

JULY 10TH, 2020

FARNBOROUGH BLIND COMPANY



A Case Study of Matic Machines,
by Atech.



MATIC

ATECH

New Automated Matic Cutter & Ares Welder leads to Increased Productivity and Higher Quality for Farnborough Blind Company

HOW IT STARTED

Farnborough Blind Company was established in 1985 making blinds for the trade from modest premises in Farnborough Kent. Bill Wyatt started as an employee in August 1988 on the factory floor working his way up from a member of the production team to a desk in the office. In 2012 Bill and his wife made the decision to buy Farnborough Blind Company. Today, Farnborough Blind Company is very much a family run business with Bill and his wife as managing directors and their son Jack and Bill's brother John as part of the production team.

Rapid growth in the early years meant the company needed to relocate three times, to bigger and better premises in order to meet the demand for its increasing product range. Their current premises, set in the Kent countryside on the site of an old lime works, boast scenic surroundings. There is a trade and retail area for the standard window shading products.

Overtime focus has switched away from the large-scale manufacture and supply of high volume products, towards the more bespoke specialised market of motorised blind systems for high end residential properties. Their dedicated research and design department works closely with architects and designers and has achieved a well deserved reputation as one of the leading suppliers and innovators in the electronic blind sector.



"Our business is to make the best that we can possibly do in the way of quality"

Why Choose Matic?

To ensure quality and maintain fast manufacturing times, Bill invested in two pieces of equipment from Atech, a Matic Ares 5000 welder, which was installed in October 2017 and the Matic M1-PC-6 cutting table in January of this year. Originally cutting by hand or on Louvolite tables and using glue to seal the edges, both time consuming jobs, Bill realised the need for new equipment. We looked at other manufactures before making our final decision including some we've previously purchased from. There are both cheaper and more expensive alternatives out there, but we knew Matic machines would last a life time as the build quality is robust!"

Having used high frequency welding machines in the past, Bill was fully aware of the disadvantage of the unsightly marks left on the finished product. He was looking to achieve the perfect seamless join, which he found in the Ares. Bill explained, "With high frequency you get a shiny finish where as the Ares has a function and adjustable settings that eliminates this happening. Each fabric is different in weight; finish etc, so having settings that can be adjusted is imperative to achieving a perfect finish. Other welding machines do not have this seamless join function".



ARES Welder & M1-PC Cutter

ARES is one of the most versatile machines, on the market. Designed to weld overlaps, hem pockets, reinforcements, zippers and PVC profiles it is particularly useful in the roller blind, exterior screens, awning, and drapery industry. It is ideal to weld a variety of textiles by electrical impulse technology. This machine is suitable for working with PVC, screens, polyesters and many other fabrics.

With the cutter, quality was again the priority, "We use to cut fabric by hand as this would guarantee a perfect square cover but doing so is slow! The new Matic cutting table cuts covers quickly and efficiently, saving time but also saving on waste material due to its unique fabric stock system".

The M1-PC is an automatic cutting table was designed and built for the efficient production of roller blinds, panels, vertical blinds, roman shades, mosquito nets and samples. It cuts on all four sides avoiding the need to turn and handle the fabric during the cutting process, eliminating operator errors. The M1-PC comes equipped with 2 pressurised rotary knives, one on the X axis and one on the Y axis for fast cutting and transitions. Ultrasonic cutting is an option.

This table is ideal for cutting technical fabrics such as PVC, screen, clear PVC, black-out, zebra shade fabrics, mosquito nets.



How did you find the installation and training?

Installation and training of both machines was carried out by Atech. It was very quick and smooth with minimum disruption to production. In fact, it went so well that Bill simply uses the word superb to describe the Atech engineers. The welder was up and running in a day and the cutting table took three days to install, followed by two days of training. "After both the welding machine and cutting table had been thoroughly tested our staff were shown how to operate the machinery in detail".

Bill explains, "It can be a little overwhelming when there is so much to remember but Allan and his team are always on the end on the phone with the wealth of knowledge. I just threw a few questions in sometimes just to catch Allan out, but it never works as he always has the answer!"

When Bill ordered his M1-PC-6 cutting table he also purchased Matic's workflow software. He was using Blindata to manage orders and stock. Thanks to the support of Matic, the two are now working in harmony.

**SUPERB.
QUICK & SMOOTH.**

How did you find the Atheneia Workflow Software?

Matic have made some adjustments to their software allowing Bill to integrate his Blindata software with Atheneia. This was a great step forward for Bill, enabling him to look at the fabric stock from his quoting system. "When I'm making a sale to a client I don't have to contact the factory at all to see if we have the required fabric in stock, this information is now at the touch of my fingertips!"

Bill further explains how the software has also reduced the amount of material wasted. "We have used a fair amount of material that I guarantee wouldn't have been found or listed before the cutting table was installed. When an order is placed online, is it automatically sent to the cutter where it is nested and the material required identified. We use Blindata to input the jobs, now we don't have any user error as it automatically sends the data to the cutting table with sizes, fabric and customer identification.

