

Customers come first at Aerodyne Alloys

"Customers today want to buy more than just a piece of metal," says President of Aerodyne Alloys, Greg Chase. "They are in need of solutions and services that save them machining time and money. Moreover, they tend to want to deal with a supplier who understands them and their businesses, and who they feel comfortable with." Tie this in with one-stop shopping for specialized alloys from an immense stock range, fully-certified process quality, and response & delivery times that have been brought back to an absolute minimum, and you have a tall order to fulfill. Aerodyne Alloys do this admirably. Stainless Steel World recently talked to staff at this leading international supplier and processor of high-temperature specialty alloys about their unique way of working with customers that has delivered them a special market position in their field of industry.

By John Butterfield

Aerodyne Alloys is not new to the high-temperature specialty alloy business. They were founded in 1979 and since then have built up a considerable

reputation based on quality, excellence, and customer service; becoming a major distributor of such products as nickel, cobalt, titanium, stainless steels, alloy steel,

alloy X, and alloys 718/625. "Over the years we have developed an inventory of materials management system that really satisfies our customers' needs," continues



Greg Chase



Robert Jergei



Gordon Anderson

"is comparing our business model to going to a local street corner dry cleaners. We have the same kind of philosophy, practicality, and speed. Likewise we are a very transactually centered company, processing orders in a matter of minutes. For instance, it would not be uncommon that, if a customer placed an order with us right now, that within minutes it would be collected in our warehouse and shortly afterwards somebody would be packing it and getting it ready to ship out. In a similar way, a customer can log in to our system, see what is in stock, talk to us over the phone, and gain advice as to deliveries – all in a matter of minutes. Our processes have been streamlined and leaned out to the point where we are built for speed because, at the end of the day, we know that getting orders quickly and accurately to our customers is essential to their success as well as ours." This applies whether the customer needs specialty alloys in bar, plate or near net shapes – Aerodyne Alloys does not keep their customers waiting. More often than not deliveries will be arranged the same day/next day. Furthermore, it does not make any difference whether it is a big customer who calls in connection with regularly scheduled alloy supplies or whether it is a customer calling about a one-off order – their goal is to be consistent and fast in handling everyone. "Our services do not end here, however," continues Greg Chase. "We also assist clients by contracting their specialty metal requisites at a set price, storing them in inventory and only delivering them when they are needed." Going another step even beyond this, Aerodyne Alloys can also

Greg Chase. "We have also followed trends and changes in the marketplace very carefully, honing in on specific alloys and sizes to the point where we will have customers who call us up on a daily or monthly basis for help and advice. It would be very rare for any of these regular contacts to ever find us out of stock in the sizes and materials they need most. We keep up-to-date with requirements and in this way we monitor trends and react to them accordingly."

Built for speed

When making choices, Aerodyne Alloys has always put its customers at the top of the agenda as, for example, is shown by the considerable investments they have made in providing a materials management system designed to help customers placing orders. "A good analogy," says Greg Chase

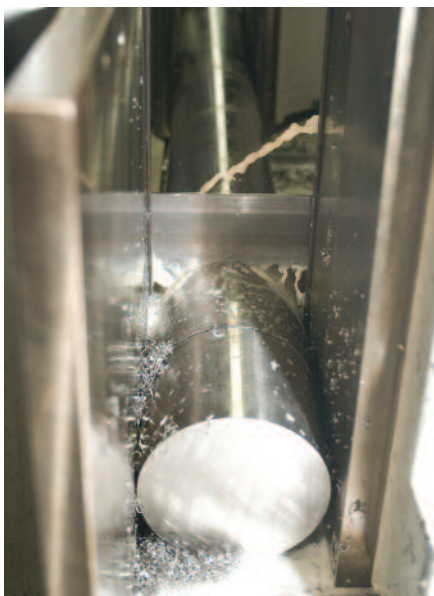




provide its customers with software to help them with their inventory management system. The program monitors everything throughout the process whether its located in one of our four service centers or in their suppliers' mills, thereby giving customers inventory control. Not only have many of their customers found that it saves them time and money, just as important is that it takes advantage of advanced planning and scheduling solutions allowing Aerodyne Alloys to employ sophisticated analytical technologies to optimize customer inventories and responses.

