

A-T Controls - Providing engineered solutions

Providing automated valve solutions for process industries since 1994, A-T Controls, Inc. manufactures actuation systems for valves and dampers including pneumatic actuators, electric actuators and electro-hydraulic actuators, as well as manual ball valves and automated ball valve packages to control industrial valves. The corporation operates out of its new 122,000 square foot facility in Cincinnati, Ohio and similar 43,000 square foot location in Stafford, Texas, with several sales offices throughout North America. Supplying products for virtually every industrial sector, A-T Controls is heavily present in the oil & gas, refining,

petrochemical, chemical processing, pulp & paper, mining, transportation, food & beverage, pharmaceuticals, ship building, HVAC and power industries.

Valve World Americas had the opportunity to visit A-T Controls' Cincinnati headquarters to meet with President and CEO, Brian Wright to discuss the company's future growth plans, wide product range and the importance of forging lasting client relationships.

By Sarah Bradley



"When we started the company, we began with pneumatic actuators and accessories. Our goal at the time was to provide automation, actuators and quarter turn accessories to mount on any company's quarter turn valves. We did that for a couple years and kept coming across the same valves to put a switch, solenoid or actuator on, so we decided to look for valves as well so that we could offer a full package and give customers the complete assembly," explained Brian Wright. "We started with valves in 1997 – starting with three piece valves in simple **pre-sized, pre-engineered, pre-priced packages** to make it easy for people to select automated valves. We expanded from there, adding flanged valves, three-ways, stainless and carbon steel, sanitary valves and fire-safe valves. We have added resilient seated and high performance butterfly valves in the last couple years. We treat them the same way – trying to pre-package as much as we can to make it more efficient and easier for our distributors and customers."

Efficiency and organization is an important factor in everything A-T Controls pursues. From the organization of product packages to the layout and cleanliness of their facilities, Brian believes that ensuring structure and systematic management to create efficiency in all aspects of the company will benefit clients by providing easy product

selection, readily available aid and fast delivery.

"The more efficient and organized we are, the more efficient you are going to be in selling product, getting it out the door and having high quality product with your name on it," said Brian. "Our goal is to make it easy to do business with us – from using our catalog for easy valve selection with the perfect trim and correct materials for your application to optimally organizing our warehouse for order preparation. **The more we do to make things easier for the customer and to accommodate their needs, the more likely they are to want to come back to work with us. It's our company culture.**"

A-T Controls continues to develop the product line based on customer requests and paying close attention to the latest developments and requirements to meet their customers' needs. The company relies on its distribution network and manufacturer representatives across the United States, Canada and parts of Central and South America to sell and service its wide product range. Having established a Distributor Council that meets biannually, the company is able to receive feedback from customers regarding new product ideas, application needs, industry trends and more.



"We have **strong personal relationships with our distribution**, based on trust, history and our ability to just listen. The distributor council is a listening vehicle where we can find out what our customers are thinking, whether we are doing right or wrong, and whether it's good, bad or ugly. We learn from that. We are able to present products that we are considering and get feedback to help us prioritize and develop based on their needs," said Brian.

Another way they are striving to make it easier to do business is by paying close attention to their clients' thoughts and concerns, recently releasing a number of "How-To" tutorial videos on their website

across. We would walk people through it over the phone, but we found it was easier to provide a step-by-step video directly on our website, that would allow them to have a visual and a demonstration of how to do it," maintained Brian. "People really like to go on and learn something, which is why we made them entirely instructional and based on the topics suggested by our distribution council. These videos have been very well received."

PRIME PRODUCTS

With the goal of providing their customers with the finest quality, highest value prod-



to address on-going questions or requests from customers regarding their products and applications.

"We would get a lot of people contacting us to request information or assistance on calibrating a positioner or setting a limit switch or other issues they would come

ucts available today, A-T Controls' extensive inventory and highly experienced staff are able to provide customers with solutions for their valve and actuator requirements with quick turn-around.

A-T Controls offers complete automation services for quarter turn valves.



through quality product and responsive action



The Triac brand actuators and accessories are well known as quality Quarter turn products. The company manufactures precision mounting kits to automate other manufacturers ball, butterfly and plug valves. Pneumatic rack and pinion, heavy duty scotch yoke, and electric actuator offering allows the flexibility to solve their customers needs and accessorize with virtually any control requirements.



Custom control schematics are available through their engineering department and facilitate their solutions oriented approach to the market.

The company offers manual and automated ball valves. A-T Controls' inventory is primarily wcb and 316ss, although they stock and offer other alloys and valve trim options. They have repackaged, pre-engineered and even pre-priced complete automated valve assemblies. Each package is clearly identified by a comprehensive part numbering system that details valve size, materials, end connections, automation and accessory configurations.

