SCHIEMA embraces Elitron digital cutting twice for greater production freedom

When SCHIEMA B.V. began investigating digital cutting technology, they were not looking to follow an established trend. They wanted the only the most suitable system for their specific production requirements.



"We did not invest in a digital cutting system simply because others in our industry were doing so," explains Edwin van Geene, Managing Director of SCHIEMA. "We proactively researched the market and deliberately did not want to automatically select brands used by our competitors."


Edwin van Geene - Managing Director of SCHIEMA

Founded in 1993, SCHIEMA is a Dutch technical trading and manufacturing company supplying industrial customers with rubber and plastic products, industrial hoses and couplings, and customer-specific manufactured components. Their own production capabilities have become an increasingly important part of their business, with flexibility, customer-specific solutions and short lead times at the heart of their proposition. SCHIEMA is not a traditional mass-production company. Its manufacturing model ranges from individual

components and prototypes to small series and larger production batches. Before digital cutting entered the picture, the company combined manual cutting, conventional die-cutting and external production, selecting the most appropriate process according to the material, quantity and complexity of each job.

The move towards digital cutting was driven by several factors, but mainly to reduce manual labour, increase flexibility, eliminate tooling costs where possible, improve accuracy and repeatability, optimise material utilisation and shortening the route from drawing to finished component. “We did not expect digital cutting to replace every other production method,” says van Geene. “For certain repetitive products and quantities, conventional die-cutting can still be considerably faster. We therefore continue to make a conscious decision for each job: digital cutting, die-cutting or another production method.”

For SCHIEMA, the real objective was to create choice and be cost effective.

Testing digital technology with real production



By the time SCHIEMA approached Elitron, the company had already developed considerable knowledge of digital cutting systems and tested other systems that did not meet their stringent production needs.

“We weren't looking for a standard sales presentation,” van Geene recalls. “We wanted to know whether the machine could actually produce our products, using our materials, under conditions representative of our production environment.”

The company supplied Elitron with its own models and a selection of the actual materials it processes, including some particularly challenging ones. The question was straightforward: could the machine produce SCHIEMA’s products under realistic production conditions?

The machine put to the test was the Elitron Kombo T 32.16, and “It passed that test with flying colours,” says van Geene.

This practical demonstration became an important factor in SCHIEMA’s decision. The first Kombo T, installed in 2020, was not simply a replacement for another digital cutting system, as it represented a strategic investment in a new production capability.

SCHIEMA processes a wide variety of technical materials, including solid rubber in different qualities, hardnesses and elasticities, specialised gasket materials such as

perforated stainless steel with graphite layers, and engineering plastics requiring both cutting and milling operations.

The Kombo T allowed the company to bring considerably more production in-house. But the significance of the investment went beyond the machine's cutting capabilities.

"Our first Kombo T changed not only how we produced, but also what we were able to produce ourselves," explains van Geene.



Digital cutting reduced the dependency on tooling and external production, while making it more practical to manufacture one-off components and small series. Jobs could move more directly from CAD data to finished parts, while digital nesting has improved material yield.

The technology also introduced greater flexibility into the production process. Once a job had been correctly prepared and was running, the machine does not require continuous operator attention, allowing SCHIEMA's staff to perform other activities.

"Digital production has changed the way we work and added to our business growth over the years" says van Geene. "It has enabled us to bring considerably more production in-house, increased our control over quality and lead times and, importantly, expanded the range of work we can accept."

The additional production capability also created commercial opportunities. Projects that previously would not have fitted SCHIEMA's production possibilities could now be considered, helping the company respond to more customer-specific requirements and attract different customers.

The return on the investment was not simply a matter of producing an existing component faster. it was about broadening what SCHIEMA could offer.

From first machine to second investment

The excellent experience with the Elitron Kombo T ultimately gave SCHIEMA the confidence to invest in Elitron technology again. In 2024, the company installed a Kombo S, extending its digital production capabilities four years after the original investment.

"We regard the machines as powerful and reliable production systems," says van Geene. "We demand a great deal from them, and

they are capable of processing a wide variety of materials and product forms as required by our diverse range of customers."



SCHIEMA uses the second Elitron system for dedicated production. The system has been highly customised around a production concept developed specifically for SCHIEMA. The precise configuration, tooling, production concept and applications remain confidential, as elements of the solution provide SCHIEMA with a decisive competitive advantage. Today, the Elitron systems are used to manufacture a broad range of industrial components, including gaskets, rings, strips and customer-specific technical shapes. Production can range from a single component or prototype to small and larger batches. This variety is precisely where SCHIEMA sees the value of digital cutting. The company does not have to commit every job to the same manufacturing process. Instead, it can select the most appropriate technology according to the characteristics of the order. Digital cutting has therefore become part of a broader manufacturing strategy rather than a standalone solution.

Beyond the system

For SCHIEMA, the experience with Elitron extends beyond the satisfaction of the equipment itself. The installation process was handled professionally, and the company was highly satisfied with all aspects of these capital investments. Initial Elitron training was thorough and provided the basis required to start working with the equipment, while further operational knowledge was naturally developed through day-to-day experience, over the years. The machines themselves have proven powerful and reliable despite the demands placed on them.



The result for SCHIEMA is not a story about replacing traditional manufacturing with digital cutting. It is a story about adding another level of choice and opening up more opportunities.
For a company built around technical expertise, customer-specific solutions and short lead times, that freedom may be the most important capability of all.
Moving forward, and as SCHIEMA continues to grow, another Elitron looks likely to be on the horizon.