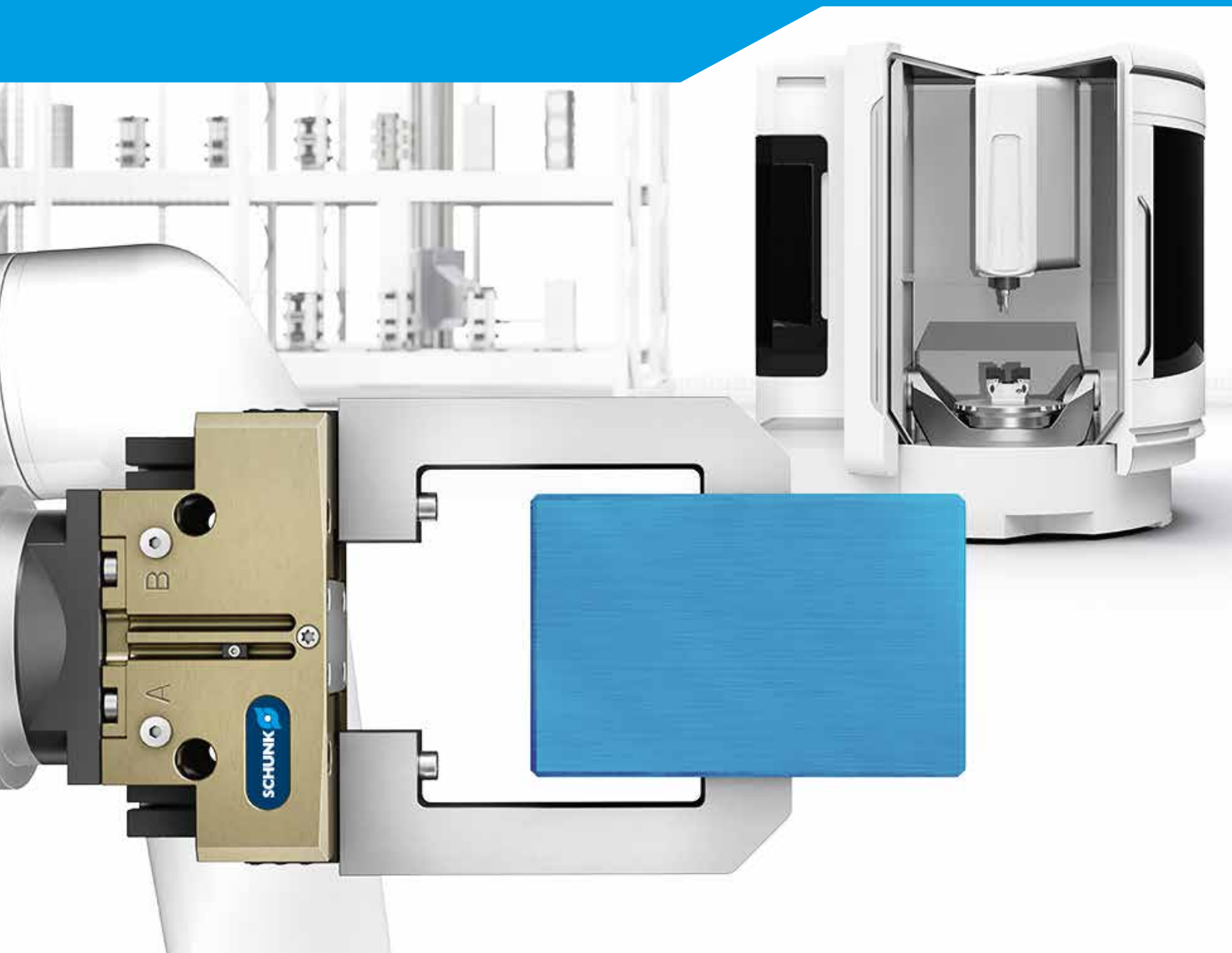
Machine Tending

The appropriate type of automation for your process

Hand in hand for tomorrow



For greater efficiency, productivity and competitiveness

In times where efficiency and maximum autonomous machine running times become more and more important, machine tending offers considerable benefits for companies of all sizes. Global competitive pressure is increasing, while there is a shortage of skilled workers everywhere. Increasing variance, ever decreasing batch sizes and fluctuating demand also call for optimized processes with the help of the latest technologies. Machine tending is an important step towards a „Healthy Factory“ – a healthy company that makes processes more productive and, at the same time, relieves the burden on people and the environment. SCHUNK will be happy to accompany you on this journey.