In addition, the company offers both resilient and high performance butterfly valves, both manual and automated. Again, pri-



marily wcb and 316ss, but many other material options are available.

A vast and varied inventory allows A-T Controls to provide product beyond general industry expectations. They pride themselves on responsiveness with regard to communication, as well as product deliveries. Their product is carefully packaged so as to reach the customer in the ideal condition.

The company's website provides several options for product selection, as well as drawings and backup technical documentation.

With strong engineering and application expertise, A-T Controls provides high quality ball valve packages from 1/4" to 24" in multiple end connections and port configurations. Valve materials include carbon steel, stainless steel and numerous high alloys.

While known for superior service in automated valves and day-to-day automation and controls, A-T Controls also specializes in offering solutions to more unique and difficult applications.

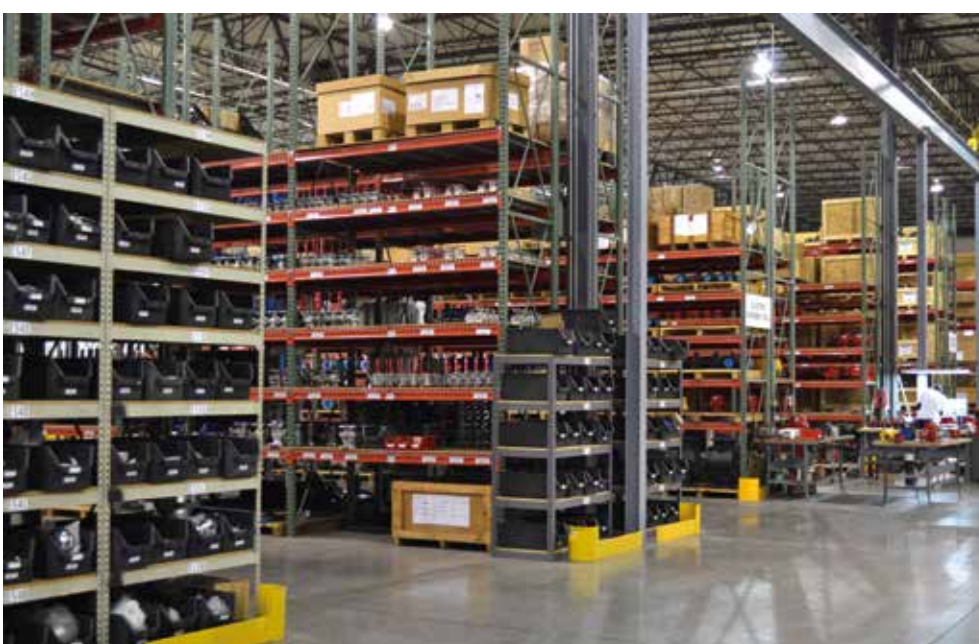
"We are a **solutions-oriented sales group** - we manufacture products based on solving problems. We have six full time engineers that cover everything from drawings to solutions and support to control valve

sizing. Much of our products are based on customers requesting solutions and applications assistance from us. We are an engineering solutions oriented company," explained Brian.

With the ability to not only automate the company's own valves, but quarter turn offerings from nearly all other manufacturers, A-T Controls is able to meet the specific needs of their clients. The company's wide line of products is complemented by a broad accessory line which includes Solenoid Valves, Filter Regulators, Limit Switches, Proximity Sensors, Positioners, Manual Overrides and Customer Valve Mounting Hardware.

All assemblies are calibrated, tested and properly packaged to assure that the user receives the exact product required for their application. Every actuator and actuated assembly is provided with a serial number upon completion which allows for easy traceability.

"We do everything from torque testing new products, cycle testing valves and actuators, material analysis and all kinds of tests for endurance. We are very cognisant that we have to be on top of new regulations, different certification requirements and expectations in different countries," shared Brian.



LOOKING AHEAD

Though currently focusing primarily on the North American marketplace, A-T Controls is looking to expand international sales, planning to focus on Latin America and Asia in the future and place more investment in other industries.

"We have a very broad offering and we do everything from pharmaceutical to pulp and paper, petrochemical, oil and gas, food and beverage and on. That keeps our exposure spread across the board, but we are planning to go further into the oil and gas market and also more into the sanitary applications," Brian revealed.

With plans to further expand the business and product offerings, A-T Controls foresees a bright future for the company, its distributors and customers.

"My partner and I sold the company in 2006 and we have continued to grow it nicely since then. Our business model has been successful and we intend to continue to expand through organic growth, as we have in the past, through acquisitions or a combination of both. We expect the business to triple in the next seven years," said Brian.



A-T CONTROLS AT A GLANCE

A-T Controls is part of Pon Holdings, a Dutch family business that was founded in 1895. Pon employs almost 13,000 people at more than 250 locations in 27 countries around the world. In particular, A-T Controls is part of the PVI business group.

