

Acoustic Slatwall -
Premium Natural Oak
sliding wardrobe doors

Global: sold on Biesse

Exceptional support from Biesse has helped Global Doors & Interiors grow its panel processing business and expand into new markets.



Matthew Fletcher

It was around seven years ago that Ossett-based Global Doors & Interiors Ltd first bought into the Biesse brand with a Selco WN2 beam saw, a Brema Eko 2.1 drilling machine and an Akron 1300 edgebander. Back then, Global Doors was best known for sliding wardrobe doors. In the last couple of years, Matthew Fletcher, previously a minority shareholder, completed a management buyout, restructured the company and, together with Manufacturing Manager and Furniture Makers' Company 60-for-60 winner, Tom Kaye and Commercial Manager Dan Farmer, set it on a course that would see the company developing new products and exploring new markets.

"There are now two halves to the business," Matthew explained. "An import and wholesale business, which is expanding with additional product categories; and a manufacturing side. The biggest customer of our wholesale business is our own manufacturing department. It converts

components into manufactured products like sliding doors, wardrobes, freestanding furniture and fitted furniture.

"Seven or eight years ago, we were just selling door frontals and selling the components for sliding doors wholesale. When we bought our first Biesse machines, the idea was to make the interiors to go with them. We've since started to expand our wholesale offer and now provide a range of more general furniture components such as draw boxes, hinges and wardrobe accessories – and we've recently launched a brand new range of acoustic Slatwall. In addition, we regularly manufacture new products, either on a batch-one basis for interior designers, or as ranges for joinery contractor clients."

Matthew candidly admits the company had very little experience of woodworking and panel processing when he bought the machinery to support its manufacturing ambitions. "When we were looking at the first machines, we went to all the major



Main image: Selco WN2

Below left: With the Selco WN2 comes intuitive bOpti optimisation software.

Below right: The design of the beam guarantees consistent, controlled pressure on the book while a sturdy pushing carriage ensures precise positioning of panels.



manufacturers," he says, "But the thing that attracted me to Biesse was the care plans they offer. They are quite comprehensive and provide cover for five years. We had very little experience in wood production machines, so having that backup was especially important. Biesse was very supportive in terms of onboarding us and training us to use the machines. If we had our time again, I would probably try to utilise their expertise more, particularly with regard to the layout of the machines in the factory. We knew more or less what we wanted then but in hindsight, had we engaged with them more fully, I think we probably could have had an even more efficient factory."

Global Doors purchased a Selco WN 2 beam saw, an Akron 1300 edgebander and a Brema EKO 2.1 panel processing centre all at the same time. "We went from purchasing all our MFC components in to manufacturing them ourselves and fulfilling customers' needs a lot quicker," says Tom,

who has a firm grip on every aspect of the company's production.

"In terms of the number of panels we're producing, it can vary, but we're processing anywhere between 1200 and 2000 in a week. We've had weeks where production has shot up to 3000 with orders from individual partners who will sometimes need 1500 panels to go on a single delivery. Then we've got the retail customers we serve. They place orders for single wardrobes as well. The machines are more than capable of absorbing all of that and we still have capacity to spare."

The Selco WN2 is certainly a capacious sizing machine. It's been purpose-designed for smaller businesses and it makes an ideal step up from a conventional saw that will enhance productivity significantly and improve machining quality, even when cutting thin or flexible panels. Reliable and easy to use, it's a robust saw with a modest price tag. The design of the beam guarantees consistent, controlled pressure on the book

while a sturdy pushing carriage ensures precise positioning of panels. The helical geometry of the rack and pinion system means vibration-free movement of the blade carriage and when a blade change becomes necessary, Biesse's patented ergonomic Quick Change system makes the whole operation quick and safe using everyday tools. Global opted for air tables with rounded ends, then fitted a scissor lift to one side, although a square-ended air table with roller is also available. They also purchased automatic label printing.

With the Selco WN2 comes bOpti optimisation software, an easy and intuitive program with clear, real time graphics to aid processing. It can calculate the best solution to minimise material use, cutting times and production costs.

