

Masters in Improvement

By M. Verloop



The separate companies within the Hittech Group each have their own competences and specialisations, but they all have one thing in common: Their drive to be the best in their field. They all have a natural urge to continuous improvement. Whether it concerns the internal operating processes, customers' products or the cost of a product – we within the Hittech Group believe that there is always room for improvement. Hittech Group are therefore often called the "Masters in Improvement".

Specialisation strategy

The strategy of Hittech Group as a whole is also fully geared to continuous improvement, a good example of which is the consistent implementation of the specialisation strategy. Within Hittech Group we believe that you can only be the best at something if you focus completely on that 'something'. In practice this means that each Hittech Group company concentrates fully on its own specialisation, enabling it to achieve continuous improvement and to lead the way in its own sector.

Higher added value

Another example of the continuous improvement within Hittech Group is the growth strategy that is pursued. Both the autonomous growth and the expansion through takeovers are completely

driven by the internal demand to be able to offer customers an ever higher added value. This last point is an absolute precondition when Hittech Group decides to take over another company. The growth strategy has led to a doubling of turnover in the last three years. This growth has taken place predominantly in the field of development and assembly, making Hittech Group a very complete system supplier. In the coming years, this growth pattern is to continue, whereby considerable growth is expected from Hittech Assembly in Malaysia. Many customers make use of the possibility of outsourcing to the Far East via Hittech Group, where the familiar Hittech Group quality guarantee remains assured.

Integral solutions

As the different Hittech Group companies and the network of suppliers are completely complementary to one another, it is possible to develop and produce optimum solutions. This creates integral solutions in which all the aspects of the development and production process are incorporated into the final result. Value engineering automatically takes place during the design and preparation process. Within Hittech Group, no concessions are made when it comes to the choice of the right machining and assembly techniques. This is not necessary, because all the latest production techniques are within reach, which automatically means that the right cost price is offered for every product at every phase of the life cycle.

Partner for life

The possibilities offered by Hittech Group are fully exploited when the whole life cycle of a product is planned by Hittech Group. The product's 'road through life' is already mapped out during the design phase. This means that the expected life cycle of the product is taken as the basis for the design and the material and production techniques to be employed, after which every phase of the cycle (prototype, pilot series, small series production, full industrial production) can take place with the right production method and at the right production location.

C O L U M N dr ir C.P. Heijwegen – Managing Director Hittech Group BV

The lead article in this latest Newsletter is entitled "Masters in Improvement".

Hittech Group BV has chosen this motto to make clear to our customers, suppliers and partners that we are aiming for continuous improvement – in products, parts, development and engineering as well as in costs, communication, internal processes, competences and workmanship.

Hittech Group aims for and implements

product lifecycle management as partner for our customers. A large number of measures have been taken to achieve this, including acquisitions such as Hittech Comac, but also the founding of Hittech Assembly Malaysia. Furthermore, we are constantly making investments and training our employees, but also generating maximum synergy within the Group.

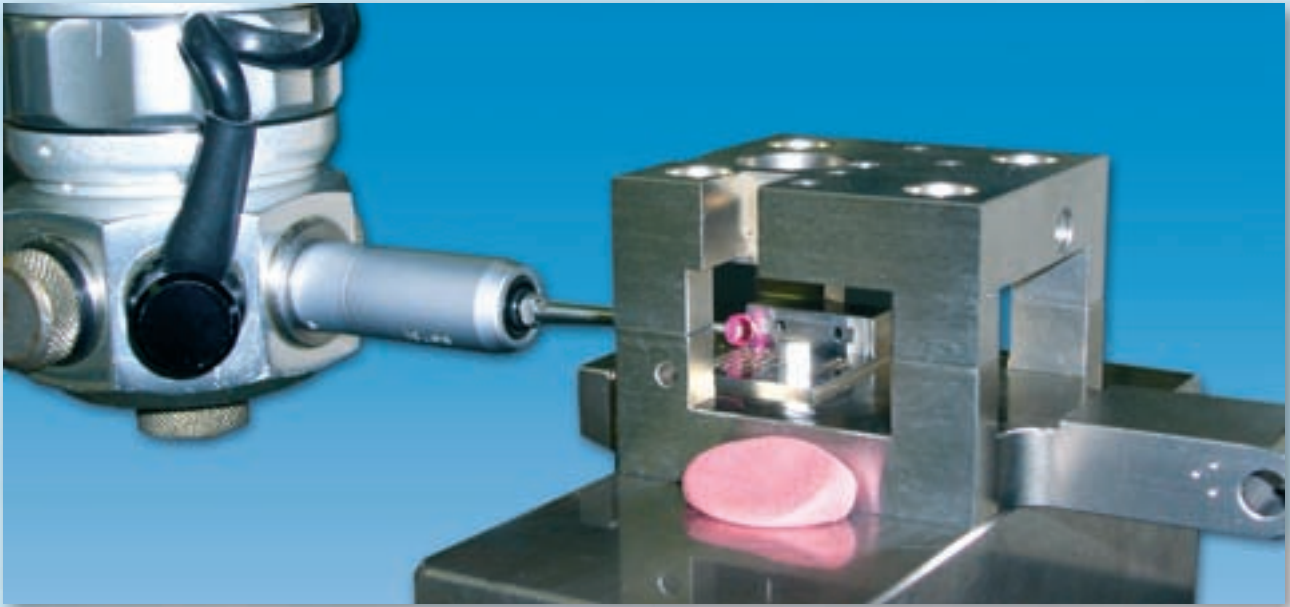
Masters in Improvement;
Hittech Group is proving it!



