

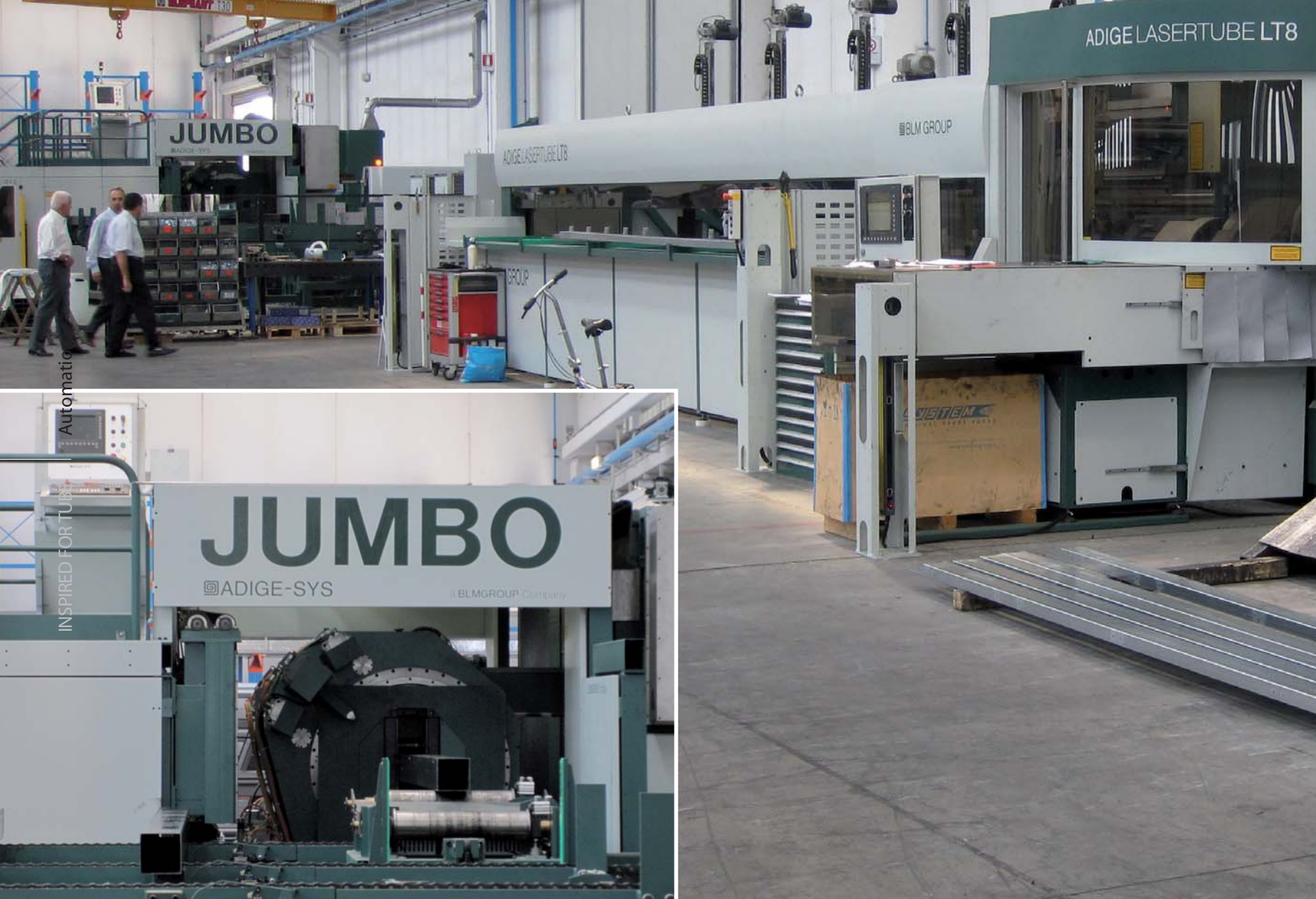


INSPIRED FOR TUBES

Lasertube technology at Gruppo System, Italy,  
guarantees very fast processing times.

# Laser and value added





In an area of 120,000 m<sup>2</sup> half of which is taken up by buildings located near Fiorano in the lowlands of Modena is the main facility of Gruppo System, which also has production facilities in Spain, China and USA. The Group is divided into three divisions: Ceramics, which deals with decorating and automation of ceramic products; Logistics, dedicated to automatic handling systems in various industrial environments and Electronics, which creates control and integration systems for industrial production. The three divisions are characterised by one common denominator and that is the spirit of innovation that transpires from the products of each individual unit.