Certification guaranteed

"No matter whether customers need high-temperature alloys for the oil & gas, chemical & petrochemical, nuclear, or aerospace industries, Aerodyne Alloys always guarantees the quality. "Every pound of metal that we purchase is fully certified," says Greg Chase "so customers are assured of repeatability quality every time. We also supply the certificates." This year the company has further updated its quality approvals making them AS 9120 and ISO 9001. It is also Pratt & Whitney and Rolls Royce approved and sells material certified to GE S400 and DFARS requirements.



Four locations

The company works from four service centers spread around the United States, each having a slightly different inventory according to the industrial segments that they serve. Firstly, there is a facility in the East cost region at South Windsor, Connecticut, which includes corporate offices, an alloy processing plant and an alloy service center. Then there is another in Houston, Texas, which was acquired in 2008 and specializes in the distribution of super alloys, like alloy A286/660, 6-4 titanium, and other alloy round bars serving the aerospace, oilfield, petrochemical, and power generation industries. Since then the company has opened up a further two facilities: one in Greenville, South Carolina that opened in the Summer of 2010 and another state-of-the-art alloy service center that opened even more recently in 2011 at La Miranda, California. "All the centers are connected to the same computer system so can access the same data. It's very important these days says," Gordon Anderson "whether you are a vendor, a customer, or a staff member at Aerodyne Alloys we like to feel that you have access to 'DOD' – Data on Demand. It personalizes the contact with us."

Changing client needs

Other alloy services that are offered are diameters at 0.0625 inch increments, precision bar sawing, and large capacity plate and bar to tolerances of 0.62 inch. "The idea behind this," says Greg Chase "is that we can handle blanket orders for clients throughout the year and we will actually pre-produce cut parts for them and store them on the shelf until needed. In this way we offer near net shapes in some of our alloys to as little as 1/16" as opposed to the more regular 1/8", which saves our customers additional machining and scrap buzz. Our water-jet cutting machinery can also cut up to 9" bars and produce near net shapes out of flat products."

In addition to producing near net shapes in plate products, Aerodyne Alloys notice that the times are changing rapidly. Whereas ten years ago customers would ask for a bar and would cut it themselves, today they are more likely to ask for 100 pieces 1 5/8" long. Accordingly, clients are provided with a hockey puck as opposed to full length bars. As a result Aerodyne Alloys have tripled their saw capacity during the past five years. "We get a lot of orders in this way," says Greg Chase.

One of the things the company is working on is further upgrading their internal operating system so that even more of the processes and admin will be automated. "Part of this ERP system software called 'Aerodynamic PaperWork' came online two years ago," says Gordon Anderson, Director of IT, "but what the new developments will mean for customers is that they can log in online and get, for example, their Mill Test Reports and certificates whenever they want them. Similarly, their invoices, shipping times, certificates and packing lists will be sent out automatically to them. This serves a double purpose in that it not only provides the customer with a double check on an order but also gives an update of the progress the order makes from confirmation to eventual receipt in much the same way as orders with amazon.com. We hope to have the complete system in full operation by 1 October of this year."

