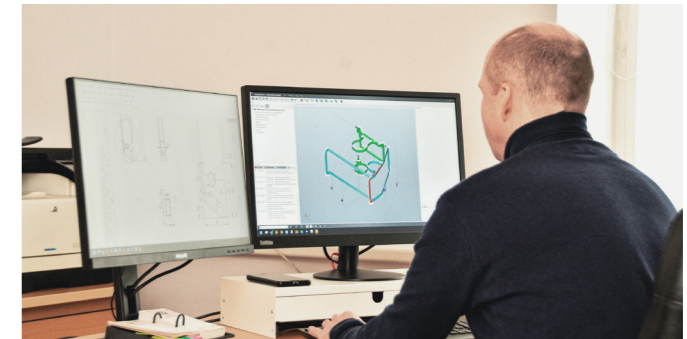


## DIVERSIFYING FOR SUCCESS



Lanksti Linija means flexible line in Lithuanian, the name already explaining a lot about this company in Alytus, southern Lithuania, which started about 22 years ago as a subcontractor of furniture giant IKEA who then wanted to differentiate its production by making its own products and completing contract work for other companies. Mindaugas Šilalė, the current Chief Operation Officer, has been with the company for more than 17 years and can therefore describe this

evolution very well. "The company was born by machining sheet metal to produce components and finished products for IKEA with high volumes of different parts. However, the inherent risks associated with working for one customer prompted us to diversify production by finding other customers and making our own products as well." This diversification also entailed an organizational change and altered the company's production from making parts in large quantities for

a single customer to making many different parts in small batches. Mindaugas explains, "We divided our business into two areas, one dedicated to mass-produced products and one to small-batch production, which also affected subsequent investments. We had started with highly productive but inflexible machinery, and then moved toward universal systems such as punch presses, bending machines, and lasers."

A few years after starting the business, the decision was made to also process metal tube with the aim of expanding the product range which also made an important contribution to diversification. "Tube processing started four or five years after the start of the business with the purchase of a BLM GROUP blade parting system. At that time, tube processing was very different from today; the cut-off machine only cut at 90 degrees, with other degree cuts done manually, and was used in conjunction with a drilling and threading machining center. That experience still allowed us to take our first steps into the world of tube," Mindaugas explains.

Today Lanksti Linija is a very well structured and equipped company making both parts and complete finished products, as Chief Technical Officer Linas Kančys explains, "For sheet metal, we have sheet metal laser systems complete with automation, paneling machines, press brakes, most of which are the latest generation. For tube, in addition to the initial BLM GROUP cut-off machine and some tube benders, we have also purchased five BLM GROUP Lasertube systems- two LT5, two LT FIBER and most recently an LT7. Robotic welding systems, as many as eleven between ABB and

Yaskawa, and painting and treatment systems complete the picture."

In 2013, the purchase of the first Lasertube LT5 system revolutionized their business. Mindaugas remembers that time well, "**When we bought the first laser, we quickly forgot how difficult it was to work before.** With the LT5 we could do any kind of hole, geometry, sectioning. The machining center with which we used to make the many holes we needed on the tubes was a good, high-performance system, but when the shop foreman saw the first LT5 working, he immediately said he didn't want to use the old machining center anymore. It's only natural, who wouldn't want a machine where you simply push a button and then you don't have to do anything else?"

The first LT5 was purchased for IKEA jobs that required high volume but not great variety. "In the first two years it probably did more hours than another machine did in five. When the Adige technicians came in for maintenance, they were surprised at how many hours had been logged. It was working nonstop, not quite 24/7, but definitely on 3 shifts." The additional focus on business diversification then made it necessary to turn to a different system. "LT5 was great for large numbers,

but not as flexible. After we entered the subcontracting world, we needed to be efficient, not just fast. We were changing for five to six different jobs during the same shift, and the LT5 setup time was penalizing in this area. We needed a more automated system" Mindaugas explains. BLM GROUP had the solution with the LT FIBER system, which combines outstanding performance in terms of speed with automation of adjustments that reduce setup time when switching from one job to another.

Finally, new demands have led to new machines states Mindaugas, "**The latest investment of the LT7 was purchased to meet the demands of our customers. We are in the furniture market, so there is a wide variety of machining and different tube sections.** LT7 allows us to process a large number of profiles and offer our customers a wide range of solutions, saving material and production time. The 3D head also allows us to make countersinks that are important for preparing the edge for welding and allows for aesthetically superior welds." LT7 in fact is BLM GROUP's highest performing Lasertube from all points of view: automation, dynamic performance, process efficiency, ease of use,technologically advanced features.

The company today employs betwe-

en 230-240 employees in about 20,000 m² of production area, plus 5,000 m² of warehouses and has a turnover between 25 and 30M€ and is strongly committed to founding values including respect for the environment and clean energy. Company uses 100% green energy and today 25% of the energy used comes from solar panels installed on the roofs of company buildings. By the end of the year, after the implementation of the new 1MW solar power plant project, more than 50% of the electricity will be produced inside the company.

Mindaugas Šilalė's future plan is to connect all CNC machines to a production control system for process optimization. "We need to have information from the systems to optimize the processes. We know that the information we need to optimize the process is already in the system, so it doesn't make sense to collect it manually as it used to be done." The ProTube system that BLM GROUP provides to customers, which is able to link all of Lanksti Linija's Lasertube systems into a single production control system, providing all the

data needed to optimize the process will be key in realizing this goal

Finally, Mindaugas recalls that, since 2013 when the first Lasertube arrived, the company has grown in turnover by almost three times, and explains, "It would be excessive to primarily attribute the growth to investments in machinery, but certainly new technologies have enabled the implementation of a strategy that is proving successful today."

# INNOVATION AND COMMITMENT DRIVE LANKSTI LINIJA'S GROWTH. *SUCCESS IS ACHIEVED THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY*