### **“Conquering the world”**

To welcome us is Mr. Stefani, President of Gruppo System, a person with much enthusiasm who has followed his passions and turned them into a company of surprising dimensions. The passion for applied technology that Stefani has shown since he was a young boy

above and over any other interest, including school came about from his profound curiosity for anything that had to do with automation. In fact, he tells us that he started out as an employee in a company, but then, with his innovative ideas and just a small loan, he started to “conquer the world” and created a business with a total turnover of almost 280 M€ and a headcount of 800 employees, half of which are based in Italy.

The current company was set up back in 1970 and the first system to be purchased was not a machine tool but an automatic storage system and this was already a sample of the ideas that would have later given life to the “business”; a business that started off by outsourcing in an industrious and dynamic environment in the plains of Modena where there was far from a shortage of craftsmen to outsource the initial ideas and what others could not do was done in-house.

### **A laser “training ground”**

Mr. Stefani is an enthusiast and this spirit lead

him to take on the challenge in the laser tube field, but only after being fully convinced of the advantages. “Relations with BLM have been on-going for 15 years – explains Stefani – during which time I have listened carefully to the description of the machines that were being offered to me and mostly of the opportunities and the vast range of innovations that laser technology could have brought to my company.”

**The determining factor in the choice made was the improvement in the quality of tube available on the market.**

“At first, tubes were used for structural steel works and were generally of poor precision and quality, but today even following the increasing demand encouraged by laser systems, quality tube is requested, perhaps specifying that the end use is for laser cutting, high quality material can be obtained and the sys-





tems allow precise structures to be implemented without the need for expensive and complicated mechanical processes to be carried out on machine tools."

### Quality without laps

Mr. Stefani is the first to promote innovation in his company and is very careful not just to sit back when a target has been achieved; he is always on the go to reach new horizons. "Others can copy – he says referring to hypothetical competitors – but our ideas by that time are already well ahead".

"When the first laser system (an LT JUMBO 20 for large tubes with diameters of up to 508 mm) was installed we started our training" he says, using the term that perfectly describes the efforts made at the beginning. You go to a gym to train and, in effect, the initial samples helped in our training, giving us a deep understanding and helping us to seize the potential of the new tool that was available. "Today we manage to produce complex structures using fitted tubes with unique reference keys

that make fast and accurate assembly possible without errors and with a final accuracy of 3 tenths on the diagonal sections of a frame".

Initially, the choice of the ADIGE LT JUMBO 20 was made assuming the possibility of reducing the weight of the structures produced using tube by 40%. The savings alone from this effectively reduced weight were such to justify the purchase of the system, but today, when looking back, this perhaps was not the most interesting aspect that lead to introducing the laser.

Installation of the second lasertube, an LT8 system with double bundle and single tube loader, complete the machine shop adding speed and performance with the same tube processing concepts and advantages for the production of smaller tubes. Logistics costs; replacement of boxes with tubes has reduced transport costs. Today, with precise tubes processed by accurate machines, quality can be achieved without the need for machining.



## 1988 Bending from coil

Between 1988 and 1992, BLM records important new machines in the product range. The PLAUNO system, which bends from coil and is fitted with orbital cutting belongs to this period.

## 1989 Expansion abroad

BLM feels the need to cover some markets with more perseverance. To this end, BLM Deutschland, BLM France and Tecmatub (Mexico), fully-owned branches of the parent company, are set up to provide sales, after-sales service and technical assistance to their customers.



## 1990 Tube laser

The first public appearance of the TT650 by Adige; the first system of the lasertube family destined to revolutionise the tube processing scenario with an innovative construction concept that has paved its way up to today's date.

## 1993 The BLM Group is created

At the end of 1993 the long-suffered acquisition of Adige by BLM takes place. This is the start of a mutually successful story.

In the meantime BLM obtains the UNI EN ISO 9001 certification, the first UCIMA company certified by ICIM (Industrial Certification Institute for mechanics).

Born to grow

INSPIRED FOR TUBE

"Customers not always manage to grasp the essential elements of innovation that characterise our inventions, but the benefits brought to the production process at System fully justify their use, regardless of the customers' appreciation" explains Mr. Stefani. "Very fast processing times, thanks to the fact that there are no real transfers from one machine to another for the different machining that are now all carried out on the laser system. What the customer sees is the final result, that is, aesthetically appreciable systems that are essential in their form, but sturdy and accurate in terms of operation."



### Designing for tube

The introduction of new systems has led to a revolution in the design concept. "It hasn't been easy. All the previous principles had to be reviewed to adapt to the new situation" says Stefani. "Designing for tube means doing a job very similar to that of a carpenter who works with precise interlock fitting and the same has to be done with tubes to take advantage of their full potential"

The innovative company must push the market, not follow it. Recently, Systems has focused on the new solar panel business, but in its own way, with an innovative product based on covered tramping tiles with a solar panel inside. "The traditional markets are getting smaller to the advantage of emerging countries – concludes Stefani – therefore, the idea is to produce less volume, but with added value and penetrate growing markets"

