



Market-leading meat packaging solutions

The meat processing industry is diverse and complex, necessitating customised solutions for its unique demands. ULMA Packaging recognises the critical role of high-performance packaging lines in this sector, as James Couldwell, managing director of ULMA Packaging UK, explains.

Quality packaging is the cornerstone of the meat processing industry. It demands impeccable presentation, product longevity, market-leading speeds, optimal efficiency and uncompromising hygiene standards. The products vary widely, from primal cuts, fillets, minced meat to hamburgers, poultry and processed meats.

For meat processors, success often hinges on seemingly simple decisions: the choice of packaging machinery, for example. These machines must consistently deliver high-integrity, quality packs, shift after shift and year after year.

With this understanding, ULMA emphasises the importance for industry stakeholders to meticulously assess their packaging strategies. Close collaboration with machinery operators is vital to ensure the best possible performance is achieved and maintained.

With rising costs of goods, energy and the continuous strain on supply chains, businesses must adapt and evolve. Another key factor in this evolution is the ever-growing emphasis on sustainability, which has graduated from being a mere 'nice-to-have' to an absolute essential - one of the reasons why ULMA launched its #ULMAweCare initiative.

In the midst of this evolving landscape, ULMA Packaging stands out for its ability to provide the widest variety of machinery suiting all applications and products. Their experience spanning over six decades, coupled with their representation in over 130 countries, solidifies their position as a leading Spanish-based co-operative.

Traysealing

Key to ULMA's success is its employment of product specialists dedicated to different sectors, including the meat industry.

This approach has enabled the company to develop cutting-edge innovative packaging solutions to processors, including its market-leading traysealing range.

With all models made of stainless steel in a closed-frame design, ULMA's traysealers are durable, practical and high-performing, while being flexible for format changes and adaptable to different packaging systems. The range's smooth surfaces limit dirt build-up, making cleaning easier, and all models achieve the IP65 rating as standard. The machine is easily accessible for maintenance, with belt cleaning and tooling changeovers possible without tools, further enhancing practicality.

The compatibility of ULMA traysealers with multiple mediums, including polyester, carton, cardboard and aluminium, also means it is well-placed for meat processors looking to cut down on plastic use. ULMA's LeafSkin™ and LeafMap™ - green packaging solutions developed under ULMA's #ULMAweCare sustainability initiative is compatible with this machinery range. Using a 100% recyclable flat cardboard tray incorporating an 'easy open' corner to remove the lid and a 'recycling' corner to separate the different materials and make the recycling process easier, and allows for plastic reductions of up to 80%.

ULMA's traysealers utilise their continuous motion control synchronisation system that feeds trays continually, making them the fastest on the market.

By using gentle and progressive movements, the control ensures maximum product stability and accurate positioning of trays in the sealing area. This allows for throughputs of up to 300 trays per minute at a cadence of 25 cycles/pm with sealing and cutting, and 20 cycles/pm using vacuum or MAP.

Thermoforming

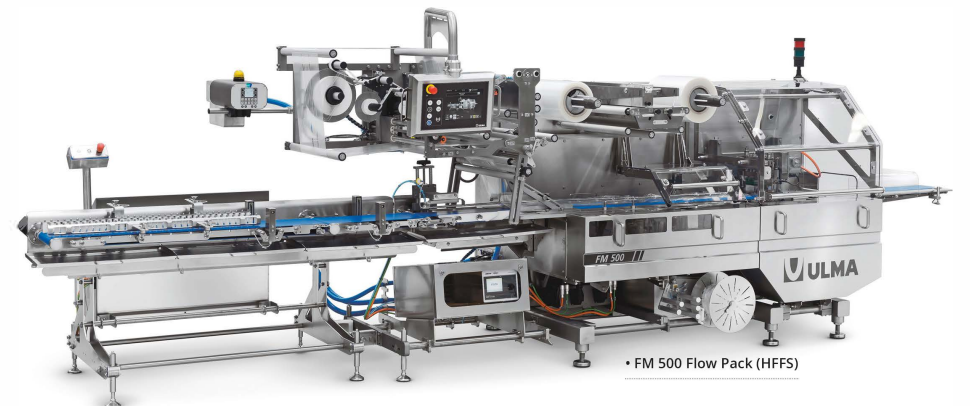
ULMA's thermoformers for the meat processor market are designed to perform to the most stringent food hygiene requirements. Alongside this, the company can provide turnkey solutions that incorporate slicing and automatic loading and unloading, thereby ensuring the best possible packaging speed and efficiency.



