Chinese machines?
Posted by Mik82 - 2008/03/21 10:05

After a little search on the internet i found out that any cnc machine that is produced in China is a lot cheaper than one with about the same features that is produced in Europe or America.
What is the catch??
Are Chinese machines reliable?

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by beazel - 2008/03/21 14:36

Mass production is the answer, ive seen it.
a circle of cnc machines with a robotic arm in the middle integrated in the program cycle.
rough casting or steel conveyed to first machine, arm positions it into chuck position, retracts, door closes and cycle starts, cycle ends, door opens arm removes part and positions to next machine for next operation and so on and so on until part is finished machined.
Assembly also done with semi robotic integration.

To make a long story short, very low cost of human error and labour, resulting in mass production at half the cost of eurpean countries having to pay for operators, setters, programmers, fetlers and assembly fitters.

Hate to admit it even after ive seen it, but chinese are way way ahead of the rest in manufacturing costs in the engineering process.

There is a company here that runs this kind of fully automated process and alot of people are unhappy and jobless from it.
But the consumer is happy at paying half the price.

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by Mik82 - 2008/03/22 13:24

What about reliability?
Is that right that you get what you pay?
It would be very disappointing to experience major malfunctions from the start just because you saved some money.

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by ivanirons - 2008/03/23 12:38

I have seen it both ways coming from China. Machines made with cheap labor with old machines and tooling. Usually what they produce is cheap, lots of backlash and looks rough. But inexpensive.

The newer trend seems to be the totally automated manufacturing floor. This setup produces far better machines that are superior at times.

It seems China has had a philosophy change happening internally in their manufacturing technology.

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by Mik82 - 2008/03/23 13:08

Yes Ivan i believe you are wright!

A friend of mine recently bought a tool for his photograph machine which was half priced than the European one and was very pleased.

A guy from China came here in Greece and installed it without extra cost!!

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by motorcoach1 - 2008/03/30 11:06

Here in america the Unions have a fit everytime a automated system goes in. but the reality of it is now all the big companies have left and gone over seas to get there work done so much for unions. we could make much of it here but then thers the unions and the mmm what lawyers , mmm what do they know about CNC units? we have EPA they have mmm well nothing, we have consumer protection -they have mmm nata we have OSHA they have mm nata again, so see there not much regulation in china , WE"ER over regulated to the point we put companies out of busness here in america. go figure

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by Dobie - 2008/09/01 08:03

China has come a long way over the past 15 years. Their quality is slowly becoming better. I own several Chinese made machines in my wood shop and I am very satisfied. I know how much I paid for each machine, and because its my hobby, I choose the cheaper machines. If I were buying for my business, I'd need to consider these factors. How much is this machine going to run? Everyday? All day? If it breaks down, how much time until I get the parts I need to get it running again? Are those parts equal in price or more? How about shipping costs on these parts? What if this machine design is discontinued? I could go on and on. If its a machine for your business you need to ask yourself many questions, and weigh all your options.

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by mik82 - 2008/09/01 10:16

Yes Dobie you are right of course.
Since you say that you are satisfied with your Chinese machines do you know any cnc router to suggest?

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by Dobie - 2008/09/02 15:31

I'm sorry Mik, I'm not familiar with cnc routers at all. So I can't make a suggestion about them at all. The machines I do have are from Grizzly Industrial. A vertical bandsaw, a 6" joiner, a mortising machine, and a 12" planer. All have worked well for the past 15 years. Although, I don't run them on a day to day basis, like someone with a business. I do run them as a hobby several hours a week.

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by mik82 - 2008/09/02 16:26

Ok Dobie
Thanks!

