

ATD MACHINERY WORKING WITH TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION PACKAGE FROM CARDS PLM SOLUTIONS

'CUSTOMERS AND TECHNICIANS CAN'T DO WITHOUT IT ANY MORE'

The Brabantse Kempen region is an important centre for the cigar industry. Royal Agio Cigars in Duizel sells a remarkable 750 million cigars worldwide every year. And ATD Machinery, formerly Agio Technische Dienst (Agio Technical Department), is the world's largest developer and builder of cigar production machinery. In 2015, two years after becoming independent, ATD moved to completely new premises of its own in Hapert. And it is investing substantially in automation. Hence ATD has developed a customised version of the technical documentation package Cortona3D RapidAuthor in collaboration with cards PLM Solutions in Best. 'Our customers and technicians are very enthusiastic about it.'



Paul Bax bij een sigarenproductiemachine in opbouw. 'Wij combineren ruim 45 jaar kennis van machinebouw met meer dan 110 jaar ervaring in sigarenproductie.' Foto: Bart van Overbeeke

PIM CAMPAN

ATD Machinery is 'nice and busy,' according to sales engineer Paul Bax in the new building on the Kempisch Bedrijvenpark business park in Haert. 'We have over sixty permanent employees, together with various temporary staff at the moment. That's a lot for this sector.' In his words, the company combines 'over 45 years' experience

of machine building with more than 110 years' experience of producing cigars (at AgioCigars - ed). ATD supplies a complete range of machines for every step in the cigar production process, from tobacco cutting machines to complete packaging/box finishing lines. They are all developed and built in-house, explains Paul Bax. 'As a complete supplier we are a one-stop shop for our customers.'

ADVANTAGE

ATD Machinery has grown rapidly over the years, driven by engineering/product development. 'We are an innovative company which launches new developments onto the market every year. And all our innovations are extensively tested in our own 'testing ground' (Bax is referring to Agio Cigars - ed.). Together with great flexibility in terms of organisation and products, and above all the close relationship with our customers, that gives us an advantage over the competition,' explains the sales engineer. The most recent innovation is the ALM2 TPD2 sticker line, which applies seven warning stickers and a duty-paid band to cigar boxes at high speed. That innovative strength results in a strong market position. 'We are the global market leader within our niche, with Central America, Europe and Asia as major sales areas. Alongside a large number of small customers we also have some very big ones. ATD is proud to include all the big names in the cigar and cigarette industry amongst its customers.' Alongside the head office at Kempisch Bedrijvenpark, ATD Machinery has had an overhaul workshop in the Dominican Republic - ATD Dominicana - since last year. 'Machines that are sometimes thirty or forty years old are completely overhauled there and brought up to the latest state-of-the-art, after which they returned to the customer as good as new.' New machines are developed and

assembled in Hapert. Paul Bax: 'Our engineers and technicians have a wealth of experience and knowledge. Technicians who have built the machines also carry out the installations at the customer; after all, they know the machines better than anyone. Travelling all over the world comes with the job for these colleagues.' ATD Machinery sources the majority of the machinery parts from suppliers in the region. Parts which incorporate unique or very specific knowledge are produced in-house by ATD in its own machining department.

BIG 'WIN'

In order to make the operating processes more efficient and faster, ATD Machinery has invested considerably in software support in recent years, with Siemens as preferred supplier. Hence the mechanical engineering department uses the 3D CAD package Solid Edge ST7, and electrical engineering uses TIA Portal 13. The new ERP system (Microsoft Dynamics NAV) went live last year. Another major improvement is the technical documentation package Cortona3D RapidAuthor. ATD called upon cards PLM Solutions for this. The specialty partner for ICT solutions from Siemens PLM Software in the Benelux has implemented the 'native importer' amongst other things. Bjorn Hoeven, business application specialist at cards PLM Solutions, explains: 'It enables you to place 3D data about machines and machine parts which is available in Solid Edge on your website directly and effortlessly. This allows customers to consult that data online anywhere in the world - in 3D, whereby you can rotate and zoom in on every part in order to examine it right down to the level of detail.' As well as making information available to customers, cards PLM Solutions has also helped ATD Machinery to make the (3D) data which is very useful during assembly available on the shopfloor. 'That provides a big 'win' in terms of production time,' according to Hoeven

ENTHUSIASTIC

Paul Bax keenly endorses that. 'Technicians are very enthusiastic. Not a single machine is assembled without that application anymore. We were already sending 3D models to the workshop, but they didn't include any part lists or production drawings. Now they do;

SAVES TIME

There are therefore major benefits, both the customer and for ATD Machinery. Paul Bax: 'you have rapid access to the right information/documentation. That means that the hardcopy parts books - in 2D and often hard to read - have become obsolete.'

'The process saves time, both for the customer and for us'

the technicians can search by item number and retrieve the description, the quantity and the production drawing for every part and view the machines in 3D without having to call on engineering. They can thereby also zoom in and out at part level, etc. It works so well that the technicians can't do without it any more.' The same applies to the customers. 'We have used cards PLM Solutions' product to create a 3D interactive portal. Customers who log in to that via our website can access all their machine information: manuals, technical documentation and the complete machine in a 3D interactive model. They can 'strip down' their own machine down to part level and see where a specific part is located in the machine, how it's fitted and with which fixings, what the item number is and they can even request an immediate quote.'

Another major benefit is that errors such as ordering the wrong parts are prevented. The process saves time, both for the customer and for us; the customer needs far less support from ATD in finding the solution to his problem - he or she can now do it themselves.' A Spanish version of the customer portal will shortly also go live with the assistance of cards PLM Solutions for the workshop in the Dominican Republic. 'The fact that we, as a relatively small OEM, are using a package that Boeing, ASML and DAF also use speaks volumes, I think.'

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