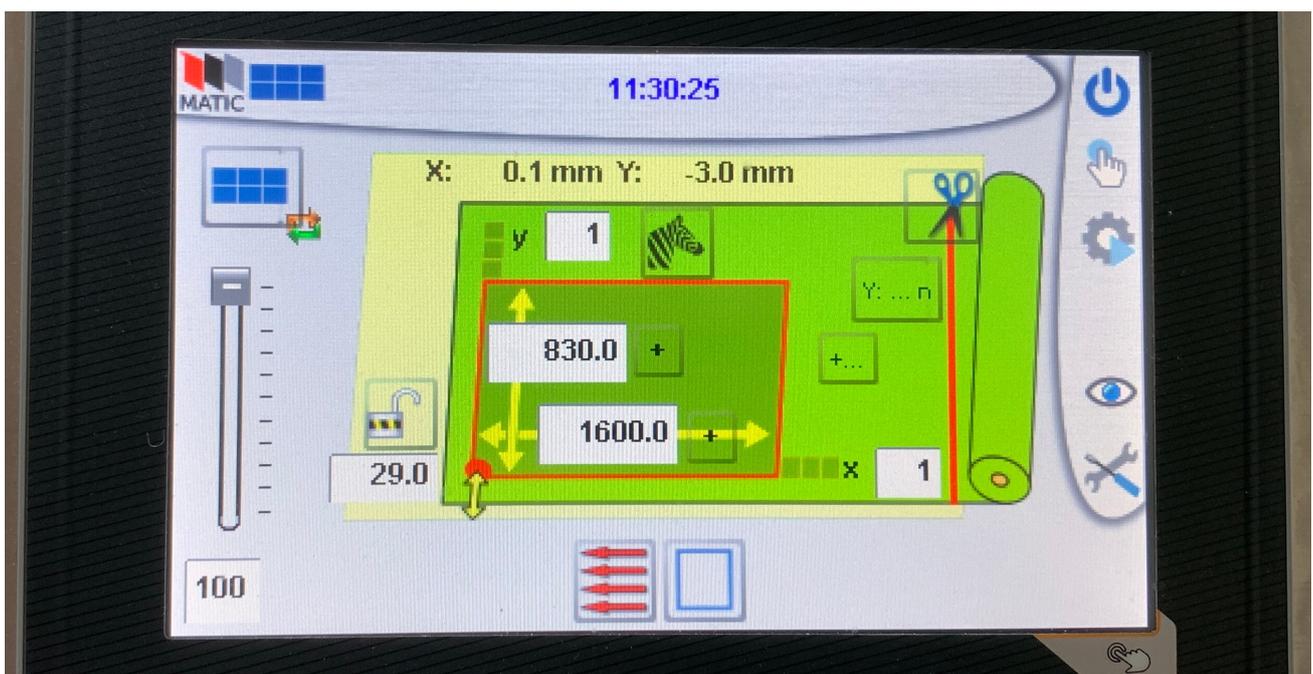
This software automatically nests all the fabrics together even if it's not for the same client and then cuts it in the most economical way possible. This has certainly saved us money and from purchasing fabric that could potentially be wasted! With the built in swatch facility we can simply set the cutter to make sample swatches cut to any size which means we further reduce waste material and also have readymade samples at hand to provide to customers".

**REDUCED WASTE
MATERIAL.**

"The Athenea Software is very self-explanatory and perfect in every way!"

Athenea Workflow Software Management is more than an operating software, it is a productivity and efficiency tool designed with the roller blind, exterior screens, awning and drapery markets in mind. It will be in constant contact with your company's ERP system to retrieve orders and report real time status of cutting jobs already in production.

The software will hold your roll inventory, deduct from it the cut pieces and waste - so you always have a clear picture of your overhead and stock. Athenea will also give you the opportunity to put reusable waste back in stock and tell you when to use it in future orders. The optimisation tool of this software is brilliant, offering nesting capabilities with or without rotating the orientation of the cut depending on the fabric pattern. By nesting the cuts, Athenea will significantly reduce waste, thus lowering your cost per blind.



How are you getting on now?

Bill is really pleased with the positive changes in his workflow and reduction in the cutting bottle neck. The operators are working well and running the machinery with ease. "Both the welder and the cutter are very easy to set up and use. The performance of the cutter is great with a perfect finish and the welder is brilliant. I can see a return happening already".

Good and bad points

Both machines are doing everything Bill expected and more. "There are no bad points! We now produce faster, with increased accuracy and a better quality finish. The cutter has given us so much more flexibility, enabling us to tackle jobs that we may of not even have gone for before opening up new opportunities and increasing the range of services we can offer our clients", says Bill.

And Finally

Would you choose the Ares 5000 welder and the M1-PC-6 cutter again, given your experience? "If I have the need to increase my production, then, absolutely yes! I'm happy and confident to say that I'm definitely seeing a return on my investment in so many ways". Bill concludes.

Bill praises Allan and his team for their after sales service and said they have been brilliant. We rely on our machinery, and it's essential that we have a fast response if issues arise," he says. "We can speak directly to Allan, who solves any problem quickly". When asked if he would recommend Matic and Atech to other customers, Bill has just one word," Definitely!"

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