

Steelcase Chooses Single-Supplier Responsibility for Transfer Press Purchase.



This new press/transfer system at Steelcase Inc. provides increased production speed and flexibility.

Steelcase Inc. (Grand Rapids, MI) needed to increase transfer press capacity at its Systems 1 Plant. At the same time, the company wanted to have a press dedicated to production of these parts on a just-in-time basis, with smaller order quantities and reduced work-in-process.

"We selected Minster to provide the press and transfer equipment because we felt that single-supplier responsibility was important," explains Systems 1 Supervisor Hal Berrier. "And our experience with the

four Minster presses in our plant had been good."

The SE4-500 press has a die space measuring 192" x 84" and a stroke of 20 inches. The three-axis Minster/GPA transfer is cam driven and provides motorized, push-button adjustment of transfer pitch over a range from 12 to 48 inches. The press operates at 25 strokes-per-minute, with a transfer pitch of 24 inches.

Operation of the transfer is enhanced by a unique drive design. Through gearing, transfer drive speed is increased above press speed. The drive is

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brought to both ends of the transfer, where drive speed is reduced to again match press speed. This design minimizes the required size of transfer drive shafting and gearing, but most importantly, it reduces any backlash or vibration in the transfer . . . permitting smoother travel and higher speeds.

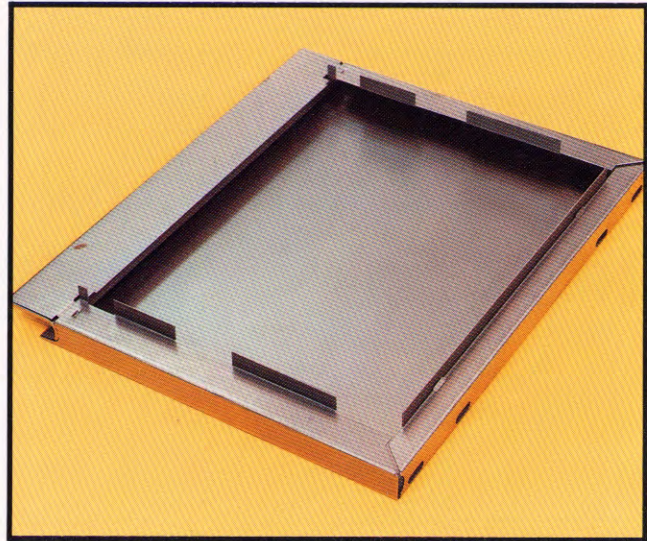
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“The Minster/GPA transfer is a good design,” says Hal Berrier. “Our people felt that it promised trouble-free operation and, at the same time, provided us with the guarantee that we could run the speeds we wanted.”

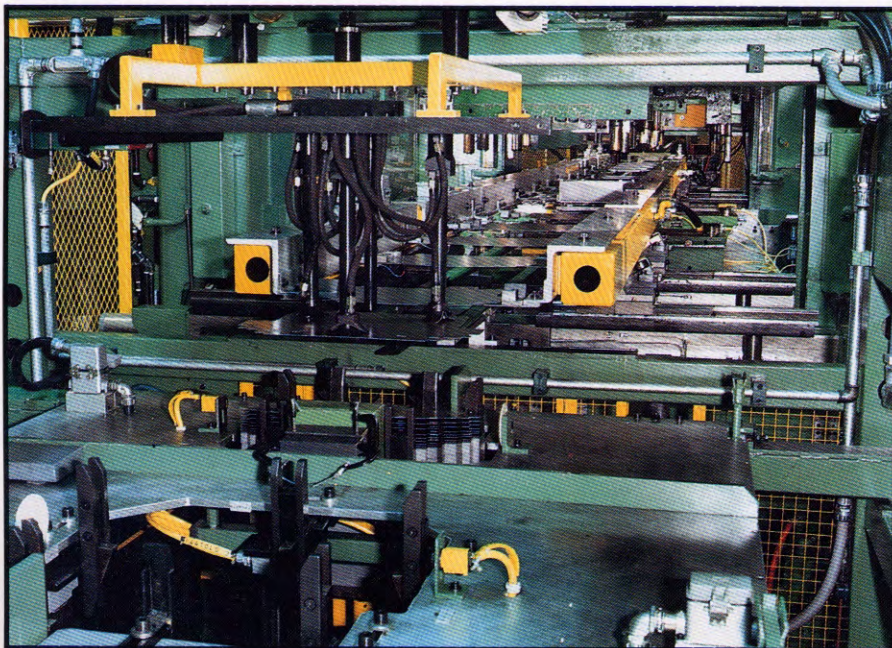
To facilitate quick changeover, hydraulic clamping was provided in the bed and slide of the press. Dies are set-up on bolster plates stationed next to the press, with the bolster and die interchanged between stations and press by a powered, rail-guided cart. The center sections of the transfer bars quickly unclamp and stay with the die, further speeding changeover.

“Instead of running a part for several days,” says Berrier, “we plan to make changes daily to match demand in assembly. Our goal is to make the complete change from one part to the next in 30 minutes.”

The new press system in the Systems 1 Plant is the latest example of a long working relationship between Minster and Steelcase. In the words of Bob North, supervisor-large press at Systems 1, “Our Minster presses have always given us good service with very little downtime, and if there ever is a problem, Minster stands behind their product without balking.”



This box drawer head is produced in an eight-station die designed and built by Steelcase.



Blanks are fed continuously to the Minster/GPA transfer. Transfer pitch on this part is 24 inches at a press speed of 25 strokes-per-minute.