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Re:Chinese machines?
Posted by Edwardo - 2008/09/03 22:41

Well, not trying to bash anyone... but!!! i worked in Mongolia for 5 years and a short tour in China. As a example, we use special metal cutting blades on a type of cutting tool that is lowered inside drill pipe to cut it off when it becomes jammed or stuck in the ground, the blades are expensive, but not nearly as expensive as the stuck drill pipe. A businessman from China approached our company saying he could produce and supply these blades in china, that they would be exactly the same as the blades shipped over from America, at a much lower cost of course. To make a long story short, they did look exactly like the other blades, even had the same part # etched into them, but they didnt work... when trying to cut steel with them, they just wore off flat losing its edge in seconds, worse thing was they got mixed in with the good ones and we couldnt tell them appart until they were being used...this is only 1 example of many during that period of my life that has made me to this day look at the tag, sticker, stamp... to see where whatever it is i am buying is from. Thanks but no thanks, i'll pay the extra money and do it rite from the start...
By the way, you can buy a genuine Rolex watch there also for $15.00, maybe buy that first and see how long it lasts before investing in something more pricey, get a feel for the good deal.
EDD

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Re:Chinese machines?

Posted by Edwardo - 2008/09/03 23:00

Well, not trying to bash anyone... but!!! i worked in Mongolia for 5 years and a short tour in China. As a example, we use special metal cutting blades on a type of cutting tool that is lowered inside drill pipe to cut it off when it becomes jammed or stuck in the ground, the blades are expensive, but not nearly as expensive as the stuck drill pipe. A businessman from China approached our company saying he could produce and supply these blades in china, that they would be exactly the same as the blades shipped over from America, at a much lower cost of course. To make a long story short, they did look exactly like the other blades, even had the same part # etched into them, but they didnt work... when trying to cut steel with them, they just wore off flat losing its edge in seconds, worse thing was they got mixed in with the good ones and we couldnt tell them appart until they were being used...this is only 1 example of many during that period of my life that has made me to this day look at the tag, sticker, stamp... to see where whatever it is i am buying is from. Thanks but no thanks, i'll pay the extra money and do it rite from the start...
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Re:Chinese machines?

Posted by chrliev - 2009/11/04 20:35

I have worked for several machine tool companies as an applications engineer including 2 years with a Chinese manufacturer, so I know all the secrets. I don't work in the machine tool industry anymore so I have no axe to grind.

The secret behind Chinese machines or anything from China for that matter is basically very simple. Cheap labor and cheap or even cheaper materials.

Besides the obvious fact that the Chinese workers are paid between 25 cents and $1.00 an hour...

Good and proper CNC machines are made from a very heavy and dense material called meehanite cast iron, castings. The raw castings are called green until they are properly aged which takes at least 4 or 5 years. Most reputable manufacturers just leave them outside during this process, the hot, cold alternating weather does the process very nicely, this investment is expensive. Chinese CNC machines, the ones that are actually made from cast iron at all, are made from a much cheaper and lighter grade of cast iron, we used to call it "Spunj" and the castings are not aged.

The aging of castings allows them to warp or unwarp and twist or untwist naturally as they lose all of their internal stresses. Since the Chinese castings are made into CNC machines before they are allowed to age properly, they are warping and twisting right on your machine shop floor and then, there goes all of your accuracy, sometimes they no longer fit together properly.

Many Chinese machines are not made out of cast iron at all, they are simply fabricated from cheap A36 hot rolled, steel weldments, consequently they are flimsy, light and have little or no rigidity. Many of the machines don't have widely spaced, boxed, turcite (a PTFE) faced ways. Instead they use thin and flimsy bolt on linear bearings instead. The ballscrews are not high precision, they don't have precision pre-loaded double ball nuts to eliminate backlash and somtimes the comp tables in the PLC are extremely high. Modern PLC controllers can only handle backlash comp upto a

point, which can be a new problem all by itself. Warpage and squareness can't be comped by the controller, if your machine cuts crooked parts, and taps break off there is absolutely nothing you can do about it.

If the machine has a tool changer, you can count on it breaking down regularly. The turrets on CNC lathes don't align properly after a very short or heavy usage time because they don't have curvic gear, face couplings.

They do however put a nice coating of Paint (with lead) on the outside so that they look pretty.

If you are a hobbyist, or you are cutting wood or plastics these Chinese machines are just fine but if you are into heavy production oriented machining and make a living doing precision machining I would keep shopping.

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