



Hayden Kirk with operator Joseph Wiel.

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airTec benefits compelling

Well-known Dunedin firm Ron Kirk Joinery has had the whole range of edgebanders during their 30 year history. Hayden Kirk, son of founder Ron Kirk and now Directing Manager, started as an apprentice 23 years ago. He remembers – not so fondly – his early edgebanding experiences.

“We had one of those hot air guns that heated up the back of the tape, and then we’d spend hours and hours scraping and cleaning to get the final result. It was a big day when we got our first Janssens edgebander, but even then processing and cleaning up a whole kitchen was several days’ work.”

Edgebanding at Ron Kirk Joinery has got more efficient since those early days. From the early 2010s they operated an Ambition 1210 from German edgebanding specialists Brandt (now rebranded Homag). But earlier this year Hayden and the team took another step up the technology ladder, buying a new Homag EDGETEQ S-200 1130AT – becoming the first joinery shop in Dunedin capable of processing laser-edged tape.

“We’ve always kept our eye on developments in technology,” says Hayden, “and we knew laser-edged tape was a technology we’d adopt when Homag’s airTec units came on a model that would suit our size.” The Brandt was running two glue tanks of EVA glue: clear and white. The finish was excellent but Hayden points out that doing their corner rounding on a separate machine was adding time to each kitchen, as well as taking up valuable workshop space. The Homag is much the same size as the previous edgebander, but comes with on-board corner rounding, ensuring their edge processing has sped up, but within a smaller overall footprint in the workshop.

Why did Hayden move to laser-edge tape? “The benefits airTec promised were compelling,” explains Hayden. “Even better, they’ve all turned out to be true. For a start, it seals the board better. There’s no clean up. No excess glue. Also, we can charge a premium for it. And it brings all of our high-gloss work under our control.” This last point is a significant one. “With a lacquered kitchen we were dependent on the painter. Any damage or mistakes found at installation meant getting

a re-cut panel back to the painter. Relying on others affected our timing, and if they were busy there could be significant delays and costs. Now everything is done in-house so stuff like this can be fixed by us, and quickly.”

Hayden and the team are now using laser-edge tape on all components in their kitchens, including the carcasses. They get their Homag serviced regularly by Jacks, and have it set up to enable most of their settings and changes to be adjustable from the controller. “Unless the customer has specifically requested 2mm edging we find it quicker and we get a better result putting everything through at 1mm with airTec,” says Hayden. “There’s really good availability of colours now. We’re even finding some architects specifying high gloss tape.”

It’s not only edgebanding where Ron Kirk Joinery has been an early adopter of technology. Their Format-4 Kappa 550 e-motion saw was the first in NZ to be linked to nesting software – providing a stepping stone to the nesting efficiency they now have with their CNC. “So long as you have good machines and capable staff

in the workshop, the key area for efficiency is the design work,” he says. “With the combination of software we use now, I can show a customer exactly what their kitchen will look like in their house before we even start processing. Given the investment many of our customers are making I think it’s important for them to see what they’re paying for, and so we can get it right for them first time.”

Given how busy the team at Ron Kirk Joinery are, and with their reputation meaning customers keep coming back time after time, it’s clear they’re doing just that – getting things right first time.



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