

Hailing from the Czech Republic, Hestego is a market leader in the manufacture of protective components for industrial machinery, and as of 2019 has a forecast turnover of more than €20 million. The company is one of the largest Czech producers in its field of expertise, offering solutions to the engineering, electrotechnical, power engineering and transport sectors. Paul Knight spoke with CEO Monika Šimánková about delivering excellence in personal protection for a company's greatest asset – its employees.



A WELL-OILED MACHINE



HESTEGO | PROFILE



Hestego was founded in 1995 to produce protective components for the moving parts of machine tools, initially catering primarily to the domestic Czech market. The company quickly expanded its product portfolio into the production of a range of telescopic covers for heavy machinery, and in 1997 expanded operations again, launching a newly expanded range of steel cable carriers.

These new products were intended for export to the German market, and such was their success that by 2011, Hestego was obliged to undertake a vast expansion of its facilities, extending its production hall to 8,000 sqm.

“Following that, in 2014 we completed another production hall and reached a total production area of 12,000 sqm,” said Hestego’s CEO Monika Šimánková.

Since that time, Hestego’s production portfolio has been streamlined into four divisions and two service centres, each of which has its own dedicated production hall.

“We are currently one of the leading suppliers of smart technical solutions on the market and our goal is to expand our operations to markets in Western Europe primarily, but also more remote destinations such as the US or Asia,” stated Ms Šimánková.

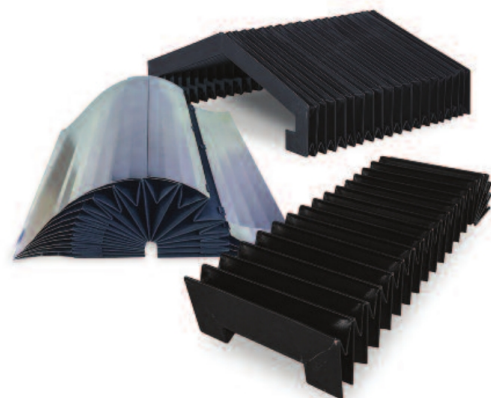
State-of-the-art production

Expansion of its production facilities has given Hestego the edge in terms of not just production capacity but also the quality of its final product.

“Our new, modern technologies, especially within the fully automated material division, alongside our other robotic equipment and combined with the expansion of production areas, has allowed us to dramatically increase production capacity, reduce production times and significantly reduce handling times,” revealed Ms Šimánková. “Our production thus adapts to the needs of the digital factory and Industry 4.0.”

All this investment has helped the company to create an industry leading product portfolio.

“Our most important products undoubtedly include the telescopic covers that we supply to all major European machine tool manufacturers,” said Ms Šimánková, before confirming that many of the specific solutions Hestego has innovated are covered by European patents. ▽





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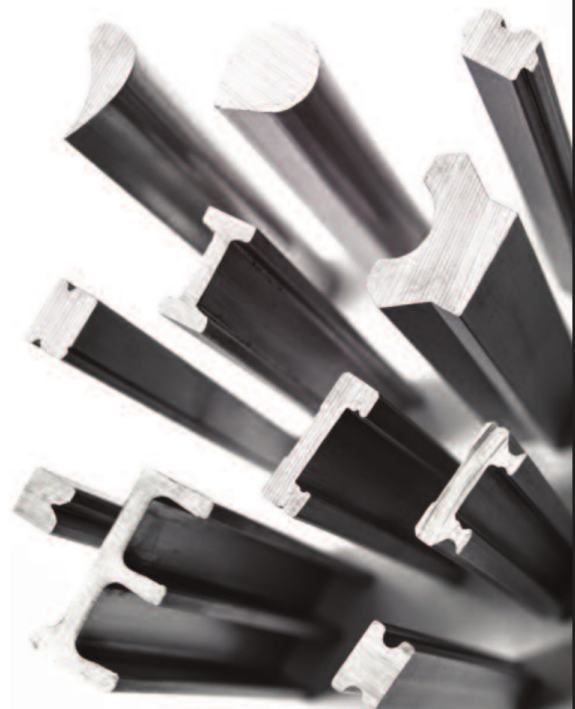
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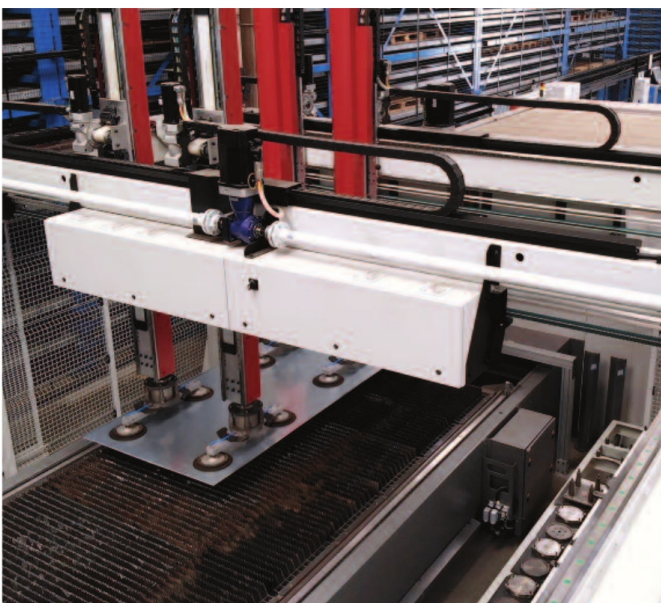
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“Our machine covers are also highly valued and sought by customers,” added the CEO. “The ideal form of cooperation is where our engineers, together with the client, design and create a future cover of a machine. We can then utilise all our experience in the use and construction of not only sheet metal materials, but all aspects of machining. With our products, we consistently maintain high quality and loyalty to clients.”

