

TUBACEX Group: Advanced level in service

The TUBACEX Group, a multinational leader in the supply of seamless stainless steel, high-nickel alloy and nickel superalloy tubular products, is headquartered in Llodio, Alava (Spain). The company is facing a challenging phase with a strategic plan focused on Growth, Diversification and Excellence in service. Three pillars aim at providing high technological steel solutions developed in cooperation with customers, increasing the global efficiency of their projects and processes, and reducing total costs of ownership. This represents an unprecedented opportunity to reinforce a service division with a constantly growing product and service portfolio close to clients, while significantly promoting services offered to them. TUBACEX Advanced Solutions integrates the global network of own stock and service centers in Spain, France, Central Europe, Houston, Brazil, Middle East, Iran and India (TSS) and all TUBACEX companies are oriented to added-value services. Managing Aging Plant magazine talked to Mr. Manuel Sarabia, Managing Director at Tubacex Advanced Solutions, about the importance of a service division in TUBACEX Group and the opportunities that represents having an own master distributor.

Gillian Gane



Full service supplier

Founded in 1963 the TUBACEX group has evolved in its business concept from being a tube and fitting manufacturer to being an integral supplier moving forward in the value chain. The company today offers advanced stainless steel solutions to the final customer with a value proposal able to cover all the stages of the process, from the design to maintenance services, including production or installation services.

This positioning has implied an important boosting of its R&D Strategy and a customer oriented approach both physically – with a global network of warehouses and sales offices –

and conceptually, understanding their real needs and providing knowledge, abilities and experience in the development of tailored solutions. “TUBACEX Advanced Solutions arises as an opportunity to group all the services and added-value solutions we are mainly offering through TSS (TUBACEX Service Solutions), our own master distributor able to provide immediate product availability and a wide range of services upon request,” begins Manu Sarabia.

What makes you special a master distributor?

“Our main strength lies in being part of the TUBACEX Group. TSS is part of an

internationally renowned Group with wide experience in the manufacturing of stainless steel tubular solutions & fittings, which shares with its customers its high-value continuous innovation outputs. Our growing wide portfolio is guaranteed thanks to the global network of industrial plants and warehouses integrated in TUBACEX Group worldwide. We are able to get our products closer to our customers and complement them with a wide portfolio of value-added services upon request”.

TSS’ success lies in the TUBACEX Group experience in the distribution market. In 1972 the master distributor Cotubes was founded providing another outlet for TSS’ more than forty-five years’ experience, quality products and services, and attention to customers. This has resulted in the exporting of its successful model to other countries, creating a global network of own warehouses in a main hub with direct communication to the mills and a collaborative interaction with customers to understand and identify improvement opportunities together.

“Our main challenge is to make our customers’ business grow, improving their sales, revenues and cost-saving capacity and identifying improvement opportunities together in terms of production knowledge, commercial support, and administrative savings,” continues Mr. Sarabia.

What services do you currently offer to your customers?

“Our portfolio of services is very extensive and, depending on the region, it can be even wider: cutting, color coding, beveling, welding, special markings, polishing, cutting, third-party inspections or NDT, amongst others, but as part of the TUBACEX commitment in the development of new products the Group is also working on product treatments in collaboration with TUBACEX’s Innovation Plan.”

More specifically TUBACEX is working on customized solutions based on tubular advanced coatings through the subsidiary company TUBACOAT. This ceramic coating product demonstrates an outstanding corrosion resistance in different media and thermal conditions, high abrasion resistance, anti-adherent



and anti-fouling properties, and improved mechanical hardness. TUBACOAT offers efficient and environmental friendly solutions to meet customer needs, reducing operating expenses in really challenging applications, increasing the service life of critical components and thus minimizing the cost of maintenance over the investment lifetime. In addition to TUBACOAT, TUBACEX also offers shot peening services to improve the oxidation resistance of materials. This is an advanced surface treatment aimed at contributing to the improvement of oxidation resistance of materials under critical application service conditions. Shot peening activity was consolidated in 2015 when major projects were completed and recognition from leading customers was obtained. Aiming for operational excellence has been the cornerstone to achieving competitiveness and quality standards

for products and services demanded by the market. "We want our customers to perceive us as the global solutions supplier we have already become. Our services are part of our portfolio and we are open to explore new challenging opportunities to improve our customers' business performance".

The widest portfolio closer to customers

TUBACEX Group has become a world leader in seamless stainless tubular solutions achieving this position through both strong organic growth in value added products and services, and relevant acquisitions in recent years. The company covers a manufacturing range in stainless steel and high nickel alloy tubes and fittings up to 72" OD for the oil & gas, petrochemical and power generation sectors, amongst others.





"The maximum range we offer in our stock and service centers is 16" OD for tubes and fittings, which covers the real needs of the distribution market based on our business experience. We also include bars and billets from R165 to R500 in our portfolio", elaborates Mr. Sarabia.

The synergies created with the manufacturing mills enables TSS to add small orders to larger production series, optimizing manufacturing resources and production times. "Bringing our products closer to our customer represents a cost and time saving opportunity", continues Manu Sarabia.

What makes your company unique and special?

"Our customer oriented approach makes us stronger by enabling us to understand our customers' challenges, thus allowing us to offer

specific high technological solutions. This is possible thanks to our fully integrated production model, with total control of all production stages from steel manufacturing, to production and subsequent distribution and sale. Having our own proprietary steelworks provides our facilities with huge production flexibility in regard to tubes, offering both the possibility of making special castings as well as reducing delivery times on urgent orders. Besides this, our manufacturing mills cover the widest portfolio on the market in stainless steel and high nickel alloy tubular solutions: pipes, tubes and fittings with ranges up to 72" OD thereby bringing them closer to our customers through the largest master distributor network (TSS). Finally, we have developed our own operational excellence program (TxPS) in our mills; a continuous improvement system with significant and

sustainable results in all mills in terms of ongoing and radical improvements (customer service, productivity, yield evolution, H&S, amongst others) and preventive maintenance".

What are your plans for the future?

"We plan to continue strengthening our value chain from the first stages (concept and product design) to post-sales operations (installation and maintenance), making the most of the synergies inside the TUBACEX Group companies and boosting our R&D activities in co-operation with technology centers. In terms of distribution we aim at boosting our TSS business model, expanding our commercial presence to offer our distributor customers a wide range of products in stock with full availability anywhere in the world, as well as an array of high value-added services".