Project:

Hittech Multin BV, Hittech Bihca BV and Hittech MPP BV

The development of gluing stations for medical analysis sensors



A project has been carried out for ficonTEC by the Hittech Group companies Hittech Bihca, Hittech Multin and Hittech MPP. FiconTEC manufactures high-precision semi-automatic and fully automated microassembly and testing equipment. This equipment is employed in the optical industry, laser diode manufacturing, opto-electronics, medical technology, security and military engineering and telecommunications. For this project, special knowledge of the high-precision machining of hard materials was required, and the performance of the complete production design had to be determined in advance through simulation and design calculations. It was therefore an ideal challenge for the machinists at Hittech Bihca, Hittech MPP and the developers at Hittech Multin. The final assembly was also carried out at Hittech Multin.

The sensors employed in the medical analysis equipment have to be glued onto a mounting adapter.

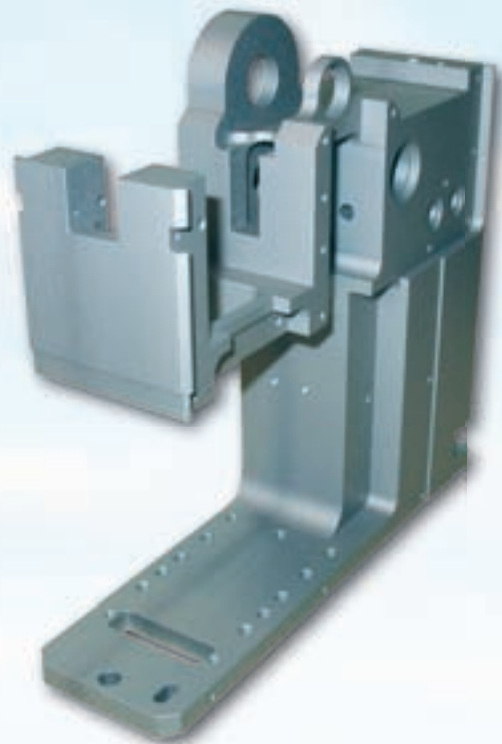
The objective of the project is to develop a gluing tool in which two parts can be automatically positioned relative to one another before being glued. During the movement and positioning the parts to be glued are held by vacuum. During the curing of the glue effected by heating for a given period, the dimensional accuracy of the parts must be guaranteed by the tool.

The required accuracy of the tool assembly is ± 0.005 mm between surfaces with a positioning accuracy of ± 0.01 . These accuracies are achieved thanks to tolerances of up to 0.002 mm on the grinding machine at Hittech Bihca. The whole assembly has been validated on the 3D measuring machine at Hittech MPP, which is located in Delft, just like Hittech Multin.

The calculation of temperature influences in relation to the expansion of the different materials used, and extrapolating

this back to the dimensioning for the manufacture of the parts was a challenge for the Development department at Hittech Multin. The selection of the most suitable materials and consultations on the manufacturability were also supporting functions provided by this department.

This finally culminated in a line of 20 gluing stations whose test products now have to be validated by the end-user. We are very confident about the result!



Innovative, flexible and service-oriented



Hittech Gieterij Nunspeet specialises in the production of high-quality sand casting in a large number of aluminium alloys. The modern machinery creates a flexible production department that is actively supported by a well-equipped laboratory for quality inspection and intensive quality control. The casting process is highly automated, retaining flexibility in series volumes, choice of alloys, complexity and dimensions.

Some 40 specialists contribute to the extensive knowledge and expertise. This is partly why Hittech Gieterij Nunspeet has obtained such a competitive position in the field of high-strength castings. Besides employing its own machining department, Hittech Gieterij Nunspeet often outsources the processing of castings, for example at Hittech MPP. Careful selection of the right partner for each product type gives us a considerable edge on our competitors. Our most important customers are to be found in general machine construction, the electrical industry, railways, heating-system industry and truck industry.

Hittech Gieterij Nunspeet is a trend-setter in the manufacture of simple to very complex castings. In order to meet the highest quality requirements, extensive research is carried out (where necessary) into mechanical properties such as tensile strength, hardness, cracking, leakage. Also x-ray test are carried out.



