



THAT SOUNDS MORE LIKE A PARTNERSHIP THAN A STANDARD SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP.

You're right, and I think it's a great example of how we do business. Rather than just talking about how our existing tooling can be used in their application—which is definitely the case, in many instances—we work with our customers to learn about the market they're involved in, the processes involved, the equipment required, and then we develop tooling to meet their specific needs. We also keep those tools in stock so they can ship quickly to prevent any avoidable downtime. Tooling that we've developed specifically for the wind industry includes the new Double Octomill, which is a 16-edge face-milling insert, our Graflex boring bar system, and a complete range of drilling, boring, and reaming tools. We've also developed the Duratomic insert coating technology, which allows for extremely high cutting speeds and drastically improved tool life. We have tools that are used for gashing pitch and yaw gears, including machining the teeth, and we're working on special radius cutters for helical milling. Seco tools are used to manufacture the gearing and parts of the main frame, the hub, the main shaft, and our milling cutters are used to prep the bevel around the plate prior to welding tower sections. So our tools really are touching most of the parts in a standard wind tower and turbine.

TELL US ABOUT THE COMPANY'S ENTRY INTO THE WIND MARKET.

The Seco Group has been involved in the wind industry for many years, from a global standpoint, but Seco Tools really started focusing on the North American market about five years ago. Then in 2009 we decided to hold a series of seminars for Michigan-area automotive manufacturers who were thinking of expanding into making wind components and wanted to know what was involved. We brought together members of the local and state government, including legislators and representatives from the governor's office, and we addressed everything from where seed money to fund this venture could be obtained to what types of capital investments, such as equipment and tooling, would be required. A member of the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) attended, along with companies such as DMI Industries, which manufactures wind towers, to provide additional insights. The event was very well received, and not only did it provide attendees with valuable information for making their plans, it helped us chart our own course in terms of really beginning to provide solutions that are specific to the wind energy market.

I WOULD THINK POTENTIAL CLIENTS ARE IMPRESSED BY SECO TOOLS' ATTENTION TO DETAILS.

That and our close relationship with the Seco Group and its R&D labs in Sweden, which has allowed us to harness knowledge gathered over many years in the more-mature European wind industry to share with our customers throughout North America. From a physical standpoint we have Seco Technical Centers located all around the world, with wind-power machining specialists available to assist OEMs and others overcome obstacles in their design and manufacturing activities. And we're constantly working to resolve "persistent customer issues," or PCIs, whether that involves supply chain efficiency or engineering outsourcing, which is something we're increasingly being asked to provide. So the Seco philosophy involves understanding a customer's applications so that we can help them overcome the challenges they encounter along the way to achieving their production goals. Because when that happens, it means that we've achieved our own goals as well. ↵