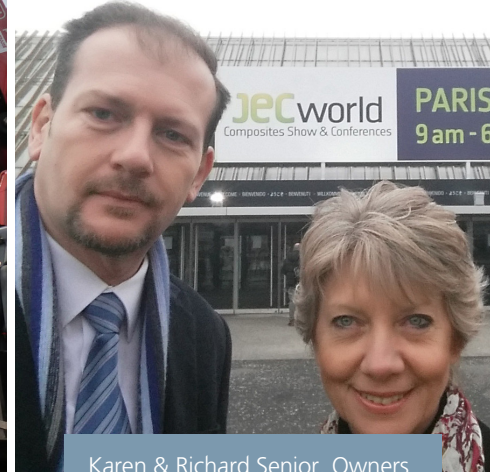


# HEMCO Power & Control Systems



Loading a finished Control System ready for delivery



Karen & Richard Senior, Owners of HEMCO

**H**EMCO Power & Control Systems has more than 50 years of experience in designing, manufacturing, installing and commissioning bespoke electrical control systems for a wide variety of process control, machinery and manufacturing applications.

Our clients include aerospace, aerocomposites, agriculture, automotive, bakeries, contact lens production, continuous metal extrusion, food processing, injection moulding, leisure industry, marine, medical, military training, packaging, petrochemical, pharmaceutical, plastic extrusion, printing, semiconductor manufacture, textile, tooling and tool heating, waste and water management.

We have extensive and transferrable understanding of electrical principles, logic, and motion and specialise in all levels of design and manufacture, from simple control panels to complete integrated control systems from inception to installation, including bespoke software.

## What we do and how we do it

It was obvious that we would have to adapt and make significant changes to the way the business was run, in order to survive in this economic climate. Creation of a focussed business plan, action plans and strategy was the way forward. As a result, we have greatly diversified our client base, branching out into more innovative sectors, thus minimising the risk to us if any one industry suffers a downturn. We have made significant changes to our internal procedures by streamlining costs and negotiating better terms with our suppliers, enabling us to maximise our competitiveness and give our clients the best deal. As a result, we have increased turnover and profits. This has meant employing more staff, updating our IT systems, workshop, tools and machinery.

## FACTS ABOUT HEMCO POWER & CONTROL SYSTEMS

- » Family run business
- » Established in 1963
- » Based just off the M3 in Eastleigh, Hampshire
- » Employs 10 people
- » UK and International clients
- » Annual turnover of £700-£900k.



Bed Stacking Control System for the NHS in Salisbury

“The most important asset within the company is our staff”

Our internal design process is based on a structured approach, involving compliance with a series of key targets, British and European standards, current legislation, specifications, guidance notes, codes of practice and manuals that cover all design, management and support disciplines. This has been developed and continually improved to capture best practice within the industry, as well as our own valuable practical experience.

We have earned an enviable reputation through our ability to design, engineer and implement technically advanced, cost effective solutions to engineering challenges. We utilise the capability and experience of our qualified, highly skilled and multi-disciplined in-house staff, encouraging initiative and lateral thought at all stages of project design and implementation.

A key aspect of our success is having the facilities, resources, skills and experience to offer both design and manufacturing services on a single site, providing significant savings in cost and time, whilst ensuring the quality of manufacturing and fabrication work is checked at every stage of production.

Our projects range from small control boxes/enclosures and operator control stations, to the largest multi bay floor standing control systems, to include motor control centres (MCCs) and distribution panels. In-house

computerised engraving and printing machinery gives us the flexibility to engrave nameplates, mimic panels and fascias, and to print terminal and component markers.

Our large workshop is very close to the M3 and M27, which gives us good access to other major motorway and road networks. This allows us to conduct regular business with companies across southern England and into the Midlands. We have also completed projects throughout the UK and internationally.

### Employees (the HEMCO family)

The most important asset within the company is our staff. Therefore, we have adopted the following approach:

- » Ensuring good employee relations by having regular staff appraisals and an open-door approach to identify opportunities and issues before they become a problem.
- » Providing a structured training programme to encourage career progression.
- » Adopting a rolling programme of apprenticeships to meet future workforce needs.
- » Supporting staff with continuing qualifications and CPD (continuing professional development).
- » Keeping staff up-to-date with regular project, business and staff meetings.

### The 'Secret to our success'?

We conduct regular reviews of our business plan, while internal cost audits ensure competitive hourly labour and engineering rates for services etc. We invest in new technologies, tooling, facilities, ISO9001:2015 quality management system and internal procedures. We recruit apprentices from approved local providers, such as the Southampton Engineering Training Association (SETA), and we sponsor



Multi-bay Control System for a new Cable Manufacturing Line



them into higher education HNC/HND level, to ensure that they have the exact skills we need. Maintaining good relationships with training providers is essential.

Other key policies include:

- » Continuing to keep up-to-date with the latest European and UK safety standards and specific industry regulations.
- » Negotiating cost savings in overheads, utilities, company insurances as well as component parts and assemblies.
- » Forging stronger relationships with existing suppliers and creating partnerships with new suppliers and distributors to obtain the best component discounts and business terms, to ensure maximum competitiveness.
- » Attending international trade shows to further technological knowledge and develop client relations.
- » Attending local business shows and breakfast networking events run by the local chamber of commerce.
- » New client financial procedures and ongoing client credit evaluation and the ability to adjust our proposed payment terms on a project by project basis, to minimise financial risk.
- » Reorganisation of workshop and stock levels etc. to increase efficiency and minimise stock holding.
- » Use of JIT (Just-in-Time) procurement models.

## Obstacles

As with many small businesses, we have encountered hurdles. Because of the reluctance of banks to lend money to small businesses, to help finance growth (even with the Enterprise Finance Guarantee scheme), few choices remain for small businesses to raise the required funding. In our case, we were forced down the self-financing route. On top of this, recruitment of Engineers has



New Touchscreen Lock & Bridge Controls, Eastbourne Marina

proved difficult. Underinvestment in promoting / encouraging STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) subjects in UK students, is causing a skills gap. IT and cyber security is increasingly costly, to ensure suitable levels of data protection. Costs of IT specialists, cloud and secure offsite backups etc. is also rising. Slow broadband speeds and apparent lack of investment in high speed fibre internet access causes progressively more issues in performing offsite data backup and business data sharing / transfer. Finally, large businesses are increasing the pressure on small enterprises to accept extended (60 or even 90 day) payment terms, risking cash flow problems.

## Into the future

'If only we had a crystal ball' is the dream of every business owner. Without such an aid, we will continue to adapt and change our business model to suit an ever changing market environment. By developing new, and strengthening existing, relationships with both clients and suppliers, we aim to continue to provide high quality, technologically advanced, bespoke solutions to our clients ever changing requirements into the future.

“We have earned an enviable reputation through our ability to design, engineer and implement technically advanced, cost effective solutions to engineering challenges”