

50 DECO

machines in
expert hands...



...part of the reason for global success!

Interview



On delivery of the 50th DECO machine to MGB in Marnaz, France, DECO Magazine was interested to find out a little more about this company. A meeting was therefore arranged with Mr Jean-Paul Burnier, Chairman and Managing Director. One fine winter's day, our journalist, together with Mr. Alain Tappaz, director of TORNOS France, went to discover the secret of MGB.

DM: *Good day Mr. Burnier. 50 DECO machines is quite a large number – can you tell us a little about the use of these machines? What are your markets?*

JPB: MGB has been active throughout the world for almost 20 years. Nowadays, 90% of production is earmarked for electronics, automobile, aeronautic, telecommunications and defence with 70% of production for export. The DECO machines allow us to manufacture complex and intricate parts that are difficult to execute efficiently.

DM: *Aeronautics is very demanding in terms of quality and safety. Is that why you work with DECO machines?*

JPB: The main reason is the capacity of the machines. We execute

parts on our machines, which cannot be produced on others. We specialise in parts with a high added value... and DECO adds to this value.

DM: *The DECO machines provide you with numerous possibilities, but what is it that helps you achieve your strength?*

JPB: In fact, our main strength is our sensitive approach to a market that is constantly on the lookout. We are always looking for improved machining solutions on behalf of our clients. The DECO machines are a real benefit, but without the men, they are nothing!

DM: *Talking about human resources, do you have a special training policy?*

JPB: More than a training policy – we have a company philosophy that governs all our decisions. We simply want the best from all areas of the company. At MGB there is no unskilled staff. Our company consists of experts at all levels. The entire company organisation is based on the optimum deployment of the skills of each employee.

DM: *At the start of the century, Taylor proposed a scientific working organisation where everyone only performed the job intended for him. Can one say that MGB makes use of a sort of improved Taylorism?*

JPB: The concept of skills and responsibilities in our company is highly developed. In fact, each person executes a specific job, but

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From left to right: Valérie Burnier, Jean-Paul Burnier and Véronique Roda.



unlike Taylorism, the employees at MGB are all experts who are fully competent in their field and are also able to work the overall concept. Nobody works "without purpose"!

To achieve this result, we have an intensive training policy in place. New employees are coached by a mentor and soon become immersed in the "MGB procedures" and appreciate the global nature of the company and the importance of the individual in the achievement of common objectives.

DM: Is it easy for you to find "experts" in the labour market?

JPB: Absolutely not. It is very difficult to find the best and this is why we are also very keen to allow our colleagues to improve themselves within the company. For example, our technical manager, Mr. Yannick Besson started as a technician and then, as an alternative, completed an engineering course...

DM: So, would this be a major investment for the company?

JPB: Undisputedly! But it's an investment, which enables us to be

at the forefront of what's going on in small parts turning throughout the world. This is our strength!

DM: Let's talk about the world. We heard that MGB was going to open a production unit in China. Normally, companies that move to these markets are doing this to produce simple parts at low cost. Does this mean that you are diversifying to fill this gap?

JPB: That's a good question and to answer it, I suggest you talk to my daughter, Mrs. Véronique Roda, who has taken on the general management of the company.

VR: Hello. At the risk of surprising you, I can tell you that MGB will absolutely not be going down the route you mentioned earlier. Our strategy of being experts in producing parts, especially for the connector industry, still holds good throughout the world!

DM: Hello. But if you produce the same parts in China, wouldn't this mean that you were going to relocate part of your French production?

VR: Not at all! Our policy is to pro-

vide our clients with "MGB" quality. It transpired that a large number of clients are opening up new assembly units in China, mainly to serve the Asian market. They are seeking out local partners to produce the components required for their sector of activity. We are going to offer this service to our clients!

DM: TORNOS recently opened a commercial and service office in China. How did you regard this event?

VR: For MGB, this is a very positive point. The DECO machines we are going to install over there could benefit from a service quality that we hope is just as good as for the French market.

DM: To come back to "experts", who are deployed in every job in the company, how do you manage globalisation?

JPB: Marnaz is a true centre of skills. Our programmers have amassed considerable know-how, which is centralised in our database. If we want to execute a part in the USA or soon in China, we have recourse to a centre of skills that

in expert hands...



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supplies the "standard MGB" service. This means that operators throughout the world have access to a standard and universal procedure.

DM: *Does this mean that your setters can change the production site and go to China, for example?*

JPB: It's already happened, engineers went to the USA and it is quite possible that exchanges will take place in the future. It is obvious that the Chinese will come to Marnaz for training and that some of our experts will be seconded to Shanghai in a supporting role for short periods.

DM: *You are investing in training and really creating high-performance teams. How do you ensure that your colleagues remain with MGB?*

JPB: We are looking at the whole. In the first place, our colleagues are experts and not unqualified employees. We therefore offer a salary that is adapted to the development potential within the company. Also, our working philosophy is to provide

optimum working conditions in terms of noise, pollution and so on. We provide workshops where every machine is fitted with filters. The rooms are air-conditioned and the environment is pleasant. Our workshops are nothing like the old small-parts turning shops.