Modern machinery enables the supply of heat-treated and processed castings complete with surface treatment. This enables Hittech Gieterij Nunspeet to deliver its products ready for assembly. The specialist knowledge amassed by Hittech Gieterij Nunspeet's employees enables them to provide broad-based support to our customers' engineering projects. From tensile strength calculations and recommendations on choice of material through to product design and detailing of the castings. The latest rapid prototyping equipment is used for this purpose. Hittech Gieterij Nunspeet has the specific resources, knowledge and skills to cast aluminium products that meet the highest standards.



Prototyping

In the present day when practically everything has to be done faster, the foundry is also confronted with shorter run-times. In order to be able to meet these demands, a possibility has been created within the foundry – but which can also be used by other customers of Hittech Group – for putting ideas into practice in a very short space of time by means of the 3D prototype printer that is installed at the foundry. On this printer where a product can be printed with the aid of ABS, it is possible to then go from the idea to the finished casting in a very short period of time. In order to point this development in the right direction, you as customer are supported with designs created in a 3D environment. Hittech Gieterij Nunspeet makes use here of Solid Works and transforms customers' drawings into an e-drawing format. This format allows measurements to be performed, volumes to be determined and comments to be added. Run-times of 2 weeks have already been achieved in this way!

Hittech Group BV at the MEDTEC 2008



Hittech Group BV can look back on a very successful participation in the MEDTEC 2008. Stand 1639 in Hall 6 on the new fair site next to Stuttgart Airport was well visited by both customers and potential customers between 11 and 13 March.

The visitors were able to gain a broad overview

of the range of competences of the whole Hittech Group BV, and gathered information on a large number of components, production methods and services that the Hittech Group can supply to the medical industry and laboratory analysis equipment manufacturing.

We are convinced that the contacts made will lead to new customers in the very near future.

ESEF 2008 more successful than ever!

The Hittech Group again succeeded in surprising visitors on various fronts during the recent ESEF. Although the growth of the Hittech Group in recent years was known to many, the visitors were pleasantly surprised by the speed and consistency with which the developments had taken place.

A fine example of innovation was demonstrated at the stand by our partners from the University of Technology of Delft who have developed the Flame. In the coming years, this independently walking robot is to be developed into a robot that is not only able to run, but also to play football. The expertise and know-how of Hittech Group is to be applied by the University to successfully carry out these projects.

We can look back on an extremely successful ESEF that not only helped to strengthen our existing business relations, but also led to a large number of new contacts. At the same time we are pleasantly surprised at the enormous possibilities that the developments within Hittech Group provide for existing and new relationships. We are therefore convinced that these contacts will lead to new partnerships.

Hittech Group Update

TIM HEIJWEGEN APPOINTED
DIRECTOR OF HITTECH COMAC BV



My name is Tim Heijwegen and I am 29 years old. After studying logistics and technical transport science in Amsterdam resulting in a bachelor degree, I lived in the United States for a total of 3 years. During this time I completed my MBA studies at the University of North Carolina and worked for one year at Vescom in New York, a company producing vinyl wall coverings.

After my working visa expired, I worked for Hittech Multin for roughly 7 months in 2005 where I assisted in the relocation of the facilities in s'Gravenzande and Zoetermeer to Hittech Assembly in Delft. A great project! For the last two and a half years I have been a proud employee of Aldi Supermarkets. A unique company, I really enjoyed working there. I was Regional Manager in South Limburg where I was responsible for 8 to 10 branches. A great job with even more possibilities, but I couldn't resist the challenge when Hittech Group offered me a job as Director at Hittech Comac. I started on 1 February and am looking forward to making a real adventure of it.

HITTECH GROUP COMPANIES SHARE
CUSTOMER RELATIONS FILES VIA CRM SYSTEM

CRM is a business strategy in which the central focus is on the customer. In order to be able to efficiently react to the needs of customers, it is useful to collect as much information about these customers as possible. CRM systems facilitate the compilation of information at each customer contact and the call-up of this information for subsequent contacts. The channel via which this contact takes place – personal, telephone, by mail or in any other way – makes no difference here. All (relevant) information has to be stored consistently. In addition, knowledge management is an important field of interest. Here it is a question of sharing customer files, sharing of knowledge about customers, gathering new information about customers and building up new customer profiles. For the Hittech Group it is very important that all the companies have knowledge about the customers of affiliated companies.

First and foremost it is therefore a matter of having common customer relations files. In concrete terms this means that we manage and maintain all relationships at a central level. By means of different segmentations (segmenting is the splitting of customers into groups), we can gain an impression of the market segments where our turnover is generated.

Although there are a number of different isolated CRM applications within the Hittech Group, it has been decided that the CRM module from Navision is to be used. A separate central department has been created within Navision for the CRM data.

In the meantime the system has been adapted to the wishes of Hittech Group and the input of the interactions has started. A training course has been set up for the persons concerned so that everyone can use Navision CRM properly.

A successful CRM will also contribute to helping the Hittech Group achieve its ambitious goals.



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