

TORNOS MEASURES UP FOR TRANSDUCER MANUFACTURER



Tornos Sigma 20 at Solartron. The machine has not only taken the place of three machines but also increased productivity by over 50%.

When Solartron Metrology Ltd needed to update its long running turning centres, the company immediately turned to Tornos and its new Sigma 20 CNC turning centre. The company has turning centres from a number of suppliers but when it came to updating its technology, the Bognor Regis manufacturer opted for Tornos.

Known as a world leading provider of precision dimensional measurement and position measurement transducers & instrumentation, 130 employee Solartron is continually increasing its production rates and the Tornos Sigma 20 is assisting the company in achieving its goals. Replacing three Tornos Elector turning centres supplied in the 1980's, the Sigma 20 has not only taken the place of three machines but also increased productivity by over 50%.

As Solartron Machine Shop Supervisor Mr Peter Shepherd states: "When looking at a new machine, we evaluated the market and found the Tornos was the best fit solution for our business. We already have turning centres from many suppliers including Tornos and from experience, the service, support, expertise and relationship Tornos provides far exceeds that of its competitors."

Exporting 90% of its production and holding an 80% market share of the global transducer market, the company manufactures significant amounts of components. With over 60,000 parts passing through the machine shop each month on a Kanban system, the ability to switch the Sigma 20 from one part to the next was a major factor. As Mr Shepherd continues: "We produce batches from 10 to a 1,000

off and we are continually changing jobs. The Sigma 20 has easy access and is well lit for changeovers whilst the user friendly Fanuc control has reduced programming times, giving us considerable time benefits when changing over jobs."

"We manufacture hundreds of families of part variations, so versatility is crucial to us and the Sigma 20 has already proved its worth with the changeover aspect of our production."

Predominantly machining 400 series stainless steel on the Sigma 20, ISO9001 registered Solartron conducts a considerable amount of drilling and it is here the Tornos machine comes into its own. As Mr Shepherd continues: "A lot of our components involve drilling; the powerful driven tooling unit on the Sigma has a torque monitor that enables us to gauge the performance of our drills. This lets us know when tools are close to wearing out or breaking. This has improved our quality process and enables our operators to work in confidence; they now know exactly when to change tooling without any breakages."

Enhancing the drilling performance further is the through coolant feature on the Sigma 20 that Solartron is now using. The through coolant has improved productivity as well as the life of the cutting tools.

"The new Sigma 20 compliments our two Tornos DECO 10 machines and has improved our production rates whilst freeing up space on the shop floor by replacing three machines. We operate a two shift system and the new Sigma 20 is running almost non-stop," concludes Mr Shepherd.

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