

HY Tech Comp

Robots covering the night shift at Estonian sheet metal plant

HyTech Comp, located just off the Tallinn ring road in Estonia, is a **thin sheet metal components producer for the electronics industry, fully focused on export and using robots in the manufacturing process.** The company operated under the name Hyrles until recently, when the brand was revamped to better describe the company's focus on international markets. HyTech Comp's CEO Urmo Sisask says that they are 100 per cent committed to international subcontracting – their entire production is shipped to the rest of the world. "Around 60 per cent of our production goes directly to our foreign clients and the remaining 40 per cent is exported by our clients based in Estonia, such as ABB and Enics. The key question about subcontracting is how to position yourself in the global value chain and we're proud to say that HyTech Comp ranks pretty high up there," believes Sisask.

The sheet metal manufacturer's core strength lies in using modern technology and a high level of automation and digitalisation in the production process. **Like many other Estonian companies, HyTech Comp is convinced that the main value proposition of local businesses stems from their flexibility, driven by the limited size of the domestic market.** "Internationalisation is a key motivation for us, because our home market simply isn't big enough for us, therefore we have to aim for export markets in order to survive. Finland has essentially become our home market – while there are many SMEs in the sheet metal business there, they lack the ambition to export. This is where our focus on export markets becomes a clear advantage, not to mention the flexibility to quickly react to customer demands at competitive pricing levels."

GOOD PARTNERSHIPS NEVER SINK

Rather than selling a particular product, HyTech Comp puts their efforts into building long-term and trustworthy partnerships with their clients. At the same time the company is happy to jump into new business ventures and engage in high-potential projects. Together with engineers from MEC Marine Engineering and top scientists from Estonia's famed technical university TalTech, HyTech Comp is currently working on developing a prototype for an unmanned autonomous vessel called NYMO, but they have also partnered with the likes of Cleveron

and Skeleton Technologies – two Estonian companies currently taking on the world in their respective fields of automated parcel delivery and supercondensators.

One limiting factor to the operating range of metal processing companies is the high transportation cost of metal products, which can form a considerable part of the final cost. **"The uniqueness of the product and company's competitive edge can widen the delivery area a lot further,** we have managed to extend our range to 1500 kilometres, with clients in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and some contacts even in Switzerland, Germany and France," **notes Sisask, who considers entering the Danish market as one of the greatest success stories in the company's history.** "Timing was everything in this instance, as we happened to be in the right place at the right time and were able to step in when the client was facing some issues with the previous supplier. This opened the door to us and this Danish customer has become one of our TOP 3 clients during the past four years, with a continuous focus on further developing our partnership and jointly working on new products," explains Sisask.

FLUENT IN EACH CLIENT'S LANGUAGE

Sisask believes that **the cornerstone of success** lies in speaking the same language as the client. And although Estonians are very fluent at speaking different languages, it's not the linguistic aspect that he considers important, but rather the special industry jargon. "We need to be professional enough to be able to understand and interpret all processes and related terminology exactly in the same way as the client. This is why we have invested heavily in building our professional expertise and quality management,



all the way from gaining ISO-certificates to implementing LEAN production principles." Clients who have come to visit HyTech Comp in Tallinn have been positively surprised by the modern production facilities and the business culture in Estonia. **"We need to keep our house tidy in order to achieve success, we simply can't afford letting loose for a single moment," stresses Sisask.**

What customers are actually looking for in a sheet metal production partner is the **manufacturing capacity**. And the good people at HyTech Comp do not even bat an eyelid when yet another customer asks about their capacity and production volumes. "We grow organically together with our clients and avoid going all-out on sales pitches. What we promise, we deliver." **Efficiency at HyTech Comp is driven by IT-innovation and the implementation of digital solutions to speed up production processes**, such as a the electronic pre-production preparation. Smart devices allow the company to monitor everything from overall equipment efficiency to labour efficiency.

WHAT'S WITH THE HIGH MOTIVATION, ESTONIANS?

Sisask says that **Estonian employees are very motivated** and eager to respond to overtime requests. "We strive to ensure modern and comfortable working conditions for our staff and as a result that are no human-caused work interruptions - this allows us to be more open to special assignments and projects." Officially the HyTech Comp manufacturing plant works in two shifts, but the night-shift is actually covered by robots.

Companies in a country the size of Estonia can not afford to keep to themselves and avoid cooperation with

others - everybody knows each other and this has lead to some fruitful cooperation projects under the Federation of Estonian Engineering Industry, ranging from joint projects to global marketing efforts. "Estonians can be characterised by an innovative approach to problem-solving and an amazing ability to adapt to changing circumstances, as past history has taught us to reach quickly to changes. We are keen to jump aboard new ideas and no-one is stuck in dogmatic thinking patterns. **This is why Estonia has already given the world four technology "unicorns" - Bolt, Skype, Playtech and Transferwise,**" stresses Sisask.

