

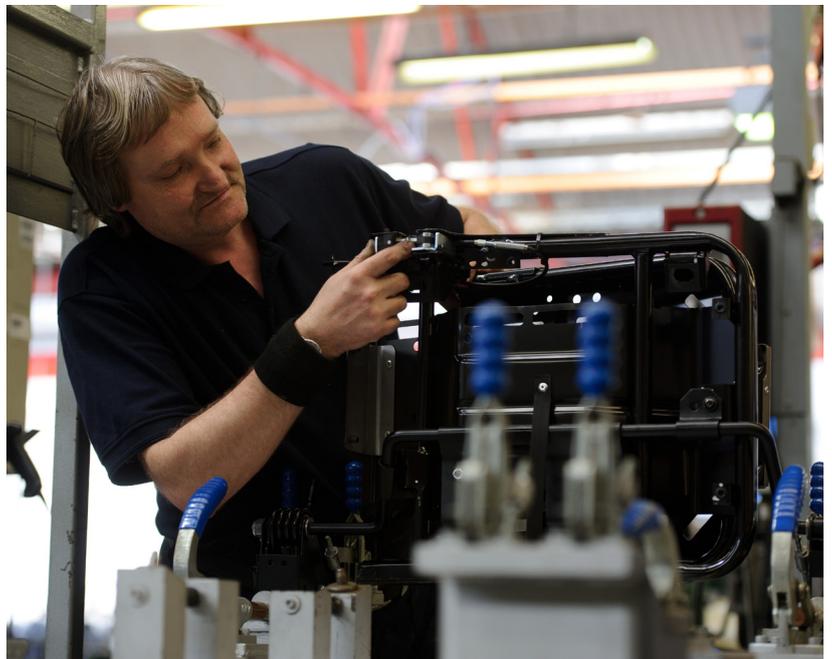
Lantek Expert

CabAuto chose Lantek Expert CAD/CAM when it needed to move its laser cutting processes in house. Based in Tipton, West Midlands, CabAuto, specializes in the manufacture of seating and interior trim for automotive, rail and marine applications. In particular it has produced the parcel shelf for the Jaguar XF, molded carpets and headliners for Aston Martin and seating, headliners and bespoke storage solutions for the Land Rover Defender.

lantek Case Study: CabAuto



Previously the company subcontracted all its laser cutting operations, but for commercial reasons needed to start cutting parts at its own factory. The solution it chose was a Bystronic laser from World Machinery and Lantek Expert CAD/CAM to nest the parts and create the CNC programs. Lee Macdonald, Manufacturing Engineer explains, "The principal project which the Lantek system is used on is the manufacture of seating components for the Land Rover Defender making between 10,000 and 15,000 parts each week. Material ranges from 1 to 8mm thick in steel, aluminium and hypress steel.



Once the components have been cut the parts are formed, welded and assembled, to make the seat frames. Due to the fast moving and cost sensitive nature of our business, we need to achieve rapid and reliable CNC programming and high levels of material utilization."

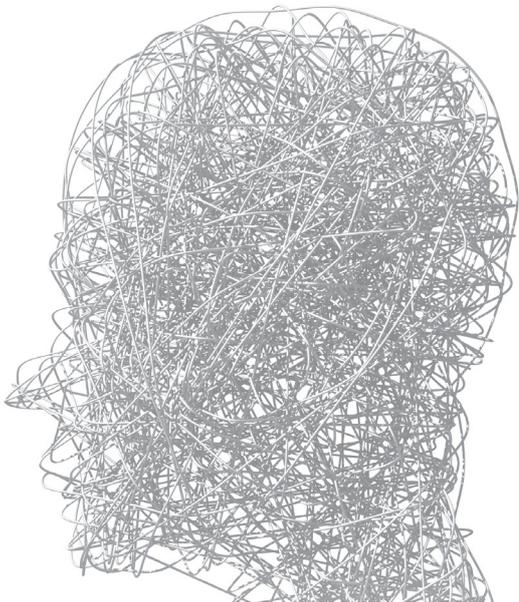
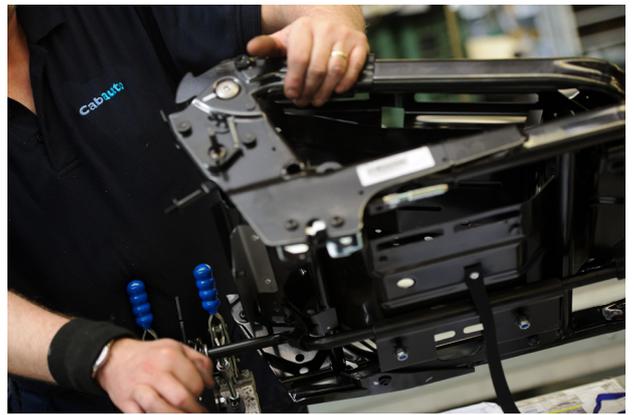
Lantek Expert allows both automatic and manual nesting and its parallel processing technology enables it to take advantage of the latest multi-processor computer hardware, producing speed improvements of at least 30%. During nesting, the system considers material type and thickness and can manage kits of parts, nesting parts within one another if possible, and manage the reuse of offcuts, through a database, to optimize material utilization. Lee Macdonald adds, "The automatic nesting is very useful indeed. It automatically arranges our parts in the most efficient way. For offcuts, Lantek Expert labels these so that they can be easily identified for the nesting of smaller batches of components, maximizing our efficiency."

During the cutting process, Lantek Expert can create micro joints to hold parts into the sheet for easier manipulation and unloading, and it can also perform common line cutting where appropriate. By using these features, companies can save both material and time, by reducing wasted moves on the laser, increasing the number of parts in a sheet, and speeding up the handling of components once they have been cut. If required, the software can also mark each part during cutting so that it can be easily identified during subsequent assembly operations.

New in the latest version of the software, is the ability to string together several commands enabling cutting to be activated with one mouse click. Whole sequences from importing CAD data to nesting, material selection, programming, and report generation can all be joined together into one operation. CabAuto dynamically nests its requirements for the week each Monday morning. Lee Macdonald explains, "Lantek saves a lot of programming time as you press one button and the nesting is done for you. It saves us having to have a full time person manually nesting our weekly requirement of parts. Our laser operative receives the schedule on Monday morning, which is between 10,000 and 15,000 components for the week, by early afternoon programming is complete and time can be spent on other productive tasks."

Lantek Expert's intuitive and ergonomic interface makes operation and training fast and easy. Lee Macdonald says, "The installation and training provided by Lantek was excellent. The training was thorough and enjoyable and broken down into digestible sections, without any fancy jargon. We have three people fully trained in Lantek Expert and we all find it very straightforward to use and we understand and can utilize all its features. After sales support is excellent too, whenever we have a query there is always someone on the other end of the phone to resolve your issue."

Around half of the metalwork at CabAuto is cut by laser and goes through Lantek Expert. Lee Macdonald says, "We chose Lantek Expert for its comprehensive features and the great support. It has delivered everything we hoped for and has all the tools that we could want. Without it, it would be difficult to make the volume of parts we produce so easily."



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