

K. Moder GmbH, in Germany, has made laser tube technology the cornerstone for its activity of pure job shop

## Laser as common thread



Nordloh is a small village in northern Germany, near the border with the Netherlands, characterized by a rural landscape that evokes bucolic images quite in contrast with the presence of several major industries, like the one we are going to visit, the company K. MODER GMBH, whose owner, Klaus Moder, has welcomed us with kindness and enthusiasm.

### Pioneer in laser technology

I met Klaus Moder several years ago, when the first laser tube cutting system sold in Germany was installed, and yet, at that time, he had already gained relevant work experience in the field of laser. From the time when he started to work for Rofin Sinar, in 1983, and then for other companies, to the point when he decided to start its own business, in 1992, the common thread of his professional life has always been the laser technology and its industrial applications.

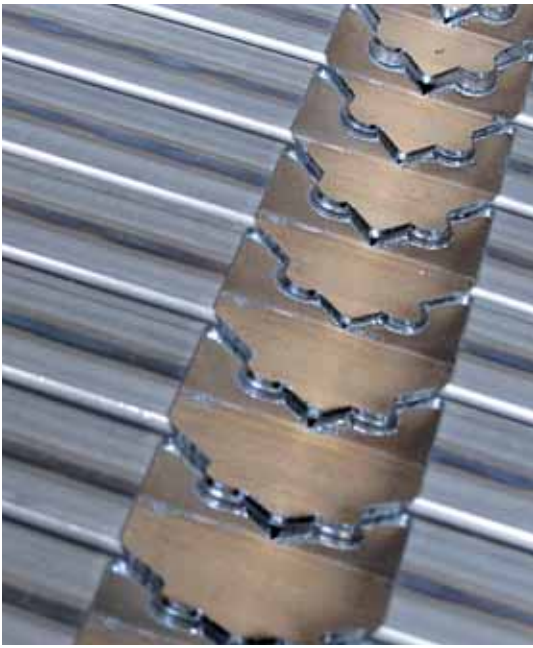
Interviewing Mr. Moder is a little bit like retracing the history of laser tube from its origins, with the point of view of someone who has always believed in this technology and still smiles sat-

isfied when somebody calls him a real pioneer in the laser field.

When he decided to enter the tube market with a laser job shop business, Moder was working as commercial technician for the first company in Germany with a Lasertube, an ADIGE TT650. It's no wonder, then, that his company started out with the acquisition of this piece of equipment, which, initially, was used to produce components for the automotive and indoor furniture industries. "With the ADIGE system I took a big step forward and since that moment, I have always been able to stay a step ahead of my competitors in laser tube processing" affirms Moder.

### Open profiles and large-size tubes

By visiting the production facility, it is immediately clear that K. MODER GMBH is an authentic tube job shop. In the beginning, most requests originated from the automotive and furniture sectors, but the use of laser for cutting metal tubes gained quickly ground and also other sectors started taking advantage of this innovative production technology.



Consequently, today, it is not easy to categorize with precision the company's customers, as they belong to many different industries.

Thanks to the promising results achieved since the beginning of its operations, in 1991, the company purchased the second laser tube, a TT652, and moved to a bigger facility. "We needed this second system to start processing square and rectangular tubes" explains Mr. Moder. "This new capability opened new frontiers in the field of tube cutting significantly increasing the market demand".

The most recent investment, the Lasertube LT8, allows the company to win new business opportunities. Among other important benefits, the LT8 system enables 3D working and the processing of bigger dimensioned tube.

"As the number of competitors keeps growing, and their manufacturing capabilities continue to improve, it is necessary to follow a differentiation strategy based on providing the customers with cutting-edge technology" explains Moder and adds "our clientele is starting to ask for tubes with larger dimensions and wall thickness". These tubes are mainly used in the manufacturing of storage and racking

systems. Another important characteristic of the Lasertube LT8 is its capability to process open profiles and sections such as channels, flats, angles etc. Thanks to this capability and the "dimensional advantage", K. MODER GMBH can compete for work in the structural steel market, for example the steelwork for industrial buildings.

"The laser tube processing market is still considered to be quite young - explains Mr. Moder - in fact, several customers still have no idea of the flexibility and innovative structural solutions obtainable with this technology". When our customers come to us, they are principally worried about the mechanical problems deriving from tube processing. Therefore, I have to help them to understand the advantages of working with laser, as several of these problems do not even exist with this production method. Currently, we are experiencing a slowdown in manufacturing orders but our presence across different markets is helping us through these difficult times. In fact, whilst the automotive industry is particularly affected by the downturn, other sectors, like the agricultural machinery sector, continue to generate demand.

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