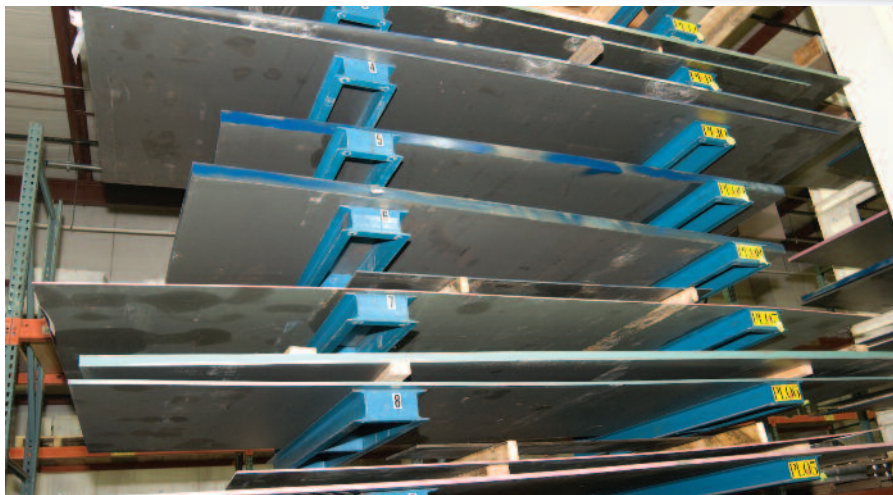
Being special for the customer

So how is the 'Aerodynamic Team' special for its customers? "In the first place," says Robert Jergel, Vice-President of Sales "our



inside and outside sales teams put you at ease when doing business with us. We deal with people and not numbers and they are professional and have integrity. They go out on the road so much that I call them our 'road warriors'. They do this to ensure that we know customers' needs and see how we can optimize our services to look after them. Doing this through face-to-face contact, where possible, is just so much better. However, just as important is the fact that our team is knowledgeable and experienced in all aspects of the alloy industry – most of our people have in fact been in the industry for almost twenty years. We have, moreover, specialists who attend to each of our chosen markets fields whether it be oil & gas, aerospace, or power generation so that they are able to act as consultants for clients. A further factor is we also tend to hold on to our staff. They're very happy with us, which makes for a strong productive team and this works to our customers' advantage by winning them business and making them more productive. They will maybe offer a client a better alloy, a cutting service, a tailored logistic or delivery service that they had not thought of. Alternatively, we are not afraid to be critical, constantly looking at ways to improve ourselves and our company. These factors separate us from the competition."

The team has a track record in problem solving from administrative staff, right through the warehouse, to sourcing, ordering, cutting, packaging, and shipping – the company always ensures that customers have access to the best team suited to meet their needs. "When you call, for example, the Customer Service staff will immediately have your data on screen for reference and can track what and when you've ordered with us so you are known to them even though your regular contact might not be available that



day. It gives clients a sense of security and confidence. Moreover, the company also has a SOS Department (Specialists on Sourcing) so that if you really need an alloy but cannot trace it we will find it for you," adds Greg Chase. "Another thing you will find refreshing about us is that we have an open door policy so customers can always speak directly to management should they so wish, me included."

The future

"Looking forward," says Greg Chase "our efforts are currently to increase our footprint globally and become more of an international player even though we are naturally convinced that there are still plenty of growth opportunities for us in the United States. We are currently looking at some acquisitions that will enable us to take on this role." This means that in addition to being present in the United Kingdom, Aerodyne Alloys also wants to establish itself in mainland Europe as well. They have also recently contracted some sales representative organizations in Japan and Canada with the aim of further expansion and they have a joint venture with a sister company at a facility in Suzhou, China.

The future indeed certainly looks bright for Aerodyne Alloys. With a clear vision of where they are going, a very motivated team of workers, and customers who feel valued and looked after their further growth seems guaranteed. As Greg Chase concludes: "For the uninitiated, I can only say, we value you, your business, and the opportunity to make you even more successful so try us out and see the difference!"

About O'Neal Industries

Aerodyne Alloys is a subsidiary of O'Neal Industries, which is a member of O'Neal's High-Performance Metals Group – a world supplier and processor of specialized high-temperature alloys (nickel, cobalt, stainless and titanium-based alloys) and super alloys (nickel and titanium).

The O'Neal High-Performance Metals Group is made up of Aerodyne Alloys, Supply Dynamics, TW Metals, Philip Cornes, Stainless Tubular Products, United Performance Metals, and Plus Ten Stainless. The partnership of these companies provides an extremely wide selection and supply of high-performance/high-temperature metal products. Subsidiaries like Aerodyne Alloys are leaders in their specialized metal fields. They often work with each other to serve as a one-stop solution to a customer's varied needs and by working together they enhance O'Neal Industries' customer service contributions to be able to fulfill almost any customer's needs even when considering specialized services and metals.