Thermoforming machinery is compatible with multiple packaging methods, including vacuum and MAP methods, skin packs or even bespoke shapes. ULMA offers a range of solutions, from their entry-level TFS80, measuring just over two metres and ideal for flexible films, to the more advanced TFS 700XL which can extend beyond 20 metres and is compatible with both flexible and rigid materials. The entire range can be customised to include printers, labellers, vision systems, automatic feeding systems and robotic product loading, ensuring maximum line efficiency.

Flow wrappers

Flow wrapping machine technology is widely used in the meat processing sector and is constantly evolving. ULMA offers a range of flow wrapping machines, suitable for single components to highly complex, fully integrated packaging lines. The machines range in size from the FM200 to FM500 and come with a variety of options including top and bottom reel holders, twin reel holders with auto splicing and integration of coding and labelling units to name a few. All of the FM range are capable of packing fresh food products with modified atmosphere (MAP) to extend their shelf life.



Technical innovation in ULMA's flow wrapper range means further sustainability and efficiency gains can be made regardless of product size. For example, the company has developed installation designs allowing the removal of plastic trays in minced meat packaging. This innovation, which uses MAP, enables processors to make substantial material savings of up to 70% while also protecting products with no discolouration, leakage or compromise on shelf life.

Verticals

Vertical packaging machines are often used to package frozen products such as mince, poultry and sausages; as well as fresh items including chicken pieces, legs, wings and thighs. Applicable for frozen items and also compatible with the MAP method for cooked and ready-to-eat items, a key benefit of this range is that they can pack both naked and marinated products and powder can even be dropped into the pack so meat can marinate in transit to the customer. ULMA offers a wide range of machinery with intermittent and continuous motion options available, depending on the solution.

ULMA's vertical wrappers have a feature called Tight-Bag™. This feature helps maintain food quality and optimises bag volume. Tight-Bag™ doesn't contaminate food products because it uses a patented jaw arrangement in the cross-seal area to extract excess air from each pack. It ensures that products are packed efficiently and minimises the risk of damage during transit.



• VTI 640 Vertical (VFFS)

It also provides the ability to fit more product in each pack, or replicate an existing pack and use less film, which in return helps reduce operational costs.

ULMA offers a range of models that can be upgraded to an IP66 rating. Additionally, their machines feature a patented design allowing for convenient and safe product changeovers by changing the forming tube from the side of the machine. This design makes it easier and safer to switch between different products.

Automation: UPA


With the energy crisis and rising goods prices continuing to affect all industries, making operations more efficient has never been more pressing. Further compounding this is the availability of cost-effective labour in the UK meat industry. Taking these pressures into account, automation remains an attractive option for processors, especially as technology has advanced in production environments.

Subsequently, ULMA Packaging's unique ability to leverage the skillsets of partner companies within the global ULMA organisation makes it well-placed to offer complete automation end-of-line processes alongside its machinery offering. This encompasses multiple options, including case erectors, case distribution and logistics, automatic loading equipment, quality control and case packing.

These options are multi-format and distribute packed boxes through a transport system to the end of the packaging line, even when this is located on another factory floor. End-of-line operations can be further automated with robot-based case packers, removing the need for manual handling.

Industry 4.0: UPC and myULMA

Packaging machine performance remains an ongoing priority for meat processors throughout its lifetime, which is why ULMA has taken steps to ensure its packaging solutions are as intuitive as possible. All solutions are equipped with ULMA's proprietary UPC control system that provides machine performance data onscreen through a simple, intuitive and configurable HMI.

Additionally, using the myULMA platform, operators can access full technical manuals, order parts, review OEE, receive remote support and access SOP/training videos onscreen for instructions on using, maintaining and cleaning the machine. This feature sets ULMA apart and it's free of charge. 

"ULMA has taken steps to ensure its packaging solutions are as intuitive as possible."



To find out more, contact **01909 506 504**, email sales@ulmapackaging.co.uk, visit www.ulmapackaging.co.uk/en/packaging-solutions/meat or scan the QR code.

