Sticking with success

Replacing manual painting of thermoplastic interior fittings with robotic painting has given Euroform a better product, and a better working environment for employees.

Euroform production technician Gert Linder says the new robotic solution saves on how much paint used - and ultimately saves money.

> Sweden-based Euroform, which produces complete interior fittings in thermoplastic at its factories in Tranås and Motala, had long faced shortcomings in its manual painting process. One of the biggest was uneven flaming, the process of buffing the surface prior to spraying, which could cause poor paint adherence. But a customer forced the issue when it suddenly increased its order. A decision was made to automate the painting process.

Euroform had already visited several factories in a bid to find the optimal solution for its particular needs when it turned to ABB partner Rotech Paint Automation. Then a visit to a company supplied by Rotech clinched the deal – they had found the perfect suspended line system they were looking for.

Rotech provided an IRB 580 paint robot and an IRB 2400 robot for flaming, both from ABB. The first training session in programming took place during commissioning, and was followed up with a further two sessions. “The installation date was decided upon at an early stage,” says Gert Linder, production technician at Euroform. “In preparation for this, the rebuilding and construction of painting booths was completed before the robots arrived. It all went remarkably smoothly. The longest part of the process was deciding to do it.”

Since the process was automated, there has not been a single complaint. “A robot has 100 percent capacity,” says Linder. “We humans do not. You can imagine how monotonous it is to just stand there and spray the same things the same way all day. Programming or operating the robots is much more interesting.”

Linder also points out the importance of investing in high-tech equipment in order to attract competent personnel to the company in the future. The labor market is highly competitive, so it is very important to provide an attractive workplace that is keeping pace with the times.

It had been necessary to automate in order to meet the increase in production, but it has also proved to be beneficial in other ways. For Euroform, which is quality and environmentally certified, reducing the risks to health and environmental impact are two very good reasons for implementing such improvements, not to mention the financial benefits that have come to light. “Stable production in itself enhances quality assurance, which, in the long term, results in more orders and larger volumes. We also find that we are using less paint, which is obviously a saving,” says Linder.