



Hiab XSDrive

A trendsetter in the crane industry

Creator has had a long and beneficial cooperation with Hiab. One of the latest projects was to design a new control unit for truck cranes. Remote control represents far more than 50% of the medium-sized and large cranes sold today. Of Hiab's two remote-controlled control systems, the flagship HiPro with the CombiDrive control unit and the HiDuo with HiDrive, the latter needed modernisation. Hiab's requirements could not be misinterpreted. The new control unit, the XSDrive, would in addition to improving the ergonomics, also capture the feel of Hiab's brand image. High demands, but thanks to an ingenious construction and a good cooperation between the customer and the supplier, the result surpassed expectations.

The project:

The new XSDrive control unit will be used for the remote-control of cargo cranes from the XS series. They had set the targets pretty high: After having tested the XSDrive, the users (crane truck drivers) weren't going to want to use anything else. Even the ergonomic demands were high. The unit would simplify control of the crane while also reducing strain on the users' hands, arms and back. Another requirement was that the design should reinforce and communicate the Hiab brand image and thereby product recognition. There should be no doubt that you are working with a Hiab control unit.

As the XSDrive would be used in a tough environment and often for an entire working day, there were major demands on creating a lightweight, intuitive manoeuvring unit which enabled long-reach use. The unit's control functions were to be so instinctively positioned that it should basically be possible to use it in the dark. In addition, the unit had to be able to withstand the tough stresses of water, heat and cold. This meant that the finished product would be subject to stringent tests prior to approval.

The solution:

In Creator's solution, the lines in Hiab's well-established elephant symbol were integrated into the design. In that way, the product and experience of the control unit were differentiated.

We just took the shape of Hiab's logo and transferred it onto the product. Looking from the side, you can see that the control unit's shape has lines that resemble Hiab's elephant symbol. That is perhaps not the first thing the user thinks about, but it contributes a unique feel to the design and affects the way you experience the brand, explains Loa Ahlgren, Industrial Designer at Creator.

Based on the design, functional models were then created from a wood-like plastic material. By means of the functional models, the tool's ergonomics could be evaluated.

It isn't until there is a physical model that we can determine if the ergonomic and design requirements have been fulfilled, besides it becomes easier for people outside the immediate vicinity of the project to relate to the product, something which, for example, was of major significance during the in-depth interviews with the end users, which were carried out later on in the project, continued Loa Ahlgren.

The entire project was characterised by a close cooperation between Creator and Hiab. A cooperation that was an important factor for the project's success.

In order to succeed, you must take a risk and test ideas and challenge both yourself and traditional conventions. Therefore communication must be allowed to be both open and challenging, from both directions, explains Loa Ahlgren.