Innovation that matters

Omori's UK division talks to *Meat Management* about the company's latest innovations and plans for the future, following a major restructure.

“Our goals are clear: we want to grow the business as we have been doing over the last few years, with the help of our key suppliers; and, without a shadow of a doubt, we want to make Omori the best-selling flow wrapping manufacturer in Europe. That is the ultimate goal for us,” said Chris Keenan, sales director at Omori UK.

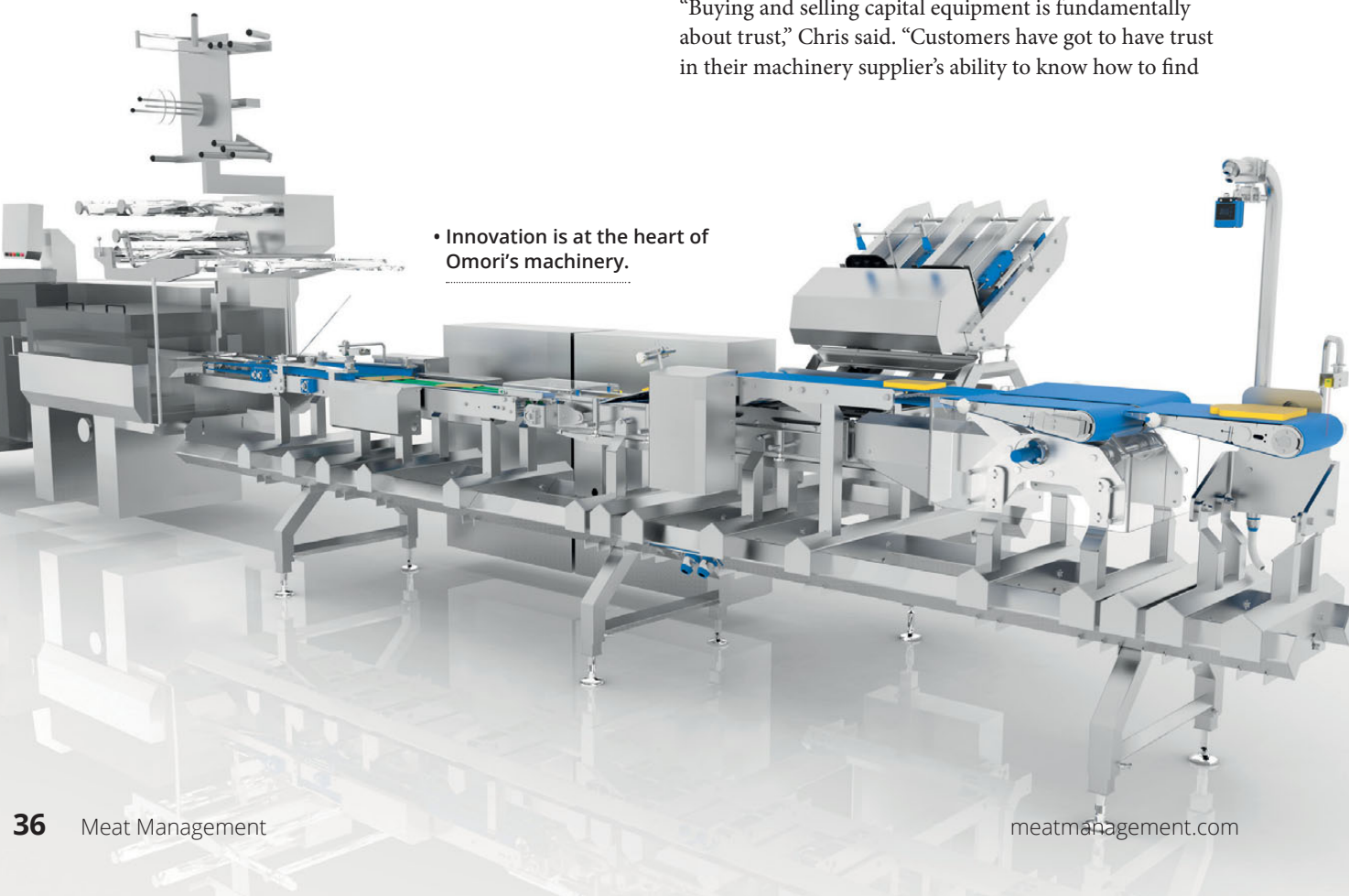
The last few years for the machinery manufacturer have been defined by forward thinking. Having acquired the Selo Group in

2015, Omori Machinery has undergone a series of strategic transformations that have seen two distinct divisions of the company created as a result: Omori Europe and Omori UK. Some would say that the Selo-Omori merger was inevitable given the companies' close relationship over the years. When Selo decided to start importing equipment from overseas back in 1979, that's when a lasting partnership with the global brand began.

