



KEEPING UP WITH GROWTH

When a business grows rapidly, efficient and fast equipment is essential

March 2012 – When companies expand rapidly, they need equipment that will keep up.

Within the last 10 to 12 years, Korry Electronics Co. has gone from a \$40-million company to a \$140 million company. The Everett, Wash.-based aerospace manufacturing firm needed a faster, more efficient solution to its laser center, which produces switches and lighted display panels for military cockpits and ground vehicles, among other products.

“When we started to expand, we were still running the same lasers we’d been running for the past 13 years,” says Darren Hendrickson, production supervisor at Korry. “While our older lasers were still very good, they couldn’t keep up with the speed we needed.”

Korry needed faster lasers that could run six different sizes of aluminum extruded tubing and cut unique shapes. It also needed a machine that would keep orders moving quickly. Korry uses 12-ft.

aluminum bar stock with wall thicknesses that range from 0.012 in. to 0.028 in. Aluminum tubes vary from 0.680 sq. in. to 1 sq. in.

Solutions

Based on positive experiences with AltaMAR in the past, Korry looked to the Fridley, Minn.-based company to build a unique product for its needs. “We had them come out and showed them what we wanted, and they came back with a design,” says Hendrickson.

AltaMAR designed a combination laser tube/flat sheet cutting system, the Model LTH2024, with a 400 W fiber YAG laser and magazine loader. AltaMAR, a laser tube-cutting systems manufacturer, took this project on as a challenge. “Doing a combination laser in this way isn’t very common,” says

Rick Jackson, vice president of sales at AltaMAR. “We designed it as a tube-cutting system with flat-cutting capabilities rather than a flat-cutting system with tube-cutting capabilities.”

Compared to its previous lasers, Korry experienced a significant improvement. “We used to buy 12-ft. aluminum tubing and we had hundreds of variations we would cut out of tubing. We would put it on a chop saw and saw them to a certain length. Then we would take them and put them on another laser, where we would hand-load them individually. This process was slow and left a big burr,” says Hendrickson.

“The new laser allows us to load 10 or 12 bars. It automatically loads and cuts the parts completely. The parts drop to a collecting station and our workers pick them up. It allows us to walk away from the machine and do other things while the machine is running. It’s also twice as fast as what we were doing before.”

The 400 W laser also helped the company catch up on past-due project orders. Because the company was working with lasers that were considerably slower, work order demands couldn’t keep up with the laser’s abilities. “We do hundreds of thousands of switches a year, and everything was hand-fabricated. Every switch you make has a component that has to go through a laser. Our [previous] lasers were always behind, and I don’t ever remember us not being past-due,” says Hendrickson. “Before the 400 W, we were 354 hours past-due on one machine. The guys were working seven days a week. There were always two or three shifts running, and it became a huge bottleneck. This morning, our past-dues on that one machine were at 59 hours past due.”

Korry’s partnership with AltaMAR has helped the company keep up with a growing workload. Customizing equipment to meet its individual needs has and will help Korry stay on top. **FFJ**

AltaMAR, Fridley, Minn., 763/586-7906, fax: 763/586-7908, www.altamar.com

Korry Electronics Co., Everett, Wash., 800/257-8921, fax: 425/297-9876, www.esterline.com/controlsystems/korry