

Subcontracting to the rail industry

Rowe Hankins Limited is a global provider of engineering solutions for the railway industry, with products installed on most major rail networks around the world. It relies on DPC components for ninety percent of its subcontracting projects. In particular DPC regularly supplies stainless steel sensor shells which are fitted beneath trains. These shells protect critical electronics in the harsh environment close to rails, where they are subject to heat and being struck by debris at high speed.

Because of the size of the components, DPC uses its range of large turning section lathes and vertical machining: Goodway GS Series Turn Mill Centres and YCM MV Series Vertical Machining Centre to produce them. These are ideal for high-speed and heavy-duty machining to produce highly accurate parts from materials such as stainless steel.

Quality is ensured by first-off, intermediate and final inspection by DPC's inspection staff, all of whom are accredited by the National Physical Laboratory. This accreditation demonstrates staff have a real understanding of the conditions or inaccuracies that can affect measurement – rather than just being able to use a machine. Quality processes are accredited to ISO9001:2008, demonstrating to Rowe Hankins that DPC have suitably high level quality procedures and keep adequate records of all runs.

Because of the harsh environments experienced by the finished products, it is critical that these parts are made from high quality materials and manufactured to specification, and traceability is assured throughout the production process, from material to finishing. This is guaranteed through certificates of conformity, material test certification, records of each run and bespoke inspection reports.

Rowe Hankins have also had to call upon DPC for parts made to tight deadlines. In August they needed large housings turned round extremely quickly. The order was placed on a Thursday afternoon and the parts were ready by the end of Friday. This was possible because DPC has built in capacity and across the board expertise, so even if a machine or an engineer is busy, there is also capacity to complete urgent jobs.

Production and Purchasing Manager Paul Bamford said "In our industry we need to solve problems fast. We use Dawson Precision Components because its staff are quick, reliable and prepared to jump through hoops to get the job done".