



OUTSIDE THE BOX

*How a fleet of 24 metalcutting bandsaws cuts tubing and solid bar round stock for big-name companies
by Chase Warner, contributing author, MetalMizer*



Established in 1974, Indianapolis-based Commercial Tube Processing Corp. (CTP) provides customers around the world with high-performance tube assemblies, top-quality metal fabrications and precise weldments. Working with a variety of large-quantity orders to supply well-established companies, including Caterpillar, Volvo and Cummins, CTP also depends on smaller orders that other manufacturers will not fulfill in order to gain business.

Throughout its history, CTP's ability to remain flexible, think outside the box and take on any size job has allowed the company to achieve decades of success in the industry.

CTP provides a range of products for the diesel industry, including over-the-road, off-road, locomotive and military equipment. The company's primary offerings are subassemblies for exhaust systems while also offering internal engine, oil sump,

fuel lines, brake lines and irrigation products for agricultural use.

CTP generally cuts tubing and solid bar round stock from 1/8 in. to 10 in. thick working with a variety of material, such as carbon steel, stainless steel, copper, nickel, brass and aluminum. With the diverse sizes, angled cuts and materials required by customers, CTP relies on MetalMizer metalcutting bandsaws to provide quality products for the global market.

KEY ATTRIBUTES

The MetalMizer saw was invented in 1985 when sawmill equipment manufacturer, Wood-Mizer, wanted a metalcutting saw to produce its premium product. The hands-on fabricators at Wood-Mizer wished their cutoff saw would tilt a little bit forward, cut at a 45 degree angle in either direction, have finite adjustments on the feed force and offer all of this conveniently without a bunch of bells and whistles.



Optional heavy-duty infeed and outfeed tables on the MetalMizer MV2018 provide material handling solutions for optimum material flow.

The fabricators went on to invent the MetalMizer MV2018 saw that is now used by manufacturers around the world, including CTP, to fulfill fabrication, production, maintenance, and research and development needs.

"The reliability, low maintenance, ease of setup, flexibility and small footprint are key attributes of MetalMizer," says Steve Lang, production supervisor at

CTP. "In the 1980s, we purchased a machine for our sheet metal division and it performed well so we bought a couple for tubing and it's gone on from there."

Today, CTP runs 24 MetalMizer MV2018 bandsaws. CTP also produces many prototypes for its customers, which may require only one or two pieces to test. →



MetalMizer's cutting head features a 0 degree to 3 degree adjustment forward tilt to optimize feed rate on entry when cutting structurals and 0 degrees for notching.



"The MetalMizer saw, with the ease of setup, means we can knock that job out quickly," Lang says. "Why set up a laser for two pieces?"

Two MetalMizer saws are set up in the prototype department specifically for their versatility. Together, the saws operate five days a week, running half a shift cutting one or two pieces at a time with different setups and requirements for each job. Because CTP doesn't do more than four or five pieces at a time, Lang says the

flexibility of the MetalMizer saws are a great fit for the prototype department.

Each of CTP's 24 MetalMizer MV2018 saws offers a cutting capacity up to 18 in. wide and up to 20 in. high. However, with the machine's unique design that includes the motor drive system on the upper wheel, overall depth of the saws is 30 percent less than comparable units. →

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*Steve Lang, production supervisor,
Commercial Tube Processing Corp.*



The head-mounted variable-frequency drive motor simplifies the drive mechanism to allow the use of a highly efficient, infinitely variable powertrain for cutting performance.



The MetalMizer cutting head includes a counterbalanced tilting saw head with pre-stop detents located at both 45 degree angles and at the vertical position for fast and easy operator adjustment any time a vertical or miter cut is needed for the job.

“Whether it’s a single angle or a compound angle miter cut, the saw head flexibility and table surface can get us an accurate cut,” Lang says.

FLEXIBLE APPROACH

In addition to allowing for more machines by occupying less overall floor space, Lang explains that the MV2018 footprint and mobility are especially important in the machine’s operation.

“We’re able to move them to the tube bender and do a workcell right off the bender,” Lang explains. “It needs a small footprint, and we don’t have room →



Commercial Tube Processing’s work center supervisor, Kevin Bryant (left), with the company’s production supervisor, Steve Lang (right), at a workcell.



The small footprint of the MetalMizer MV2018 allows flexibility for a workcell near the tube bender.

between machines to have a larger saw up there.”

Dave Gillaspy, a manager at MetalMizer, says the team at CTP is able to think outside the box and achieve success by remaining flexible in their operation. He says that saws are assigned to certain areas for certain types of work, but adds that they’re so flexible that if CTP needs to move one – based on the workflow that’s going through – it’s not a problem.

“CTP’s ingenuity to create workcells that solve specific production challenges is an example of manufacturing at its finest,” Gillaspy says. “CTP reinforces the ability of MetalMizer to produce a high-quality, low-cost, space-saving solution to satisfy the sawing needs of many companies throughout the world.”

Kevin Bryant, a work center supervisor and machine operator at CTP, agrees the flexibility of the MV2018 saws is →

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The MetalMizer MV2018 can cut a variety of materials, sizes and shapes.

what allows the company to set up different workcells in many areas based on production needs.

“Ease of setup is really nice on the machines, and they are user friendly; there’s not much to operating them,” Bryant says. He adds that the machine requires very little training for the saw operators, which makes it easy for anyone to move, set up and operate the machine when needed.

MINIMAL MAINTENANCE

While each of the MetalMizer saws operate depending on production demands, Lang says the machines require minimal maintenance.

“When I asked our maintenance supervisor, we had \$0 entered for the 24 saws for the last five years,” Lang says. “We check fluid levels, the reservoir and change a bearing every once in a while, but basically it’s a no-maintenance machine.”

CTP performs a bi-weekly and annual preventative maintenance service on

each machine in order to maintain the equipment performance throughout the year.

Customers of CTP praise the company’s quality, on-time delivery and willingness to do the small prototype work that their competitors won’t fulfill.

“I see thinking outside the box as a big part of our success,” Lang explains. “We figure out how to make things work and over the years, we’ve learned the importance of that.”

CTP’s installation of versatile machining equipment along with the ability to provide quality products at any quantity or specification has positioned it for continued success in the industry. ●

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