Whilst Omori's UK branch may have a new image, the principles of quality and innovation remain unchanged. Its team of seasoned directors and senior management staff have been with the company for years, and over that time have accumulated a wealth of insight into the food manufacturing market.

“Buying and selling capital equipment is fundamentally about trust,” Chris said. “Customers have got to have trust in their machinery supplier's ability to know how to find

• Innovation is at the heart of Omori's machinery.



• The company's UK headquarters is located in Bromborough, Wirral.

solutions to difficult problems. Omori's experience operating in the market allows us to understand what is required to create an efficient, modern food production facility.”

Reliability is key

Chris, who has been working with the Omori brand for nearly 30 years, says that there are two core elements of its machinery that he's been particularly impressed by over the years: its reliability and pack presentation.

Omori's range of flowrappers are suitable for packaging a variety of products including gas flushed packs, which require high quality hermetic seals. Using European components such as Siemens, Lenze and Festo, their fully stainless-steel construction means that its flowrappers can be installed in damp areas and can be equipped with a buffer system for automatic loading. It is also possible to add various accessories to the basic version of the packaging machines, including various infeed systems.

The manufacturer's stretch wrappers are Servo motor driven and are the market leaders for handling shock-free stretch film. These wrapping machines are for packaging and sealing products in a tray at high speed. The machines are equipped with a unique fold foil flap folding system for an attractive packaging presentation.

As well as designing and producing their own equipment Omori also represents Leepack, one of the world's leading manufacturers of filling and sealing machines for preformed bags. Its selection of packaging machines can

process preformed bags from 100 grams to 5 kilos. Customers can also change from flat bags to doypacks and from doypacks to block bottom bags in a click of a button.

Tailored solutions

It must be said that the manufacturer's success doesn't solely come from the cutting-edge spec on its equipment, but also from the staff at the heart of its operation. Omori's in-house design team are meticulous in their approach to product development. Chris explained: “It's a real partnership that we have with the customer in developing a system that works for them. We'll sit down with them and tailor an approach around their needs, their products, how much space they have, what the application is etc. It's really a combination of their knowledge and our own expertise.”

As part of their tailored solutions, the Omori team also offer retrofit and upgrade options on top of a range of flexible service contracts.

“Our service contracts have increased dramatically over the last few years,” said Chris. “We offer contracts that take into consideration the type of machine the customer has, how often it is being used and the type of environment it is working in, amongst other factors. The bottom line: our contracts are tailored to suit the customer's requirements.”

For Chris, service contracts are “win-win” for both the customer and the supplier. He said: “Whilst we are able to keep in regular contact with our customers, the buyer can maintain their machines to a certain standard so that they run at their optimum level.”

• Omori's customers include a supplier to one of the UK's biggest supermarkets.



Through contracts, we can also provide full traceability which is particularly handy when a customer has to produce audits or gather data for BLC inspections. In these instances, we can provide them with the correct, up-to-date paperwork that they need.”

The company has also heavily invested in its demonstration site, making it easier for customers to ‘try before they buy’. Located in Merseyside, Omori UK’s site offers customers the chance to experiment with different packaging options and realise their final product.

Chris explained: “You can show customers brochures and videos of the equipment, but there is nothing better than being stood in front of a machine. Using their materials, the customer can see their product being made first-hand.”

Reducing costs

The manufacturer prides itself on the success of its projects with its industry-leading clients. In recent times, Omori had the pleasure of working with a key supplier of cooked, sliced meats for one of the UK’s biggest supermarkets. The supplier’s research and development team concluded that consumers weren’t keen on the amount of plastic used in their product’s packaging at the time, and that a change in approach was needed. Their research found that the customer wanted a paper-bag style pack, something reminiscent of that produced in a traditional butcher’s shop. Another key requirement was that the pack had to be reliable and resealable.

