

## COLLABORATION AND EXPANSION

During 2007, MGB, a company based in the Haute Savoie region of France, opened its doors to receive its 100th machine from Tornos. This machine celebrates the truly exemplary collaboration between Mr. Jean-Paul Burnier (recently retired from MGB) and Alain Tappaz (recently retired from Tornos).



For an exemplary partnership, from left to right: Mr. Alain Tappaz, Tornos France, Mr. Jean-Paul Burnier, MGB and Mr. Francis Koller, Tornos.

The past is very interesting indeed, but what does the future hold in store? Is it possible to use the strong points from the past as a foundation for building the future? To answer this question, Ms. Roda, CEO of MGB talks to us regarding the expansion!

### Collaboration

**decomagazine:** 100 Tornos machines delivered – In your opinion what is the recipe underpinning this shared success?

**Jean-Paul Burnier:** Without any hesitation, I can respond by speaking of the 'partnership' approach. For more than 30 years, the quality of relations between Tornos and MGB has been built on our knowledge of one another and on mutual respect.

Technical and commercial discussions have always been conducted in this spirit - we know and respect one another.

**dm:** People are important; but is that to say that the machines are less so?

**Jean-Paul Burnier:** Absolutely not! Maintaining excellent business relations is only essential if these are backed up robustly by technical elements, otherwise success is simply not there to be achieved. We are talking about a whole, which must be in perfect balance. Without this aspect, we certainly wouldn't have as many machines as we do, that is quite certain. Our plant now operates more than 100 Tornos machines and we work with different types for different applications.

## Interview

**dm: How did you come to acquire so many turning machines? Why do you work with so many different types?**

**Jean-Paul Burnier:** By seeking out innovative technical solutions, Tornos has enabled us to enter markets hitherto unknown to MGB and through its knowledge of its own customers needs; MGB has been able to collaborate with Tornos to fine-tune these new processes. In other words, we have been putting a "win-win" strategy into place.

**Alain Tappaz:** MGB has set us numerous challenges over the years and Tornos has applied itself to the task of finding answers to these.

**Jean-Paul Burnier:** For us, the Techno-Center at Tornos France is another demonstration of this willingness to listen to us and to work closely with us.

**dm: You are therefore a company that sources its equipment almost exclusively from one single supplier: isn't that a little dangerous?**

**Jean-Paul Burnier:** MGB has always had a clear vision of its strategy and has sought, through having a homogeneous machine shop, to be able to address the needs of its own customers in a flexible and responsive manner. We have certainly always made a point of verifying our initial choices and, until evi-

dence emerges to contradict this, these choices have proven to be correct and have been the most appropriate ones for our needs at the time.

**dm: Can you summarize this success in terms of two factors: firstly your business relationship and secondly the technological expertise underlying it?**

**Jean-Paul Burnier:** Yes. If we look more closely at these two distinctive aspects, we can say in technology terms that MGB has always evolved alongside Tornos. For the last 30 years, we have effectively advanced hand in hand, stage by stage. For example, the arrival of the controlled holding/stop function on the MS7 opened new doors for us, followed by CNC and of course by "the DECO saga".

**Alain Tappaz:** We have been able to develop this partnership because there is a real technology culture at MGB and the company has always sought to do as much in-house finishing work on components as it possibly can. Ever since the 1970's, whenever new features made their appearance, for example the two-spindle counter-drill or the 34DA conveyor, MGB has always spotted their inherent potential and has translated it into tangible results!



MGB premises in Marnaz, no shortage of carpet – the machines are so clean they look as though there are at an exhibition.



At MGB, all machines are equipped with facilities aimed at making the production environment safe, e.g. fire extinguishers.

**dm: Without going into details of the time when Tornos and Bechler were still in competition with one another<sup>1</sup>, I imagine that the arrival of the CNC machine must have transformed your production environment?**

**Jean-Paul Burnier:** With our MS7, we specialized in establishing contacts for connectivity purposes and with TOP 100; we started to offer highly complex body production. Thereafter, with the ENC we went on to develop ways of creating very short production runs and prototypes, then the DECO 2000 arrived on the scene. Tornos equipped us with one of the 3 prototype machines and we rapidly spotted the potential for development that we could tap into with this new generation of machine. Today, we have no reason to do anything other than congratulate ourselves on the choice we made.

### Expansion

Following this “historical” section, we met up with Ms. Véronique Roda, CEO, who talked to us “about the world”.

**dm: The history of MGB would appear to be linked to that of Tornos and vice versa: what can you say of the present and of the future?**

**Véronique Roda:** Today, MGB, while continuing its development of co-engineering in France, is also active on the North American continent and in China where we have production facilities<sup>2</sup>. Our factory in Shanghai enables us to satisfy the needs of locally-based customers in the telecoms and aeronautics sectors. We took the decision to maintain the quality and specific features that define MGB, and this necessarily implies that a component manufactured in China must achieve identical quality standards to an equivalent component manufactured in France! To achieve this, the processes employed in China are the same as those used in France.

**dm: Does this mean that you provide turnkey solutions? Don't you have to take account of specific local factors?**

**Véronique Roda:** Yes indeed, and the exchange of information is very much a two-way process. We provide MGB expertise, but in some cases solutions are developed locally. Our technology culture is our strong suit, but having things looked at in a fresh and different way can enable us to consider different ways of accomplishing the same set of objectives. This process is enriching for both parties.

<sup>1</sup> This was a period with which the author of this article was not familiar.

<sup>2</sup> See decomagazine 43!

**dm: Are there advantages to manufacturing in China?**

**Véronique Roda:** Of course! We are close to our customers and the local workforce is always involved in our local production operations. It is very important for us to be able to respond to the needs of our customers with this degree of proximity. Furthermore, the fact that we have a presence in China also opens doors to us in Europe because we are considered as "global suppliers".

**dm: Are you satisfied with your presence in China?**

**Véronique Roda:** We are in line with budgets. In terms of service, we are close to Tornos Shanghai and can advise that service standards there are delivered to the same quality standard as they are in France: i.e. very good indeed. For 2008, the local market will be pursuing its growth course and we will therefore be adding to our production capacity. It is worth noting that large corporations based in Asia require their own buyers there to supply their requirements on a local basis.

**dm: You also mentioned the USA: how are things for MGB in that region?**

**Véronique Roda:** Here too, we are in expansion mode. Until 2007, our presence on this market took the form of a joint-venture, but from 2008, we will be standing entirely on our own feet as MGB Inc.

**dm: Are you applying the same strategy in the USA as you are in Asia?**

**Véronique Roda:** Indeed we are! For us, it is most important that MGB quality standards are identical anywhere in the world and we apply the same "recipes" across all our manufacturing sites. The expertise and support of our French unit is absolutely essential to the success of our international operations. These factors enable us to assure consistency and globalization to our market offering.

**dm: In conclusion, could you say that MGB continues its expansion with the same trump cards as those that enabled it to grow in France?**

**Véronique Roda:** Absolutely so: wherever the customer is located, MGB is right there beside them with its technological expertise.

## DIFFERENT MACHINES FOR DIFFERENT NEEDS

At MGB, the machine shop is enormous and is adapted to suit different types of component. As seen earlier in this article, the development of this business is achieved in tandem with machines from Tornos. A new machine enables us to enter a new market ... a new market drives you towards new technological solutions, a new machine ... etc! The figures demonstrate that DECO has been a tremendous lever for growth.

With Micro 7<sup>3</sup> scheduled for testing at MGB from the first half of 2008, Tornos and MGB clearly intend to continue this exemplary form of collaboration.

<sup>3</sup> On the subject of Micro 7, see the article on page 39.

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