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What’s a typical day like for you at Seco Tools?

It’s a little bit different now since the Coronavirus hit. We all have a little bit different way of working. There are a lot more virtual meetings and things like that. Generally, in the office, the main thing I’m doing is checking the numbers to make sure the products sell. At the end of the day, we need to satisfy the customers’ needs in order to drive shareholder value, and that’s what we’re trying to do. We want to address those main customer challenges. We do that by looking at the overall product line and making sure that we have the right product mix and availability where we need it. Then, it’s just helping the sales team on any product-related issues that come up.



Tell us about Seco’s newest grades of stainless steel.

There are two grades (TM1501, TM2501) that are enhancements on the existing grades that we have, but then we’ve also added a new TM3501 that is the primary choice for tougher duplex and super duplex material, super austenitic stainless steel. It’s a little bit tougher and can handle more of those aggressive applications such as heavier depth of cut and interruptions. It’s really impact-resistant. Previously, we had a couple of grades that served us well. Now, we’ve got this ultra-tough grade that can attack a new avenue of business for us.

What was the driving need behind this newest grade?

Mainly, it came down to customer challenges, what they need, what we saw them facing, and how we could provide a solution for them. We saw that they were being challenged to get the parts out the door faster by the people they are supplying. We could help them do that a couple of ways: By making our inserts have the capability to run at higher parameters, and also longer in cut time. We tried to address that with the Duratomic® coating. We wanted to offer the ability to have consistency and security in those more aggressive, heavy interruption, tougher applications with the TM3501.

Specifically with these materials, we’ve learned over the years that you can see consistent wear patterns and challenges that the customer faces. Some of these materials are gummy and sticky, so you need an edge that’s going to resist some built-up edge. Then, some of them are aggressive, so you need a grade that is going to help resist depth-of-cut notch and other key failure modes. We’re just trying to address the main customers’ needs and advance them as they need.

What is the Used-Edge detection technology, and how does it work?

That is a chrome flash coating on the top of our inserts. As soon as that insert comes in contact with the material, the operator knows that is the used edge. When we were developing our grades for steel material, we were doing a spot check in some of the customers’ recycle bins — just grabbing a handful of inserts and checking

them on the workbench. We were noticing that anywhere between 11 percent up to, in some places, 20 percent of our handfuls had edges on these inserts that could still be used, and they were brand new. To the customer, that’s just dollars flying right out the door in that they’re not using their tool to its full capacity. This was

something easy that we saw we could do to help quickly identify and help the customer show where and what inserts have been used and help keep some money in their pockets.

Overall, the main technology is in the texturing of the coating. That chrome flash layer is just an additional benefit we saw that would help the customers with one of their needs.

Tell us about the FF1 chip breaker and how it makes the TM3501 grade of stainless steel unique.

TM3501 is pretty versatile. We discussed that it was tough grade for heavy interruptions, and depth-of-cuts, but also you can use that toughness at a lower surface footage. We noticed early on that we had customers that were running larger components on some older machines that couldn’t get to the surface footage needed for some of those harder grades to run. In those finishing applications, they need a different style chip breaker. By applying that FF1, we were able to provide a solution for a wide variety of those customers. Even on the smaller components with a shorter time in cut, the TM3501 grade really excels.

What has the industry response been in rolling out the new grades?

The stainless-steel grades were released in September 2019. So, it’s been on the market for a little bit. We’re always hoping to see positive industry response. You’re never going to satisfy 100 percent of the customers. Everybody wants that unicorn or that magical Pegasus that works all the time but, overall, the market reception has been good for all of this product line. In a lot of cases, we were able to increase the productivity or the tool life on our existing applications. We’ve also been able to excel above some of the competition in existing applications and take over some business that way.

Again, one of the biggest things for us is our Duratomic® coating technology, we’re aligning those crystals to bring that coating in smoother and make it a little bit harder and tougher. That, along with the chrome flash coating, are a couple ways we have worked with the customer to help provide solutions for their challenges. We’re trying to be more engaged with the customer to provide sensible solutions geared toward their challenges. 📧