DM: *Will you adopt the same policy in China?*

JPB: Absolutely!

DM: *You often refer to "MGB philosophy". Visiting your workshops, we noted that this was present throughout, since all your machines are similar and benefit from the same environment. How did you set all this up?*

JPB: I have managed this company for 30 years with my brother, Pierre Burnier. Pierre was the specialist in applying this philosophy to the workshops and he was responsible for standardising our entire fleet. And even though he is now retired, every now and then he suggests other improvements. Without him, MGB would not be at this level of excellence. Now, together with my

daughters, the company is managed by the fourth generation!

DM: *After four generations, are there any future challenges left for you?*

JPB: The company is now managed by my daughters. Véronique is the general director and Valérie is the financial director. My contemporary, Yves Roda is technical director. The management team is completed by Yannick Besson, who is in charge of the small parts turning centre in Marnaz. As chairman of MGB, I support the management in its strategic development and nowadays, I am very closely involved in the China project and I'll be going back there on Monday! For us, the challenges are to provide an improved service for our clients.

DM: *In this context, you are technological experts and use high-tech products. What else can you do to stand out from the competition?*

JPB: It is really our intention to provide our clients with a complete solution by incorporating machi-



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ning and associated services in a fully integrated production facility. But this alone is not sufficient. In my opinion, the most important thing is to excel further. For example, we've gone a long way with the TB-DECO in that we've created dozens of macros so that we can always do that bit more and always provide our clients with added value.

DM: *Your machines, dedicated processes and your company philosophy are very important assets but are they recognised in the market?*

JPB: We are acknowledged as the leader in the connector market. Our experience enables us to offer perfect parts that match the requirements of all sectors. Our com-

pany is certified to ISO 9000 and in 2005 we shall be ISO 14000 certified. We are also certified to ISO TS 16949 in the automotive sector. We work with Airbus and its A380, which is revolutionising air transport. These certifications represent the "official stamp" of our processes, but they go even further with regard to the quality management of the company's products.

DM: *With your programming centre that operates for the world as a whole, does this not contradict the concept of the experts? If the setters did not develop the programmes...*

JPB: Exactly, they are the experts and develop their experience. The programmers take account of this experience and offer very high-

quality services. What is more, the setters can go from one machine to another, since everything is standardised. This guarantees the same quality and a "universal" philosophy in all the companies forming part of the MGB group.

DM: *What about the tooling? Do you also wish to ensure universality?*

JPB: Mr. Besson will be in a better position to answer this...

YB: Everything is standard at MGB – the programmes and tooling. The idea is to provide the setters with a "process" that is really as efficient as possible and allows them to go from one machine to another without problem. The programs are transferred to the machines via the memory card to the DECO 13a and 20a, and for the DECO 7/10a machines, we go via RS 232 using mobile PC stations.

DM: *What about the software developments at TORNOS, were you able to benefit from these?*

YB: Our series runs are quite varied – from 100 to 100,000 parts. But in all events, we carry out several dozen start-ups and program changes per month. The most interesting for us in the short-term is the "one key function" for transferring programs – this is a great simplification.

DM: *Thank you Mr. Besson. Unfortunately, Mr. Burnier has just given me a sign that we have come to the end of this meeting.*

Mr. Burnier, it would appear that MGB is constantly on the move



Mr. Jean-Paul Burnier and Mr. Yannick Besson.



Mr. Yannick Besson "talking chips" with Mr. M. Didier Perreard, setter.



and your on-going objective of offering more to your clients means that you have developed in several directions – both in terms of industrial methods and geography. Could you perhaps divulge some other ideas for the benefit of our readers?

JPB: In terms of communication with our clients, there is still a lot that has to be done. We shall set up an information system in real time on the web, for the benefit of our clients. All the information regarding offers, order monitoring and delivery tracking are now permanently available.

DM: *I can see that MGB is always rich in ideas and that this provides strength to the company. Regarding your machines, could you spare us a few words before we finish?*

JPB: After 9 years of experience with the DECO machines, I can tell you that we have achieved our goals. We can really offer efficient solutions for complex parts with high added value. We are constantly on the lookout for new products to execute simple parts ...

DM: *We shall pass on this message... I would like to thank you for this meeting and wish you every success for the future. We may write an article on China in a few years time – what do you think?*

JPB: The future will tell...

MGB

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| Production | France USA China from 2005 onwards |
| Scope of activity | 90 % connectors 10 % medical |
| Number of DECO machines | 50 |
| Number of employees | 85 people |
| Total number of machines | 130 |
| Export | 70 % |
| Comment | 100 % of small parts turning is carried out on TORNOS machines. The company also uses other types of machines, but purely for connectors. |



The story behind the logo ...

When questioned about the meaning of his logo, Mr. Burnier explained...

"The hands represent the connection, the main sphere of activity of our company, but also the partnership with all our clients. The "small squares" represent the spare parts we machine, which then make up the units for our clients. The world is underneath because our ambition is to have a global presence to service all our clients!"

The logo was created 10 years ago and the message is as pertinent as ever. If only one word should be applied to MGB and Mr. Burnier, it could be "visionary"...

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