Advantages of machine tending:

Increased productivity
Automated systems can operate 24/7 without a pause, increase production capacity, and reduce set-up times and machine downtimes.

Cost savings
Labor costs and rework can be reduced by less manual intervention and precise automation. The operator controls the process, and the work is done by the automation system.

Improved quality
Higher process accuracy and repeatability ensure more consistent product quality and reduce the number of errors.

Flexibility
Allows fast adaptation to different production requirements and easy integration of new products.

Enhanced competitiveness
Shorter product throughput times result in faster delivery times and therefore increase customer satisfaction.

Overview

Your entry into the world of automated machine loading

From the very beginning, we support you and guide you through the various options to find the best possible approach for your needs. What options are there? Which solution suits your manufacturing process? And what are the advantages of each approach? Together, we will find the right type of automation for your process.

Depending on the workpiece, batch size, manufacturing process and machine, there are six automation types to choose from.



Lean automation

Workpiece variance	●○○○○
Workpiece complexity	●○○○○
Batch size	●○○○○



Pallet automation

Workpiece variance	●●●●○
Workpiece complexity	●●●●●
Batch size	●●○○○



Vise automation

Workpiece variance	●●●●○
Workpiece complexity	●●●○○
Batch size	●●●○○



Workpiece and pallet automation

Workpiece variance	●●●●○
Workpiece complexity	●●●○○
Batch size	●●●●○



Workpiece automation

Workpiece variance	●●●○○
Workpiece complexity	●●○○○
Batch size	●●●●●



Flexible manufacturing system

Workpiece variance	●●●●●
Workpiece complexity	●●●●○
Batch size	●●●○○

Workpiece variance = how many different workpieces are loaded
Workpiece complexity = how demanding is it to clamp the workpiece

Batch size = quantity of identical workpieces that are produced without interruption

Lean automation

Lean automation

Lean automation describes a flexible and affordable method of automated machine loading by using available functions of the machine tool intelligently. The raw and finished parts tray is located within the travel area of the machine. With the help of a gripper with spindle interface, workpiece handling can take place within the machine workspace. A clamping station facilitates the manual changeover of raw and finished parts as well as clamping devices.

Your advantages:

- **Low acquisition costs**
- **No additional knowledge required for operation**
- **No additional space required in front of the machine**
- **Dual working is easily possible**

