

The DECO 2000 system serving the medical industry

The COULOT company, a longstanding partnership

Located in central western France, in the town of Châtellerault, away from the traditional small-parts turning centre, the COULOT company forged a solid reputation in the field of medical parts.

At Châtellerault, at the heart of a residential quarter, 500 metres away from the town centre, Mr. COULOT opened the doors to his company. The COULOT company is the brainchild and passion of Gabriel COULOT.

Mr Gabriel COULOT, 44 years, runs the company with his wife. As a holder of a CAP in general mechanical engineering, Mr. COULOT started this job 17 years ago and quickly climbed the ladder to run his own company at the age of 30. The COULOT company was established in 1985 through the purchase of a small company on a lease management basis. In 1987, Mr. COULOT purchased the business; at that time the company only employed one person. Mr. COULOT, who received a salary in the form of a regional PME, provided the necessary impetus to his company as well as continuing with his work.

In 1988, Mr. COULOT left his job and devoted his entire time to the company. His first NC machine was purchased in 1989. It was an ENC-16 with a six to eight month lead-time, which was put into service at Moutier. The application was precision micromechanics. At



that time, Mr. COULOT had no knowledge of small parts turning whatsoever. He purchased this machine because it had an automatic bar feeder, and there was no need to stand at the foot of the machine each time a bar was completed. Mr. COULOT's company employed three people: Mr. and Mrs. COULOT and one labourer.

Nowadays, the company is still managed by Gabriel COULOT who also deals with the commercial side. His wife Christiane is in charge of administration and finance. Their assistant is Gérard ANTOINE, who is entrusted with the technical management and in

charge of the workshop and, since 1998, they have employed a head of quality control. The company is undergoing the final stages of certification to ISO 9000.

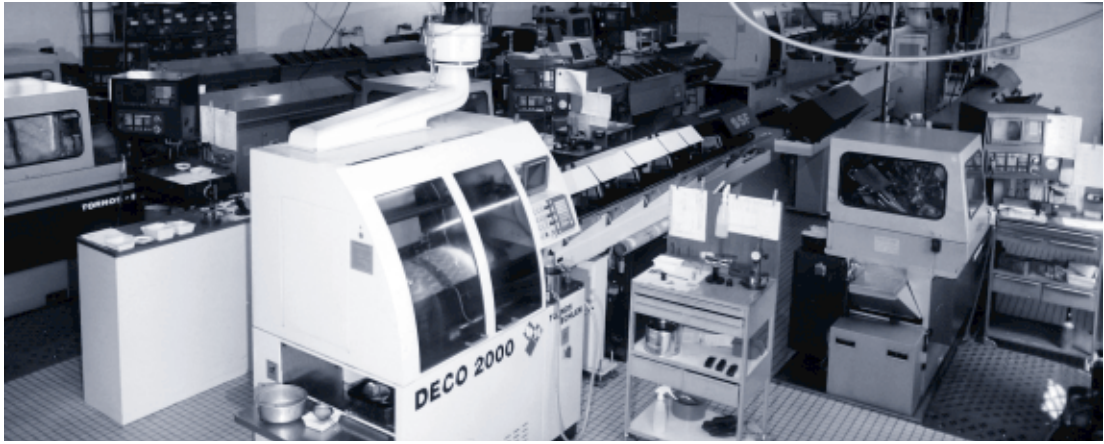
Fleet of machinery installed

Nowadays, the COULOT company is a «pure small parts turning company», as is witnessed by its fleet of machines:

- ◆ 1990: purchase of an ENC-164 and a second ENC-162
- ◆ 1991: purchase of an ENC-164
- ◆ 1994: purchase of an ENC-162
- ◆ 1997: purchase of a DECO-10
- ◆ 1998: purchase of a DECO-10
- ◆ 1999: purchase of a DECO-20, purchase of a DECO-13.

In addition to the TORNOS-BECHLER fleet, the COULOT company also has a lathe with couter headstock, with 7 mm bar capacity, a high-precision reworking lathe with axis C, a three-dimensional contactless, measuring machine with video, and an assortment of small machines.





Production

The company has a surface area of 700m². To date it employs 21 people and achieves a turnover of 12 million francs. Its activities are divided up as follows: 50 to 60% of activities for the medical sector, 25% for aerospace, 10 to 15% for the connector industry and various high-precision parts.

Its strong points are quality and delivery time, which have been reinforced by the delivery periods for the DECO-2000, which are considerably shorter than was the case for the old generation lathes. This meant that the COULOT company was quickly able to adjust its fleet of machines based on orders. Being a leader in its own market and operating very short delivery periods, its fleet of machines and high-performance organisation enabled this company to meet the demands of its clients almost as «soon as the letter had been read». In this case, customer satisfaction regarding delivery time and quality is rule number 1 for the COULOT company.

The COULOT company specialises particularly in difficult materials: TA6V titanium, 316L stainless steel etc. To this end, the company employs qualified professionals, the majority of whom were trained in-house, since Mr. COULOT could not find the proper qualified staff in the labour market.

With its ENC-16 range, TORNOS-BECHLER enabled the COULOT company to operate with a considerable degree of versatility for small series runs, whilst maintaining precision in the quality of parts. All parts are less than 5/100ths. With an average of three series changes per day, this means that Mr. COULOT occupies an important place in the medical turning sector.

Why the DECO-2000?

At the outset, the DECO-2000 was essentially purchased for machining connectors. In fact, it transpired that the competitiveness of parts produced on conventional NC machines was very limited. With its increase in production time from 30 to 50%, the DECO-2000 made it possible to become competitive again in this market.

With respect to the increase in the medical market for the company, Mr. COULOT shifted some of the production of parts to the DECO-2000. This meant that he could achieve a 50% reduction in production time, whilst attaining an improvement in quality and producing ever more complex parts.

Mr. ANTOINE, technical manager, discovered a precious tool in the TB-DECO. In fact, programming on a PC running in Windows led

to simplification at programming level, whilst the graphic environment and ease of synchronising operations, make it very convenient to use. The system, with its collision tests, ensures optimum work preparation, whilst considerably reducing machine downtimes when changing series. This system can work on databases (tool files, test programs etc.) and also stores the knowledge gained by the company.

Conclusion

The COULOT company will soon benefit from delivery of the DECO/2000-13 mm capacity, which it ordered, together with the TB-DECO version 5, which will further improve programming, and operating convenience compared with the current version installed.

As can be seen, TORNOS-BECHLER is an important partner. In fact, Mr. COULOT chose TORNOS-BECHLER at the outset because of its excellent reputation and because the TORNOS-BECHLER name has brought in new clients. What is more, in TORNOS-BECHLER he found an available partner, providing him with technical solutions and adapted machines, which were developed according to the latest requirements.

The partnership with TORNOS TECHNOLOGIES FRANCE is proving to be increasingly productive and Mr. COULOT appreciates the efficiency, quality and availability of TORNOS after-sales service.

*Raymond Paget
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