

WOODNEWS

Furniture and Manufacturing Technologies

29
Years

Pioneer in the
service of the
woodworking
industry

CHANGE AGENT

**Hettich Poddar Institute
ushering cultural shift in
carpentry P.24**

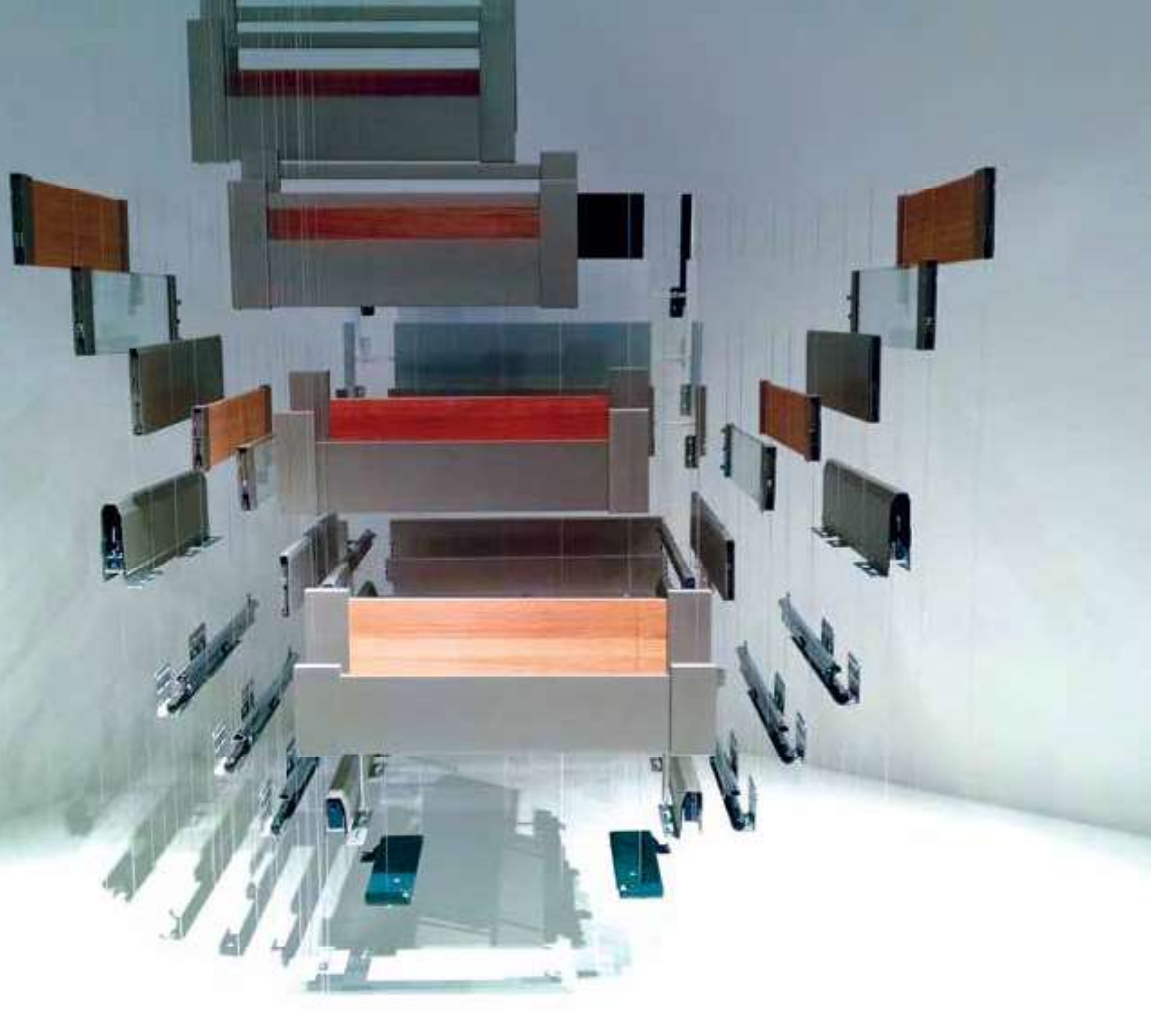
FEATURE

Zen and the art of
woodworking **P.10**

SPECIAL FOCUS

Timber Forum 2019
Highlights of the event. **P.40**





1

Change Agent

How the Hettich Poddar Woodworking Institute in Faridabad (Haryana) is ushering a cultural shift in carpentry in the country

India continues its attempts to deal with ever-changing – and sometimes overwhelming – challenges in upgrading its employable young population with skills and expertise that will meet industry requirements and sustain the growth of the economy.

