

One-Stop Shop

Thanks to Metalcam's long experience and the quality of its modern processing plants, it can provide one single point of contact for the complete manufacturing process. Bonnie Yuill finds out more.

SPECIMEN

Metalcam SpA operates in Breno in the Italian province of Brescia, an area with a centuries-old tradition of ironworking. The current manufacturing company was officially founded in 1986 under the name Metalcam but its origins go back in time. Massimo Cocchi, Sales Manager, takes up the story. "Metalcam is a company that started at the beginning of the last century with the production of open die forging parts. Our major market is still the Italian market with around twenty per cent of business but now our activities are well-developed in all the countries in Europe: the UK, Germany, France, Spain and so on, but also in the US and South America, especially in Brazil, and in the Far East and also in China. We produce specific requirements for our customers, so usually the customer sends us drawings, specifications from the technical quality aspect and we produce the part they need and for this reason it's very important to offer our customers a very complete and very deep know-how about the production process and about the activities we have to perform to produce what they need."

So what else has made Metalcam so successful? Cocchi again. "Most other forging companies in the world are only forging companies and so they buy the raw materials, eg the steel, from a steel mill located in different countries but we do everything in-house so we have our own steel plant, our forging department,

our heat treatment department, machine shop and so on. So we perform every single production step in-house with our own equipment and with our own personnel, so we can offer to our own customers a really complete know-how."

Long term customer relationships

Metalcam currently produces forgings for a wide variety of business sectors and its input about how to best manage the production side of the process is highly valued by its customers who depend on Metalcam's ability to provide the best and most economical results. In terms of organisation, Metalcam is owned by three main shareholders, including the founder the Carlo Tassara SpA group which is the major financial holding company in Italy, according to Cocchi. "Then in 2008 Clessidra Sgr, the largest Italian Private Equity Fund, invested in Metalcam. Having a private equity fund investing in a production company is quite strange and this is due to the fact that they have identified in Metalcam a very strong solid company with a long experience in the market but also with a good and a profitable future – in fact they really enjoy our philosophy that we are looking only at the long term relationship with our customers and also for this reason they decided to invest in Metalcam."

The company operates an innovative employee shareholding scheme, whereby ten per cent of the company's share capital





is controlled by its employees, emphasizing the company's philosophy of the strategic importance of workforce involvement in the company. "We are one of the few companies, not only in Italy but I think in the world, where the operators are not only employees but are also shareholders of the company," explains Cocchi. "This has been a profitable and very safe investment for all of us and this also shows how solid the connection is between Metalcam and the people working for us. Metalcam has 270 employees here in Italy where we have our headquarters but we have four production plants, three in Italy and one in Germany because we have tried

to develop step-by-step different production facilities for a different range of parts in order to fulfill as best as possible our customer needs and to give our customers the opportunity to find in Metalcam one single supplier."

One single response

Underpinning the company's success is this end-to-end integrated production cycle with one single supplier taking care of every single production step. "We are responsible for every single step," says Cocchi. "It is one single point of contact, one single supplier, one single response. Another aspect of our success has been

the fact that we look at the long term relationship with our customers because to be successful in the market today, tomorrow and also in ten years' time, it's very important to establish a very deep collaboration partnership with our customers at different levels – so not only at the commercial level but also the technical level."

Metalcam takes safety and environmental issues very seriously and the company carefully monitors developments in Italian and international standards regarding quality, environment safety and keeps its own system constantly updated. "Safety and environ-

mental aspects are connected and very important," Cocchi emphasizes. "We have been here over 100 years so we are part of the area – we are not a guest, we are here to support and improve the quality of the area as best as possible."

So what of the future?

"As in all the global economy, the industrial situation of our market is a bit difficult," Cocchi reports. "We are fighting harder and harder to be successful in the market. We are also starting to see also some competition coming from the Far East, from the low-cost countries especially for what concern the production of forgings with an

easier production process and limited technical requirements; for this reason our goal is to concentrate our activities on high quality forgings with critical and high tech application (i.e. Oil & Gas and Energy sectors). We expect in any case a better situation starting from September 2010 because we have seen good signs from the market. Some projects have been released and approved and so we are confident that the end of 2010 and the start of 2011 will be the real time of the start-up of the market. Our market is suffering due to the fact that a lot of investment has been frozen, postponed or cancelled during the last year due mainly to the worldwide finan-

cial crisis. The fact that Metalcam is continuously involved in very strategic and critical projects by all our major customers is a real sign that we are a reliable partner." ■

