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**Walshs Glass and LiSEC: In the midst of digital transformation**

Walshs Glass has been the leading glass company in Western Australia for over 50 years. Walshs Glass is a prime example of a successful Australian manufacturer of a diverse range of flat glass products including acoustic glass, architectural glass, double glazing, customised laminate, decorative glass, energy-efficient glass, safety glass, shower enclosures, sliding doors and splashbacks – demonstrating how to establish a higher throughput with a sorting buffer and how to handle the challenges of digital transformation in glass processing.

Alongside an experienced team, Walshs Glass has two strategies which it is successfully employing to meet the demands of the future: Getting the best out of production and utilising the digital transformation to its advantage.

"If we have a challenge in the company or we want to optimise our processes, we start the initial discussions internally and then look for all the information externally so that we can make the best possible comparisons. We exchange a great deal of information with other glass processors in Australia and engage in dialogue with reference customers that we visit. That's where you learn the most," says Andrew Parker, Executive Director of Walshs Glass. "We also draw on the expertise of specialists such as LiSEC, who we have found to be the perfect sparring partner, in particular when it comes to fully automated plants, because LiSEC can offer every piece of the puzzle in a fully automated production process. From the software to the hardware."

The decades-long collaboration between Walshs Glass and LiSEC is characterised by extensive trust and an open culture of dialogue. Mutual feedback is important so that both companies can continue to develop and learn from the past.

The Walshs Glass premises contain something small but rather special downstream of the LiSEC PKL: The company has connected three LiSEC cutting systems to the PKL. However, as the self-driven glass loading station with rotating suction frame is at its limit with three cutting systems to be supplied, a LiSEC ATH was also installed for automatic glass loading, from which additional glass can be lifted if the crane reaches its capacity limit. A LiSEC ATH is usually equipped with the most common types of glass, in order to supply the tables quickly and optimally.

After processing on the LiSEC SplitFin or the parallel LiSEC KSR / KSV system, the sheets are rearranged in the LiSEC sorting system in the correct sequence for the LiSEC TPA insulating glass line or the tempering oven.

One of the biggest challenges facing Walshs Glass is identifying the direction in which the glass industry trends are heading and what future solutions should be offered to customers. It is therefore no coincidence that the LiSEC TPA is the absolute highlight in the Walshs Glass production facility.

Walshs Glass was able to witness the functionality and quality of the LiSEC TPA first-hand at Glasstec 2022. Seeing the machine on show at the trade fair and the performance of the LiSEC TPA live in operation with reference customers was decisive for the purchase.

The LiSEC TPA is a fully automatic system for applying thermoplastic spacer bars. It provides a warm edge in the insulating glass due to its high thermal insulation. Operating the insulating glass line is considerably simplified by eliminating conventional frame production. Instead of a large number of consumables, only the thermoplastic material is required. The high flexibility of the system enables batch sizes of a single unit and therefore ensures maximum productivity in insulating glass production.

Another turning point in production at Walshs Glass was the installation of the buffer system. "This has completely transformed our factory," says Steve Cuff, Executive Operations Manager at Walshs Glass. "We had a lot of manual processes before, which often led to confusion and errors and ultimately cost a great deal of time, which can now be put to better use. Installation of the LiSEC buffer was accompanied by a significant reduction in manual intervention, we have far less breakage and a higher throughput thanks to automatically sorted products."

Production planning and automatic capacity allocation by our GPS.prod production control system form the basis for smooth production processes. Transparent production progress can be called up on the system and trimming is carried out promptly, improving the completion rate of customer orders, which in turn leads to improvements in customer service.

Further challenges that Walshs Glass sees in the future are the various aspects that digitalisation brings with it. The optimum combination of digitalisation and the right technology is crucial for the continued success of the company. Walshs Glass is in the midst of digital transformation and places great importance on software solutions such as analytics from LiSEC, which enables the analysis of machine data and shows how and where to get the best out of the machines.

"We are especially excited about the latest generation of software features from LiSEC, which we will be seeing at glasstec 2024 in Düsseldorf," says Andrew Parker. "Good software is our main focus when it comes to the global digital transformation. LiSEC laid the foundations for glass processing in the past, and also has the potential to write the future of glass processing."

**Tip:** Integrating a LiSEC buffer system enables increased throughput and minimised manual intervention, resulting in a lower error and breakage rates. The automatic sorting of the sheets and the constant loading of the processing lines elevates the throughput of these systems!

**Photos** © LiSEC

Ein Bild, das Bautechnik, Stahl, Industrie, Im Haus enthält.

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**About LiSEC**

With headquarters in Seitenstetten/Amstetten, Austria, LiSEC is a worldwide group of companies that for over 60 years has provided individual and comprehensive solutions in flat glass processing and refining. Its businesses include machines, automation solutions and services. In 2023, the group achieved an export ratio of around 95 percent and generated sales of almost € 300 million with roughly 1,300 employees and 20 locations. LiSEC develops and manufactures glass cutting and sorting systems, single components and complete production lines for fabricating insulating glass and laminated glass, as well as machines for glass edge processing and tempering. With reliable technology and intelligent automation solutions, LiSEC sets standards in quality and technology and significantly contributes to the success of its customers.

**Further information:**  
Claudia GUSCHLBAUER

Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications

LISEC Austria GmbH  
Peter-Lisec-Strasse 1

3353 Seitenstetten, Austria  
Tel.: +43 7477 405-1115  
Mobile: +43 660 871 58 03  
E-mail: [claudia.guschlbauer@lisec.com](mailto:claudia.guschlbauer@lisec.com) – [www.lisec.com](http://www.lisec.com/?utm_source=Press-Release&utm_medium=Word-PDF&utm_campaign=DE)