With the brief finalised, Omori UK’s team got to work. Its team hosted weekly meetings with the customer to design a pack that met their requirements and could be easily incorporated into their existing line. The result: Omori was able to reduce the amount of plastic in the pack by around 50%; reduce labour costs through automation; and reduce power consumption within the factory by around 50% as well.

Saving on labour and energy

Ongoing labour shortages and the rising cost of production are, unfortunately, two major issues hindering manufacturers operating today. Having fewer people needed on the line, with less energy-intensive machinery, to produce the same or better volumes is a real asset now.


• Omori’s reclose flowrapper.



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Chris said: “Omori’s flow wrapping machines consume considerably less energy than conventional packaging machines, such as lid sealers and thermoformers. The latter uses a large huge vacuum system that requires huge amounts of energy to run. Flow wrapping is an ideal way for manufacturers to automate efficiently as there are savings to be made on both energy consumption and labour.”

According to Omori, a core attribute of ‘good packaging’ is that it not only ensures that the food retains the desired quality throughout its shelf life, but also that it can reduce waste. Chris explained that the company made “a conscious decision” around 10 years ago to take significant steps towards improving its environmental footprint. He added: “I’m pleased to say that we are doing just that, by producing more environmentally friendly retail packs with less plastic.

“We’re also reducing our consumers’ use of secondary packaging (such as cling film and tin foil coverings) by ensuring products are reliable and resealable. Manufacturing our machines in Europe means that we aren’t shipping equipment from around the world and adding unnecessary ‘carbon miles’ onto our products. Sustainability, for us, comes down to a combination of small but effective measures that ensure our machines are both financially and environmentally efficient.” 

For more information on Omori UK, contact Chris Keenan on uk@omori.eu or visit www.omori.eu

Developing new markets and new products

We take a look at Frontmatec Accles & Shevoke a year on from the business joining the Frontmatec portfolio.

The last 18 months have been a period of consolidation, investment and development for the manufacturers of captive bolt stunners, Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke.

In May last year, Accles & Shelvoke became part of the Frontmatec family – a Danish company supplying the global red meat and pork slaughter and processing sector through companies such as Attec, ITEC, Carometec, Frontmatec and SFK LEBLANC.

Having previously been part of a group whose main focus was outside the meat processing sector, Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke has now found itself within a company with aspirations to be the number one supplier in the red meat and pork processing industry.

And with this support, Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke has been able to invest in its Birmingham factory, develop new products, seek out new markets and distributors and find marketing support at trade shows around the world.

Global growth

The company already has 44 distributors worldwide and ships its products to 60 countries with markets in the US, Australia and China as well as Europe.

However, it is now targeting the growth markets across the globe.

“We have gone south and east targeting the growth markets,” said Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke’s vice president of bolt stunning, Joe Holland.

“We are going into Brazil, which has taken over from the US as the biggest beef producer and we are investing in the infrastructure there.”

Holland said that while the US has been the company’s largest market with millions of pounds’ worth of sales, the developing markets have until now seen low sales.

However, by investing in these countries and seeking distributors in places such as Brazil, China and Russia, Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke aims to increase its sales base.

Holland explained that being part of Frontmatec was helping the business to establish itself in these new markets.



One aspect that has to be addressed in the Russian market is that while there is not a problem in exporting stunners into Russia there are difficulties with cartridges. However as there are already existing trade routes between China and Russia, and Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke has some expertise already in China, there are opportunities to ease the problem.

The company is in discussions to establish a distributorship in China and is also in discussions in Argentina. It has recently just signed a new distributorship in Canada.

New products

Part of the recent investment in the company has seen Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke develop and launch several new products.

One of the developments is a long handled tool that clamps on to the stunner.

The CASH Magnum Long Handle provides reach and accessibility and has been designed to be used with all new and old CASH Magnum stunning tools.

The robust construction of the handle comes from its all metallic body and the hexagonal cap screws provide secure fixing of the CASH Magnum tool, which gives a reliable long-lasting accessory for the stunning tool.

The firing operation is achieved through a trigger mechanism located at the base of the handle.

