



## DKW Engineering, Portsmouth

# UK subcontractor turns tables on Chinese



Four years ago, Portsmouth-based contract machinist, DKW Engineering, lost 40 per cent of its business to China, most of it simple turning and milling work. Today, direct exports to that country account for 15 per cent of DKW's turnover and the lost business has been largely replaced by higher-added-value contracts for more complex components.

Many subcontractors have found that the answer to competition from low-wage countries is to move away from manually operated machine tools to one-hit production on CNC lathes and machining centres. This is exactly what DKW's managing director, Nick Iacobucci has done.

Since 1997 he has decommissioned 60 cam automatics and replaced them with seven sliding-head mill-turning centres of 12/16, 20 and 32 mm capacity from Star Micronics GB.

DKW's engineering manager, Jerry Acres, commented that HPC greatly assists unattended machining of stainless steel, which accounts for two thirds of the Portsmouth subcontractor's output.

Experience with the latest Star SR-20R II has shown that **surface turning speeds and feed rates can be increased by as much as 30 per cent** thanks to the ability of the coolant to break up the stringy swarf and dispel the chips efficiently from the working area. The intention is to retrofit HPC to three other similar machines on the shop floor.

DKW regards the uptime of Star lathes as exemplary. The first two – an SR-20 and SR-32 – were installed in April 1997 and have scarcely gone wrong in 10 years. Jerry Acres confirms that these and all of the other Star lathes hardly need any unscheduled attention. **"It is incredible - we are still waiting for them to go wrong"**, he said.

*the name in sliding-headstock technology*

**"One-hit mill-turning on the Stars helps us to quote lower prices and make more profit, with 25% fewer staff"**

**Nick Iacobucci**  
Managing Director  
DKW Engineering