1 Gripper with shank interface

2 Quick-change pallet system

Vise automation

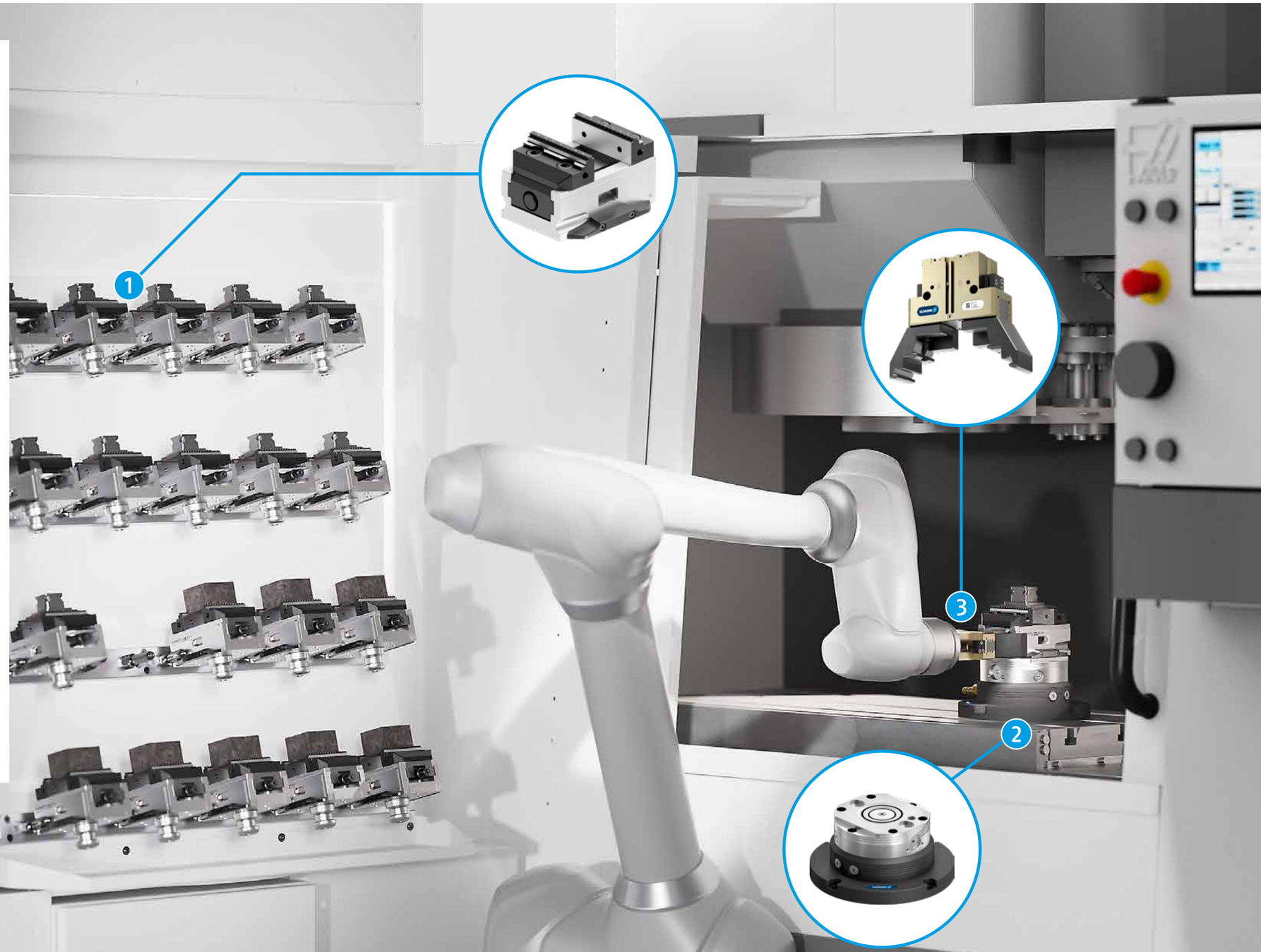
Vise automation

In the field of vise automation, specially designed vises are stored in a storage rack via storage pins. Loading and unloading or re-clamping for machining the sixth side can take place both outside and inside the storage rack. A robot places the vises on a specially designed clamping station in the machine tool using special gripper fingers. After machining, the vise and the workpiece are removed from the machine and placed in the storage rack.

Your advantages:

- **Low investment costs**
- **Very high reliability**
- **Low complexity**
- **Increase in efficiency**

1. Centric clamping or single-acting vises
2. 1-way clamping station as console version
3. Universal gripper including gripper fingers for vise handling



