NEW MACHINERY
FOR THE VTI OOSTENDE

„COOPERATION WITH DB&S MACHINES HAS BEEN THE KEY TO SUCCESS"

A great project for DB&S Machines and a new machine park for VTI Oostende: only satisfied faces.

VTI Oostende does not like to do things half-way. After a thorough assessment of the carpentry shop, it was decided to invest significantly into building a new wing containing brand new machinery. For this purpose, the company worked closely with DB&S Machines. „Considering their service, quality and proximity, it was a logical choice," explains Kris Barber (VTI Oostende).

Rory Moerman

NEW FROM SCRATCH

Although this story reached its most recent climax in 2021 with the commissioning of the new machines, it all started four years ago. „At that time, VTI Ostend was confronted with the fact that the carpentry shop had become extremely outdated and was in urgent need of modernisation," explains Kris Barber, pedagogical-technical coordinator at VTI Oostende. „Things had to change, and so we took a fairly radical approach: We decided that part of Block D would have to be demolished to make room for a completely new wing. Consequently, everything in the old Block D had to be reassigned, resulting in a veritable merry-go-round of departments. For example, the construction department had to be relocated to a rental building so that we could set up an entire room for the carpentry department at its old location. The teachers of the wood department then worked out a comprehensive plan to arrange all the machines properly so that we ended up with a shop set up like a company workshop." This transformation was accompanied by an investment in new machinery. „Only six machines of the old fleet remained, all others were replaced."

Wouter Van Berlamont, Sales Manager at DB&S Machines explains: „There are 23 new machines in total, including a selection of all types: an edgebander, a spindle moulder, a CNC machine, a tenoner ...".

CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT

Building a new wing and investing in 23 new machines - not exactly a minor undertaking. „Fortunately, our Board of Directors joined us on this adventure and paved the way for funding." Funding was provided in cooperation with Agion (Agence pour l'infrastructure dans l'enseignement), the general financing institution of the Flemish Ministry of Education. „This has helped us with the replacement of the machines: Since Agion was able to finance the building, our board of directors was able to release the necessary funds within the framework of the school group's NPI to invest in the project and to be able to purchase the new machines as well as to carry out the reorganisation."

THE NEW MACHINERY	
CNC	Format4 profit H350 16.30
Cutting Machine	Mayer kappa automatic 80
Automatic Cabinet Press	BONACIN NINA 2500 Automatic, electromechanical cabinet press
4-sided Thickness Planer	Thicknesser Weinig Cube Plus
2 Surface Planers	2 x Format4 plan 51L
Thicknesser exact	Format4 exact 63
3 Sliding Table Panel Saws	Format4 kappa 400 x-motion Format4 kappa 400 Felder K 500 S
Edgebander	Format4 tempora F600 60.06L
2 Spindle Moulders	Format4 profil 45 M (Motor 7.5 hp / 5.5 kW) Format4 profil 45 M x-motion (Motor 7.5 hp / 5.5 kW)
Stroker Sander	Felder FS 722
Edge Sander	REHNEN SK-1
2 Horizontal Slot Mortiser	2 x PANHANS Modell 116
Tenoner	Vertongen PENTHO COMPACT 3
Bandsaw	PANHANS BSB 800
Automatic Mitre Saw	Pneumatic Mitre Saw OMGA TS21 ST
Wide Belt Sander	Format4 finish 1352
4 Dust Extractors	Felder RL 200 3 x Felder RL 350

„WE WERE ABLE TO START FROM SCRATCH AND IN A JOINT EFFORT WE FIRST EVALUATED THE NEEDS OF THE VTI OOSTENDE."
(WOUTER VAN BERLAMONT, DB&S MACHINES)

A CONSCIOUS DECISION

The necessary procedures for new machinery started with issuing tenders. Eventually, it was decided to work with DB&S Machines in Hooglede. „The decision to use DB&S Machines was based on three factors: Firstly, they have a huge range of machines. Moreover, they have a reputation for providing support, even after the purchase. And lastly, it was important to us that the company we chose was in the region." „Our decision to go with DB&S Machines was well received by our board of directors," Barber continues. „This would have been more difficult in the past. In fact, we did not choose the cheapest bid. However, in the process we were able to give more weight to different parameters. Hypothetically speaking, if a company is more expensive by 5% but guarantees long-term support, it becomes obvious that budget may not be the main determinant."

THE ATTITUDE HAS CHANGED

Van Berlamont agrees with Barber: „This project clearly shows a slight change in attitude. Nowadays, the parties concerned are placing more and more emphasis on quality and sustainability. If the story around Fyra a few years ago taught us anything, then it is that these days it is not necessarily the cheapest offer that takes the cake. Quality is in demand and projects must pay off in the long run. VTI Oostende can therefore count on our support even after installation. In addition, software updates are included in our support package." This was an interesting case for DB&S Machines. „Although this project in itself was not very different from others," explains Van Berlamont. „Ultimately, VTI Oostende wants to build a bridge to the professional world." „We were able to start from scratch and in a joint effort we first evaluated what VTI Oostende would need under ideal circumstances and what would be feasible in reality - both in terms of budget and infrastructure. The solutions had to meet the needs of the students as well as the curriculum at the same time. Based on all that, we then pieced together the puzzle to put the right machines in the right place."

VTI Oostende and DB&S Machines held an informative day to mark the official opening of the machinery.

„Even the faculty was on board during this adventure," explains Kris Barber. „Only logical, because this way they are able to work with the most modern machines and technologies.

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(KRIS BARBER, VTI OOSTENDE)

LEARNING CURVE

The final installation of all machines took place during the transition period between 2020 and 2021. „There is always a period of time passing between the initial contact and the installation as well as commissioning. This is often the case with public institutions, as they have to process all the paperwork first. Eventually, all machines were ready for operation in January 2021." The result is an entirely new fleet of machines with 23 different machining centres. But these are by no means just ordinary machines, Van Berlamont notes: „In order to keep the gap between school and the working world as small as possible, we have taken into account everything that is commonly used in today's professional world. Instead of low-cost machines, VTI Oostende has focused on these popular machines and options. This way graduates are not left out in the cold when faced with a CNC machine or a digital measuring device in a workshop." „Even the faculty was on board during this adventure," Barber adds. „Only logical, because this way they are able to work with the most modern machines and technologies. DB&S Machines provides them with the support they need to convey the new technologies to their students. Although the machines have been operational since January, there is still some learning curve necessary for the teachers. They had to master the sometimes quite complex technology of the individual machines in order to be able to teach at a sufficiently high level." Van Berlamont: „Training after installation is extremely important. It is not simply a matter of switching on the machine and starting to use it. Very often you have to learn how to program the machine, which takes a lot of time and effort. That is the basic principle of man and machine: one cannot work without the other."

To best prepare their students for the professional world, VTI Oostende has focused on everything that is commonly used in today's professional world.