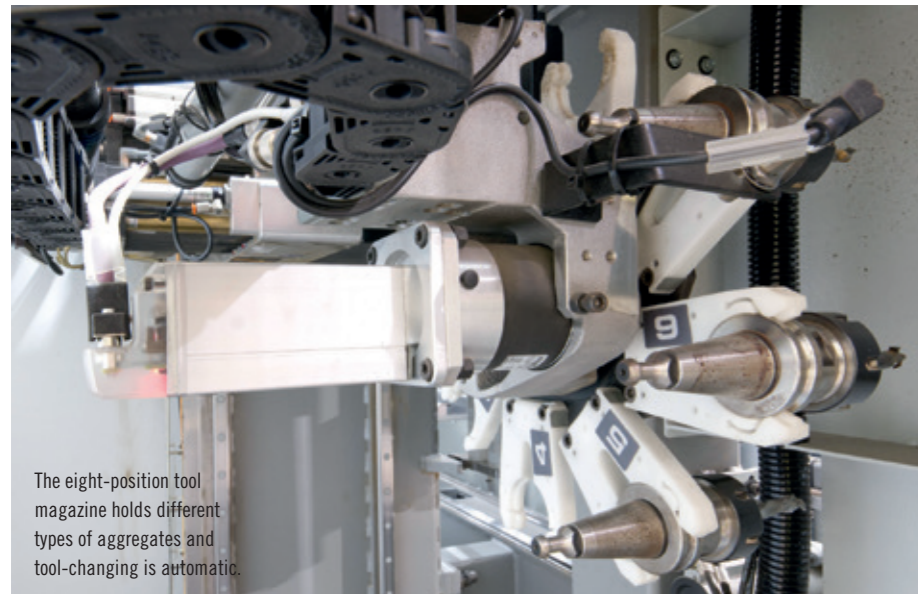
Although space was never really an issue in Global's 40,000 square foot factory, they chose a compact Brema Eko 2.1 vertical drilling machine to complement the Selco.



Brema EKO 2.1



Akron 1300



The eight-position tool magazine holds different types of aggregates and tool-changing is automatic.



Designed with just-in-time manufacturing in mind, the Eko 2.1 will carry out all drilling, milling – and glue, dowel and additional hardware insertion operations, if specified. It has been designed to provide optimal loading and unloading ergonomics and offers zero set-up times and high levels of productivity, even when using the most delicate surfaces. The eight-position tool magazine holds different types of tools, increasing the machine's versatility, and tool-changing is automatic.

"The only option we requested on the Brema 2.1 was a longer outfeed because a lot of our panels are two metres," says Tom. "We also had a barcode scanner system added so the operator can scan the labels without having to load the programs onto the machine but apart from those it is a standard machine."

The Akron 1300 Global Doors purchased comes from a range of automatic single-sided edgebanding machines that was purposely created for craftsmen and companies looking for user-friendly, customised production to fit in a limited space. Cutting accuracy is assured because the Akron has an end trimmer that removes excess edge at the front and rear of the panel. The Flex system, which is standard on the end trim, automatically adjusts the excess edge regardless of whether the corner rounding unit is being used. The corner rounding tool is equipped with two motors and will apply a radius not only on the front and rear edges but also on the upper and lower parts of the panel.

"Biesse's operating systems are quite intuitive," says Tom. "I've never had to spend more than two or three days training a new operator on any of the machines. Once the

operators are trained, they seldom come back to ask questions. It is quite an easy system to work with. Biesse's software as a whole is a good package and all our operators are trained on all our machines, so if someone is away production is never held up."

At the time Global Doors decided to start manufacturing the company had a fixed budget to implement the processing plant. Matthew freely admits, if the business had had the financial capability he would have spent more and gone for an automatic loading saw and one of Biesse's higher productivity edgebanders. "12 months on, we realised the beam saw was far more capable of producing a lot quicker than either the edgebander or the CNC could manage, so we decided to bring in an additional edgebander," he recalls. "We couldn't afford a new machine but with



The Biesse Roxyl 5.5 wasn't new but Biesse provided "endless support" to bring it up to full working condition.



the support we were already receiving from Biesse, it was a no-brainer to keep with that brand of machine.

"We found a used Biesse Roxyl 5.5 with AirForce that we thought would do the job. It came with a lot of issues but we've overcome them with the help of Biesse's engineers. They've provided us with endless support whenever it's been required. I think we've probably refurbished that machine from scratch over the past couple of years and because it runs at 28m/min, it provides lot of capacity to do what we need to do – and it can keep up with the beam saw."

Although the Biesse five-year service plan has expired on all Global's new purchases, they've found it so good that they renew it every year. "We get a lot of peace of mind with the service plan," assures Tom. "We can ring Biesse and within a couple of hours

we've got someone dialled into the machine. We're a company that can't afford to have a machine down for more than 24 hours. The service that we receive from Biesse means it is back up and running within the day.

"To be honest, we really don't get many issues with any of the machines we bought new – never more than two and that's probably due to a major issue like a belt snapping that you can't plan in. Last year we had a few more than we would have wanted with the Roxyl. It's 10 years old now but it's reached the point where it's running efficiently."

It's perhaps as well. Aside from servicing the needs of Global's 450-strong retail customer base, the company launched 10 completely new product ranges in Q4 of last year, adding vanity units, a new range of doors, bedside cabinetry, even drawer boxes for use

in kitchens – and there's more in the pipeline. Reliable machinery and a responsive service partner are key to the company's growth plan: "For this year and the next couple of years, we're looking to grow the wholesale components element and increase our recently launched acoustic Slatwall product range," says Matthew. "We've invested a lot in the company to grow our offer. Tom's put a huge amount of effort into getting the factory organised and implementing systems that will take us forward. Now we need to take advantage of that."

For further information on Biesse machines and the service plan that's benefitted Global Doors across the board, visit www.biesse.com/uk/ or call 01327 300366. For information on the products made by Global Doors and Interiors Ltd., call 01924 283004.