

On the edge

Carpentry and millwork company updates its edgebanding process for higher productivity and increased accuracy

By Jeff Crissey



As a commercial casework manufacturer, Brunt Associates builds plastic laminate casework for schools, hospitals and corporate offices, including circulation desks, front office counters and solid surface countertops, as well as custom office furniture with veneer inlays.

The 17-year-old company, located in Wixom, Mich., blends craftsmanship and modern technology with a large amount of automated machinery and 15 production employees in its facility. The company has a large catalog of standard products and also designs and builds custom projects.

The production process starts in the front office, where Brunt Associates' projects are designed using Pattern Systems software, which interfaces with the machinery on the shop floor. Most of the panels are laid up in-house using a Joos press and are cut to size on a Giben beam saw.

Once parts are cut on the saw, they are labeled using a barcode system and separated onto two carts: One cart contains parts that require further machining and routes them to a Mor-



A seven-spool edgebanding material cart aids in switching from one edging to another to streamline the edgebanding process.

bidelli point-to-point machining center; a second cart is loaded with parts that proceeds directly to an Advantage 6600 edgebander from IMA America, which it added a year ago. The company primarily uses 3/4"-thick MDF and industrial particleboard panels, which Brunt says both work exceptionally well for edgebanding, which is typically a 3mm PVC edging material.

"We found ourselves with so much work going on that our previous edgebander was below our required capacity," says Brian Brunt, vice president. "We were looking for a machine that was reliable and could handle what we throw at it."

The edgebander is equipped with all the equipment required to reduce downtime between jobs. A seven-spool edgebanding material cart aids in switching from one edging to another to streamline the process, a timesaving system considering the company uses three or four different edging materials on a typical job.

"Changing edgebanding material is a simple matter of entering in a new spool

Process Of The Month

number, and our total changeover time between tapes is less than a minute,” says Brunt. “Before, it took at least five minutes to change between tapes – we’d have to remove the spool, tape it up and store it, then bring in the other spool.”

The edgebander is equipped with a pre-melt unit, which heats only a small amount of adhesive as it is needed to retain adhesive moisture and reduce glue waste.

“The advantage of a pre-melt unit for us is that we don’t have a big pot



Brunt Associates builds plastic laminate casework for schools, hospitals and corporate offices.

of glue baking away, which means our machine can stay idle longer rather than having to shut down a normal machine to make sure the glue doesn’t cook away without being used,” says Brunt.

The IMA edgebander is equipped with a pre-milling unit to “true” panels prior to edge application to ensure a square edge and eliminate edge failure down the road. Other edgebander stations include a pressure roller, end trimmers, buffing units, profile scrapers and flat panel scrapers. An additional edge finisher station is equipped with ball bearings that roll the edges of 3mm edging to add luster to the material after it has been scraped.

Brunt says the reliability of the new edgebander has been a major plus for his production.

“All the edgebander stations are controlled by the computer,” says Brunt. “Once the program is put in and tested, it runs consistently, which means we don’t have to pop the hood to make any small adjustments here and there like we did in the past.”

Edgebanded parts are currently returned to the edgebander for further edge application using carts, but the company is exploring the addition of a return conveyor system to further increase the productivity of its edgebanding process. **MW**

For more information circle Reader service numbers: Pattern Systems 427, Joos 428, Giben 429, IMA 430

1/2
page
island