1 Hettich supplies thousands of products in architectural hardware and furniture fittings. The high level of engineering design requires trained carpenters and installers.

In our quest to keep abreast of technology and trends, market variables and consumer preferences, we look far and wide for inspiration, advice, investment and expertise.

But for the furniture manufacturing and woodworking industry in India, a beacon of hope and a pillar of support stands in the form of the Hettich Poddar Woodworking Institute (HPWI), situated right outside New Delhi.

Started in 2017 by Hettich, a world leader in

furniture hardware and fittings, it is a corporate social responsibility initiative by the Germany-based company to change the culture of carpentry, ethos of woodworking and business of mass manufacturing in India.

Technology leap

When the likes of Hettich (among others) entered the lucrative Indian market, it was realised that skilled manpower was at a premium. The Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across the country had obsolete syllabi and systems, out-of-date tools and teaching faculty, and insufficient will to transform to the fast-changing requirements of modern furniture manufacturing.

The company started awareness and training



2 Hinges, sliding systems, knobs and handles need expert preparation in boring and drilling, ahead of installation.

sessions across the country when it entered the India market some 15 years ago – the change in hardware materials and leap in fittings technology required it. But the need for a centralised, formal educational system and training centre led to the formation of the HPWI in Faridabad.

In the initial years there was tremendous resistance to new technology – even Hettich's simple slide-on hinge did not find favour with freelance carpenters (they still make up 70% of Indian furniture manufacturing capacity!) who preferred the outdated piano hinges. They preferred the obsolete chisels to boring jigs and machines.

The HPWI is now an 8,000-square-foot, fully air-conditioned learning centre with classrooms, workshops, a machinery shop floor and a library. The machines are elementary, but essential to understanding sawing, shaping, boring and edge banding of wood-based panels. It is on these machines that students learn that production tolerances cannot exceed +/- 0.05 mm!

Customised courses

It has a manifold agenda: upskilling carpenters from traditional methods to modern furniture-

making; upgrading the knowledge of contractors and interior designers; and providing modern factories (OEMs) with skilled and trained manpower to achieve quality standards and improve manufacturing efficiencies.

The institute has designed a 3-month course in woodworking for storage (cabinets and cupboards), seating and sleeping systems (chairs, tables, sofas and beds) doors and windows (including frames), kitchens, as well as furniture upholstery. It also deals with critical architectural hardware and furniture fittings that go with these products.

The course can be customised to train workers from factories – and so far more than 1,000 such employees have successfully learned their respective skills from OEMs based in Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and even Bhutan. Many return to the institute for upskilling, or to learn new skills.

A successful candidate from the institute has sound knowledge of solid wood; understands the nature of panels and boards; knows his cabinetry (assembling, dismantling); and can process panels (cutting, boring, shaping, polishing, etc.) for the required product.

3 The Hettich Poddar Woodworking Institute in Faridabad spans 8,000 square feet, accommodating classrooms, workshops and a section for panel processing machinery.



More importantly, however, s/he is capable of collating data – reading drawings, interpreting designs, planning material optimally, processing boards precisely, and preparing a bill of quantity for any production order. Without doubt, this is a huge advantage for those looking to hire skilled personnel in his/her factory!

More centres

4 Apart from training the trainers, the institute also prepares candidates for the prestigious World Skills competition, considered the Olympics of vocational expertise.

The HPWI has been labelled a centre of excellence by the Furniture and Fittings Skill Council and the National Skill Development Corporation. It is a vocational training partner for the former, and provides internationally recognised training and certification for the industry.

It has trained installation teams from Livspace and Urban Ladder. It also trains selected candidates for the World Skills Competition,

considered the Olympics of vocational training expertise. It plans to open four more such learning centres, beginning with Indore (Madhya Pradesh).

If you are a green-horn wishing to work with wood; or a carpenter looking to upskill; if you aim to grow your team into a contract business; if you want to be a machine operator or production supervisor; or an online retailer who wants his/her employees trained on delivery and installation, the HPWI is your knowledge and training partner.

Successful candidates can aspire to earn good salaries in factories; or start their own contract manufacturing businesses; or even find attractive employment opportunities abroad. So what are you waiting for? (www.hettichwoodworkinginstitute.com).

