

Tornos cuts cycle times for BTMA member



As a fifth generation family business and BTMA member, Herve Engineering Ltd can boast a distinguished history of supplying high quality turned components to customers the world over. Today, one way the ISO9001 registered and accredited company competes successfully in the face of low cost global competition is to deploy 13-axis CNC sliding head auto technology from Tornos.

Founded in 1850, the current managing director of Herve Engineering, Ken Herve is undertaking the guardianship of this respected sub-contract manufacturer. Based in Shoeburyness, Essex, Herve Engineering is currently enjoying a period of growth and stability and in 2004 the company witnessed growth in the region of 17 percent: turnover currently stands at £1.2 million.

Part of the reason can be attributed to the company's planned

programme of investment in recent years, which has included the acquisition of two NC automatic, single spindle sliding headstock lathes with counter spindles from Tornos, a DECO 26 and DECO 20.

"Before we bought the DECO machines we assessed the marketplace and decided that they were the fastest machines available for the type of work we wanted to do. We looked at other models but Tornos appeared to be the pioneers of rapid movement. At Herve we have always believed in trying to be the leader rather than the follower and it was apparent that Tornos had the same philosophy," explains Mr Herve.

Buying two different size capacity DECO machines reflects Herve Engineering's ambition to offer the marketplace as much flexibility as possible. "One of our strengths is that we have never concentrated

on one particular 'envelope' of component size," continues Mr Herve. "It's a policy that has put us in a very strong market position and maximises our opportunity to capture and maintain new customers. After all, while we always welcome new orders, it's the customer's second and subsequent orders that we really want."

Today the two DECO machines fed by Tornos Robobar bar feeders are kept busy producing turned parts in batches of 1500 and above to industries such as electrical/ electronic, automotive, domestic appliance and gas. Typical materials include a selection of mild steels and non-ferrous metals as well as some stainless steels.

Tolerances are tight in keeping with the precision nature of the components being manufactured, 0.01mm in some instances depending on material.

Although the machines run 24 hours a day whenever possible, the biggest benefit offered to Herve Engineering is the completion of turned parts in a single operation. "While we could manufacture these parts before we had the Tornos machines, lead-times were longer because of the multiple set-ups required," he says. "Using the counter spindle and back operation functionality of the DECO machines has represented a halving of many cycle times at Herve. For instance, one particular stainless steel shaft we make features two tapped holes passing through a milled flat. Today this part takes 60 seconds to complete on the DECO 20 whereas before it was a two or three operation job. The machines have also allowed us to pursue more complex work."

Herve Engineering is a good example of UK manufacturing fighting back. "Despite all the obstacles put in front of us, such as the minimum wage, rising energy costs, rising raw material costs and endless legislation and red tape, we're still competing, we're still investing and we're as busy as ever. I can't emphasise enough the importance of investment. Our Tornos DECO machines particularly, have ensured that we can compete on a productivity level with anyone in the world," concludes Mr Herve.



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