Holland said that the tool is designed to be used if an animal has fallen in the stunning box and it enables the operator to stun the animal without having to lean into the stun box.

The long hand attachment improves the welfare for the animal as well as making the operation safer and easier for the operator.

Another development that has recently reached the market is the CASH Special XL stunner, which is an ergonomic pistol shaped cartridge powered humane stunning tool suitable for use on heavy animals.

The Magnum XL stunner, with its none-retracting free flight bolt, delivers the strongest possible stun using the 6 grain .25 calibre red cartridge produce 667 joules of energy. This combination can stun the largest livestock, including cattle such as large bulls ,buffalo, bison and very heavy sows and boars.

The Cash Special XL pistol shaped tool with trigger fired tool is easily operated and designed to withstand the greater performance and pressures involved.



Holland explained that the more grains that the stunner has improves the velocity of the stunner and by using a 4.5 grain cartridge, it increases the speed of the stun, significantly reducing the pain and improving the animal welfare aspects of the slaughter process as well as increasing the production efficiency on the line.

While improving the animal welfare and reducing the stress to the animal, it will also help to improve the meat quality.

One UK based slaughterer that is using the CASH Special XL stunner said: “This new tool is the .25 Cash Special XL and is specifically intended for use on very heavy cattle, bulls and sows in conjunction with the newly-developed .25 Green 4.5 grain power load.

“This stunning tool delivers 100 per cent knockout on every stun and gives the slaughterer complete confidence in its application.

“The new ergonomic pistol grip is a definite improvement on earlier models with excellent grip characteristics ensuring minimal hand slippage at point of stun.

“The introduction of this new stunning tool proves that Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke is fully committed to product development and demonstrates level of performance expected of a world leader in their field.” said Holland.

A third new development to come on to the market is the CASH Captive Bolt Stun Check.

• Accurate stunning performance is measured and validated with the CASH Captive Bolt Stun Check.





- CASH Captive Bolt Stun Check is compatible with all CASH Captive Stunners.

The CASH Captive Bolt Stun Check measures the precise velocity of the penetrative captive bolt to determine its effectiveness within specified tolerances.

The device ensures that the stunner meets animal welfare regulations that require the stunning tools are working efficiently and effectively every time and are compliant with the legislation.

The stun check device supports all existing CASH penetrative stunning tools and produces measurable data for the requirements of an animal welfare audit.

The device is designed to be used wirelessly via Bluetooth with a tablet and PC and is provided with an Android tablet pre-loaded with the compatible software and Microsoft Windows compatible PC software; both pre-configured for the CASH Stunning Tool of the user's choice. It also comes with on-device visual indication of stun check.

With global growth in the pipeline, new products and a fresh online presence the future is looking nothing but positive for Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke.

Holland said that the device enables the slaughterer to be able to tell the vet the velocity of the stunner before stunning.

It will also be able to help the operator recognise whether the stunner needs to be cleaned or whether there are worn parts according to the speed and efficiency of the stunner seen in the check.

One further development that Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke is currently looking at is a multi-stunner, where the cartridges

are on a belt. The new stunner is expected to be launched in January and could fit in with other aspects of the Frontmatec developments, which are focused on robotics.

Holland said that a stunner on a robotic arm could be seen as friendlier as an animal will see a man as a predator but will not be so alarmed by a robotic arm, reducing stress and improving animal welfare.

Since becoming part of Frontmatec, Accles & Shelvoke has also seen around £100,000 worth of investment at its Birmingham factory in Sutton Coldfield. The investment has been in a diamond turning grinding machine that gives the parts an ultra-smooth finish.

The company has also invested in making the plant more accessible to its 22 employees, easing communication for the staff.

Refreshed website

Another development has been in the company's website, moving from a UK based website to Frontmatec's global site. The site now houses not only all the product information, but also sales sheets, training manuals, training videos, CE certificates as well as information about the history of the company and staff.

And as part of the push into the growth markets the product information has been translated into the languages of those markets – Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese and Russian.

"The website keeps our customers and distributors up to date with all the shows we have been going to," said Holland.

"It re-establishes us with our distributors."

From speaking to Holland it is clear that, with global growth in the pipeline, new products and a fresh online presence the future is looking nothing but positive for Frontmatec Accles & Shelvoke. 