

## A Tooled-up Success Story

The evolution of Surfine Tools, a well-established manufacturer of power steering system components in Coimbatore, is a typical success story of determined entrepreneurs starting from scratch and eventually building up a fine organization with hard work, grit and vision; and also, by the way, with machines from the Ace Micromatic Group, supported by technical help and service from Micromatic Machine Tools.

Mr. V. Sriram, the founder, recalls his intense desire to do something on his own after getting his degree in engineering in 1977. But he had no capital, and no clear idea on how to become an entrepreneur, and had to take recourse to employment, till opportunity struck in 1990. He took advantage of a Central Government scheme extended to technocrats. Under the NEDA scheme, he secured a loan to set up a unit in partnership with Mr. N. Rajendran to manufacture burnishing tools, an import-substitution project, which took off quite well. "I attribute our success to the excellent grinding machine supplied by Micromatic Machine Tools. It proved to be a dependable tool-room machine, giving consistent quality," says Mr. Sriram.

Spurred by the hard-won initial success, the partners started looking for opportunities to widen their horizons. "At that time we had no product in mind and only a dream in our heads," Mr. Sriram remembers. "Mr. Nandan of MMT spoke to us about the advantages of CNC technology in manufacturing processes. We were convinced and we acquired our first turning center from Ace Designers in 1996. It indeed proved to be a turning point in our business. We were among five manufacturers given the opportunity to become vendors for making components for the power steering systems made by the the Rane Group. Within a year we had become their largest suppliers. Soon thereafter we



*Mr. V. Sriram and Mr. N. Rajendran examine a component on the shop floor of Surfine Tools, Coimbatore. In the background is a line-up of AMS machining centers and Ace CNC lathes.*

started making other turned and machined components. We now have 14 machines from the Ace Micromatic Group. Of these 7 are Ace Turning Centers, 4 AMS Machining Centers and 3 MGT Grinding machines."

"With the machines we had acquired from Ace Micromatic, we have had no problems in meeting stringent quality requirements and strict delivery schedules. Our main challenge was in keeping our costs low. In this, the assistance given by Micromatic Machine Tools has proved to be invaluable. All our machines are under annual maintenance contract with MMT. The service we get from them is very good. They make no distinction between big and small customers."

"We are also using TPM-Trak from Pioneer CT of the Ace Micromatic Group to monitor our processes and enhance productivity."

Mr. N. Rajendran adds: "MMT is very much a part of our growth. After all, machines play a critical role in our business. We have received timely support from them. We give our feedback on the problems we face to MMT, and we believe this helps in improving the quality of the products and the service we get from them."

Summing up, Mr. Sriram says: "Our association with Ace Micromatic has been very good. They have not only supplied machines to us, but also have been helpful in tooling up the machines. They have given us valuable information and tips on the methodology of manufacturing. We plan to buy more machines from them."

*Mr. Raghuramachandran, Asst. Manager, Marketing, Micromatic Machine Tools, is flanked by Mr. V. Sriram and Mr. N. Rajendran, founders of Surfine Tools.*