Workpiece automation

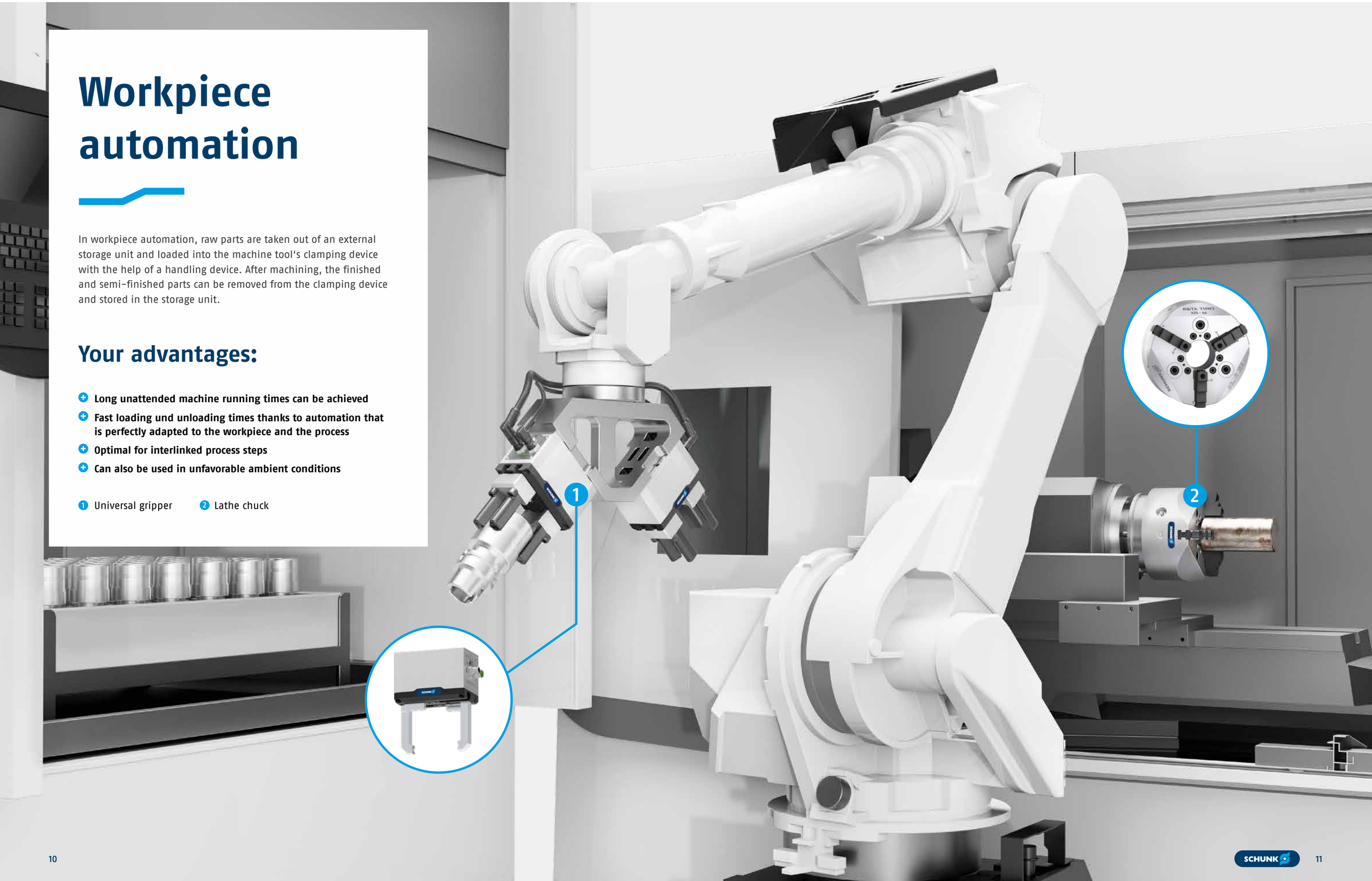
Workpiece automation

In workpiece automation, raw parts are taken out of an external storage unit and loaded into the machine tool's clamping device with the help of a handling device. After machining, the finished and semi-finished parts can be removed from the clamping device and stored in the storage unit.