These efforts have not gone unnoticed by the wider industry at large and Hestego has received accolades, including a Red Dot 2015 award for the company’s design and design standards.



Forging partnerships

Ms Šimánková is unequivocal about the central importance of partnership to the success of the company.

“Some of our relationships with our suppliers go right back to the 1990s,” she highlighted. “We seek – and are sought out – for our stability and in recognition of our continuous efforts to improve our process and our solutions. This continual evolution is impossible to achieve without the right suppliers. A partnership must always bring measurable benefits to both parties – only then is the cooperation considered most effective.”

She added: “We are always straight with our suppliers and customers and value open communication. Stable suppliers have the opportunity to grow together with our company.”

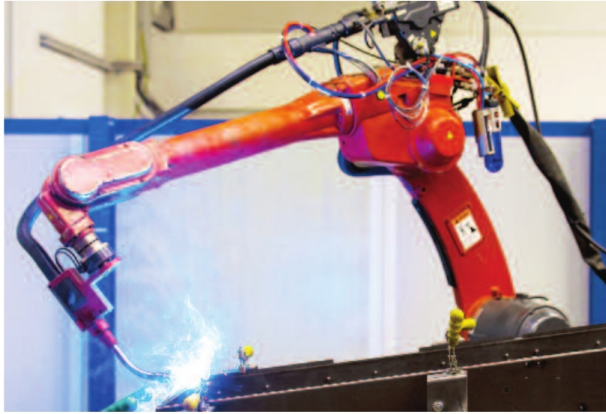
Supporting sustainable enterprise

With a constant eye on sustainability throughout all its business steps and procedures, Hestego backs this up with ISO 14001 environmental management accreditation.

“By automating material separation, we reduced electricity consumption by 27.8% and CO2 production by 407.88 tonnes per year,” explained Ms Šimánková, who also revealed the company is a proud participant of the Blue Competence Initiative, created by the Mechanical Engineering Industry Association (VDMA) which represents more than 3,200 member companies in the SME-dominated mechanical and systems engineering industry in Germany and Europe.

“Further improving our carbon footprint, we want to use more energy from renewable sources this year and therefore we have plans to install a photovoltaic power plant on our roof in order to facilitate ecologically sound production of our own electric energy,” Ms Šimánková illustrated.

“Despite our production programme focus, we keep the working environment at the highest level in the region.



That is why we have received the Company of the Year or Employer of the Year awards here in Czech Republic on various occasions in recognition of this.”

A bright future

“Optimism is a necessary trait for entrepreneurship,” Ms Šimánková stated. “However, it must be supported by the hard work of everyone in the company and by the determination to achieve the set goals.”

Hestego continues to receive industry recognition for excellence.

“In the January issue of the MM Educational and News Magazine, the Industrial Spectrum Magazine published an extensive interview on the topic of team management, communication with managers, selection of suitable employees in the engineering field and the proportion of women in this field. Among other things presented were our corporate culture and corporate values, such as collaboration, courage, friendship and perseverance, which accompany us at Hestego every day,” revealed Ms Šimánková.

“Another article was published in a significant Czech periodical in June, and presented to the public the close cooperation of Hestego with educational institutes for children. We support children since their early years to love engineering and we try to show them the beauty of the sheet metal world and new production technologies.”

The future for Hestego will see more expansion and more investment. Ms Šimánková is understandably optimistic regarding the future of both Hestego and the sector more generally. For Hestego, the future means continuing growth and evolution as the market demands.

“By far the largest production project is the installation of a new material cutting automation that combines cutting, forming, grinding, deburring, marking, storage and sorting into a single unit. This significantly reduces the unproductive times of machines and people, and is absolutely unique in Central and Eastern Europe,” she concluded. ■

