

Agate Steel Inc.: Writing Their Own Story



L to R: Loren Kuenzi (Shop Superintendent), Nancy Palmer (CFO), Les McCauley (Vice President), and Jim Uhl (President and CEO) of Agate Steel, Inc. in Scottsdale, Arizona - USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME: Agate Steel, Inc.

INDUSTRY: Industrial Structural Steel

LOCATION: Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

CHALLENGE: With layout and fitup employees ageing, what will replace them?

SOLUTION: The PeddiWriter

MACHINES INSTALLED:

PeddiWriter automatic layout marking machine, BDL-760 drill line, FDB-2500 plate processor

RESULTS: An investment in technology has increased productivity by 25%

Writing Their Own Story

When an e-mail from Peddinghaus crossed Les McCauley's desk in early 2011, he was intrigued. This was not just another "SPAM" message, this was an e-mail that would inevitably save Les countless hours of labor, and his employer, Agate Steel, Inc., tremendous amounts of money. In this e-mail, Les was introduced to the future of fabrication, the PeddiWriter CNC layout marking system.

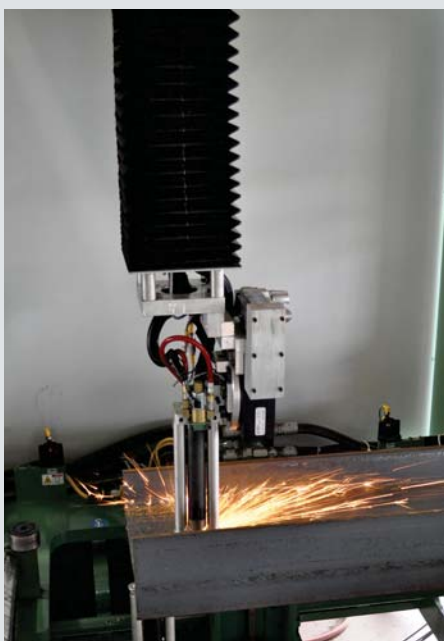
Based in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, Agate is a company founded on core values of innovation, reputation, and leadership. Their thirst for modern technology and dedication to turnkey construction solutions has allowed Agate to gain acclaim throughout the industry. With these key principles in mind, Les (Vice President of Agate Steel, Inc.) was compelled to visit the upcoming NASCC to experience exactly what this new machine was capable of doing.

Seeing is Believing

As soon as Les witnessed the PeddiWriter in action he knew that it was the next best thing for structural fabrication. "When I saw the machine, the Peddinghaus engineers and operators asked me how I would like to see the machine work," stated Les, "right there on the spot we were programming, testing, and making it operate the way Agate needed. I



"If the PeddiWriter were removed from our facility today, we would need at least 6-8 layout workers to replace the productivity of the machine." - Les McCauley



got my hands on a video and sent it to our Shop Superintendent, Loren Kuenzi, to get his reaction. Let's just say he was excited."

"I told Les if he didn't write a P.O. for the machine right then and there that I was going to be extremely upset!" stated Loren, "from installation to the final performance of the PeddiWriter, the machine had exceeded expectations from start to finish."

The Proof is in Production

Today at Agate, production has changed across the board due to the accuracy, and productivity that the PeddiWriter CNC layout marking machine provided.

"In the 3 months we have had the machine, it has increased our productivity 25% across the board. This is not only how much faster fitting is, it is how much faster we are in all aspects of production as a fabricator. This machine has made a substantial difference in our productivity," stated Loren.

Les provides a before and after take on the productivity of the machine: "We tested a part on the PeddiWriter that used to take us 1 hour and 40 minutes to layout manually. That part was completed in 8 minutes! The machine has performed absolutely 100% accurately since it has been installed. This machine is taking Agate to the next level."

As Skilled Labor Disappears, Agate Innovates

As skilled labor continues to vanish, Agate's solution is to continually auto-mate. The PeddiWriter is a prime example with its labor saving design. "If the PeddiWriter were removed from our facility today, we would need at least 6-8 layout workers to replace the productivity of the machine. These are people you just can't find in today's labor market," stated Les.

In today's computer age, Agate relies on streamlined programming to ensure that production truly takes flight. Using the Peddinghaus Tekla API module, Agate is capable of transferring data directly from the Tekla model, and laying out weld locations or cope locations with ease. "A layout machine is use-less without a good BIM interface," states Les, "using the Tekla API from Peddinghaus, we are capable of converting a 600 ton (544 metric ton) job directly from the BIM model into CNC part files in only 20 minutes. This includes scribe locations, cope locations, everything!"

Beyond the PeddiWriter, the decade old BDL-760 drill line from



Cross transfers allow material to be sent from the drill and saw, across to the PeddiWriter, and directly into the building for welding and assembly.

Peddinghaus benefits from the very same software as legacy support is a key component of the Peddinghaus software philosophy.

“We program the BDL-760 using the Tekla API because it’s a faster, more accurate way of doing it. Simple as that,” stated Loren.

Beyond easy operations, maintenance is a breeze with the PeddiWriter, and consumable costs are practically non-existent, “We have had the machine running production for three months and we haven’t changed the consumables ONCE.” States Loren, “there is no plasma particulate fumes visible at all when the torch is marking, the cuts are extremely clear and concise, and we don’t need any sort of special gasses to run the machine like a higher amp plasma torch. We run the machine at around 5-6 amps and use nothing but shop air. This is an inexpensive machine to run.”

Agate Keeps their Eyes on the Horizon - The Future of Fabrication

Jim Uhl, CEO/President of Agate Steel, Inc. relies on his experience and in depth knowledge of all corners of the industry as he describes his take on the future of fabrication, “As developing countries continue to attack foreign markets, American fabricators are at a distinct disadvantage. Labor rates are higher, corporate taxes are higher, and regulation is stricter. Our high tech Peddinghaus equipment is protection from those attacks. We feel the PeddiWriter levels the playing field between Agate, and the cheap labor rates from developing markets. We can compete with confidence with these inter-national threats because of our continual investment in modern technology, and turnkey construction solutions.”

A “Do Whatever it Takes” Kind of Company

Agate never shies away from a challenge. From the power industry, to mining, to flight line canopies, Agate offers start to finish solutions.

“At Agate we offer more than comprehensive solutions for steel construction, we offer services from business units that are synergistic, mutually supporting organizations,” states Jim.

“We specialize in design build work. Each business unit provides feedback to the others and an improvement in any arm of Agate means the entire company benefits. With the first job processed on the PeddiWriter, our half waymark illustrated that we had saved 1,000 hours of erection time due to the accuracy of the parts. Before the end of the project we expect to save 2,000 hours of erection labor. If you know



erection, you know that is a big deal!” stated Les.

Peddinghaus and Agate – A Powerful Partnership

When asked about Agate’s relationship with Peddinghaus Jim was direct, “In Agate’s 40 years of operations, we have never had a vendor as professional, and courteous as Peddinghaus. The machines are well designed and dependable, but above anything the support is fantastic. Nobody sup-ports you like Peddinghaus.”



Peddinghaus Corp Bradley, IL

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Peddinghaus Corporation visit:
www.peddinghaus.com

PRODUCT LIST:

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- Anglemasters
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- Coping Machines
- Thermal Cutting
- Automated Layout Marking
- Structural Band Saws
- Ironworkers
- Material Handling