Your advantages:

- **Long unattended machine running times can be achieved**
- **Fast loading und unloading times thanks to automation that is perfectly adapted to the workpiece and the process**
- **Optimal for interlinked process steps**
- **Can also be used in unfavorable ambient conditions**

1 Universal gripper 2 Lathe chuck



Pallet automation

Pallet automation

In pallet automation, workpieces are set up outside the machine in the clamping device which is located on a pallet. The complete pallet (including clamping device and clamped workpiece) is then loaded into the clamping station in the machine tool. The complete pallet including the workpiece is removed from the machine after machining. The workpieces are loaded into and unloaded from the clamping device outside the machine which can be done manually or automatically.

Your advantages:

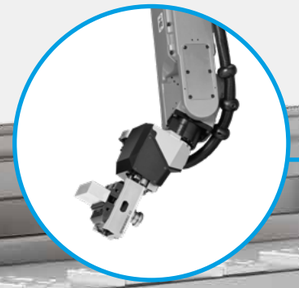
- **Different clamping concepts can be implemented, also suitable for small series**
- **Enables clamping of complex workpieces**
- **Also suitable for automation of heavy workpieces**
- **For machining operations with high requirements on the accuracy of the clamping situation**

1 Manual clamping system 2 Pallet-change master





Workpiece and
pallet automation



Workpiece and pallet automation

R-C2 is an example of an automation solution that combines features of both workpiece and pallet automation. The workpiece in the storage rack is gripped and clamped with the R-C2 at the same time. The clamping force block with the clamped workpiece is then loaded into the quick-change pallet system of the machine like a pallet. After machining, the R-C2 including the clamped workpiece is removed from the machine. The workpiece can now be set up again, clamped, and loaded for processing the second side. After production, the R-C2 including the workpiece is removed again, and the finish-machined workpiece is deposited.

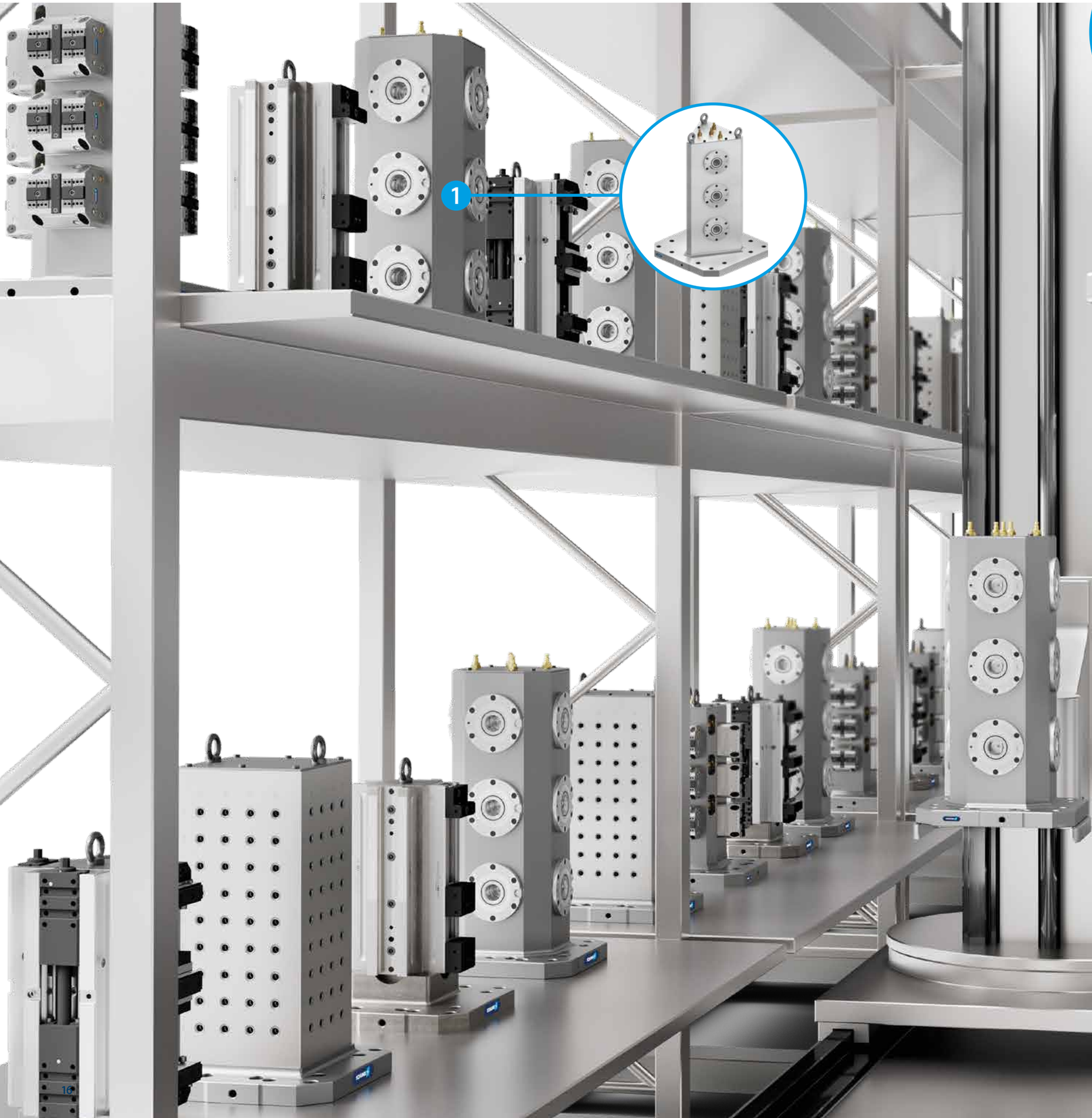
Your advantages:

- **High level of flexibility**
- **Less set-up work**
- **6-sided machining without manual intervention while maintaining high accuracy**

1 Clamping force block R-C2 2 Hydraulic expansion toolholder



Flexible manufacturing system





Flexible manufacturing system

Flexible manufacturing systems are multi-machine systems for machining workpieces. The individual machine tools are connected to each other via a connected transport and storage system to enable an automated material flow. In addition to the machine tools, there are transfer stations where the raw parts are prepared, the clamping devices are loaded and unloaded, and the finished parts are deposited.

Your advantages:

- **Perfect utilization of the machine, increased spindle running time**
- **Large number of avialable pallet spaces**
- **Perfect organization and logistics of production through stockpiling of raw parts, clamping devices and tools**
- **High flexibility in the selection of the production sequence**

1 Tombstone

2 Clamping force block

Your neutral partner for machine tending

We at SCHUNK are specialized in gripping and automation technology, toolholding and workholding. High-quality, sophisticated components that are used in the vicinity of your machine tool. Based on this experience, we understand what is crucial for effective machine tending. Regardless of the robot type and machine tool, we offer you neutral advice, and together, we will select the right type of automation for your application. If you do not plan and commission the entire system yourself, you can involve a system integrator or machine manufacturer.



Achieving a Healthy Factory through automation

Those who act economically, ecologically, and ergonomically responsibly make processes „healthier“ and their companies more successful. At SCHUNK, we see the solution in targeted automation of manufacturing processes. This makes growth more stable, relieves the environment, and employees benefit from more ergonomic and safer working conditions. SCHUNK is pleased to support you on your journey to a Healthy Factory – for greater sustainability and a better tomorrow for everyone.



You can find video examples in our machine tending playlist on YouTube.

schunk.com/machine-tending-playlist

Did we pique your interest?

We would be happy to walk you through the available options in a personal meeting. Contact us and let‘s work together to shape the future.

For further information, please visit: **schunk.com/machine-tending**

SCHUNK SE & Co. KG
Spanntechnik
Greiftechnik
Automatisierungstechnik

Bahnhofstr. 106 – 134
D-74348 Lauffen/Neckar
Tel. +49-7133-103-0
schunk.com
info@de.schunk.com

Follow us

We print sustainably

Printed product
CO_2 compensated
klima-druck.de
ID-No. 24161950
VDM+

You can find more information on the calculation methodology, offsetting and the selected gold standard climate protection project at klima-druck.de/ID.

1600631-12/2025