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Lectra's New CLS Auto Leather Cutter Provides a Unique and Comprehensive Answer to Challenges Facing Automotive Manufacturers

With CLS Auto, leather cutting becomes part of an optimized non-stop production process

Paris, June 10, 2009 – Lectra, the world leader in integrated technology solutions dedicated to industries using soft materials—textiles, leather, industrial fabrics, and composite materials—, is pleased to announce the launch of the new CLS Auto leather cutter, designed to support automotive manufacturers in the optimization of their industrial processes.

The automotive market is among those most severely affected by the current economic crisis. It is currently going through a period of profound change: it is becoming more and more important for companies to deploy flexible production models adapted to shorter runs, and these require solutions specific to each material—textile, leather and airbag fabric. For leather (automobile seats and interiors), CLS Auto provides the perfect way to overcome new challenges related to productivity, competitiveness and flexibility by offering a cutting process that is unique on the market. Able to reduce production costs through just-in-time operation, that process generates significant material savings and accelerates the time-to-market of new models while maintaining flawless quality.

A unique non-stop production process

CLS Auto operates non-stop on a conveyor, managing every stage of the production process: loading of pre-marked hides, recognition of hide flaws by scanner, automatic contour detection, calculation of the actual hide surface, automatic nesting of pattern pieces taking flawed zones into account, cutting, and sorting of pieces for offloading.

CLS Auto stands out from the competition thanks to its unique non-stop production process that eliminates waiting time between the different hide processing stages. The time needed for manual intervention such as loading hides and offloading cut pieces is kept under total control, guaranteeing optimal productivity.



Maximum leather savings achieved through a combination of three integrated tools

HideScan recognition software controls a very high resolution scanner which automatically identifies hide flaws and contours. AutoNest software then automatically nests pattern pieces, ensuring material savings of 5% to 10% compared to die-cutting systems. Finally, Offload (Lectra's offloading assistance software), which guides operators offloading combinations of several cut orders, generates additional material savings of 2% to 5%.

CLS Auto: a combination of unrivalled cut quality and unparalleled ease of use

In addition to its optimized production process, the CLS Auto's level of cutting quality has also been carefully thought out in order to achieve the best combination of productivity, cutting speed and finished product quality. Through the automation of certain steps (scanner identification of flaws on pre-marked hides, automatic nesting and cutting), CLS Auto is designed to be simple and easy to use—qualities highly valued by operators, who are thus able to concentrate on loading hides and offloading pieces. Finally, workstations have been made more user-friendly, operator comfort and safety have been enhanced, and the physical effort and movement required of users are kept to a minimum.

Substantial savings and greater competitiveness

With CLS Auto, automotive manufacturers are now able to make annual savings that run into hundreds of thousands of euros. Savings can be generated through reduced purchasing and tool costs, but also through substantially lower working capital requirements and operating costs due to the deployment of just-in-time production models. In addition, reductions in electricity consumption and the elimination of the need for plastic film to hold hides in place also create savings.

The value of a unique, powerful and user-friendly leather cutting system like the CLS Auto, with its low operating costs and ability to generate such large material savings is obvious. Zenda, a German company that specializes in cutting high-quality leather for the automotive market, has certainly felt the benefits of the solution. "We chose Lectra because the company offers an integrated solution for the whole process, which is really flexible and simple to use," said Ulrich Sandmeyer, Product Engineering Manager for Zenda Waldfischbach. "Since we installed the CLS Auto automatic leather cutting solution, our productivity has improved by around 5 to 8%. In addition, Lectra experts trained our staff to use the solution effectively in less than two weeks." Zenda is one of Lectra's first customers to integrate CLS Auto into its production environment, replacing two traditional presses.

"CLS Auto is the perfect solution in the current macroeconomic climate, where it is more important than ever for companies to implement value-added technologies and solutions that enable them to boost their competitiveness and sustain their sales strategy," said Daniel Harari, Lectra CEO.

About Lectra

Lectra is the world leader in integrated technology solutions that automate, streamline, and accelerate product design, development, and manufacturing processes for industries using soft materials. Lectra develops the most advanced specialized software and cutting systems and provides associated services to a broad array of markets including fashion (apparel, accessories, footwear), automotive (car seats and interiors, airbags), and furniture, as well as a wide variety of other market sectors, such as the aeronautical and marine industries, wind power, and personal protective equipment. Lectra serves 23,000 customers in more than 100 countries with 1,500 employees and \$292 million in 2008 revenues. The company is listed on Euronext Paris.

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