



Technical Member Profile: Schmolz+Bickenbach

PMPA technical member Ugitech USA began the year with a name change. The supplier of specialty steels is now Schmolz+Bickenbach USA. Its parent company, Schmolz+Bickenbach AG, was founded in 1919 in Düsseldorf, Germany, and is currently the world's largest manufacturer, processor and distributor of special steel long products.

The company's presence in United States began in 1990 when Ugine, a French steel producer, bought Alloy & Stainless, a stainless steel distribution company based in Colmar, Pennsylvania. After several name changes and owners, the company now distributes and manufactures specialty stainless bar products in North America.

"The domestic manufacturing operation is something we had wanted to do for years," says company vice president Chris Zimmer. "When Schmolz+Bickenbach purchased Ugitech in early 2006, that gave us the go-ahead to build the manufacturing facility. It was a hefty investment of about \$12 million, but it shows how committed the parent group is to the U.S. market."

The company currently has stocking warehouses in Mahwah, New Jersey; Greer, South Carolina; Houston, Texas; Brea, California; Cleveland, Ohio; Toronto, Ontario and Batavia, Illinois. The Batavia location is also



the site of the new manufacturing facility that opened in June 2007.

With the group's Toronto warehouse and sales office now carrying the stainless bar product line, Schmolz+Bickenbach is also making a commitment to the Canadian market. "The Canada District of PMPA is one of the organization's most active regional groups," says Mr. Zimmer. "So, we're happy to have a very strong presence there."

"Stainless steel bar is our primary product, particularly for our PMPA customers," continues Mr. Zimmer. "We also sell coil products, wire rod and some nickel alloy products, but we're primarily a stainless bar manufacturer."

According to Mr. Zimmer, Schmolz+Bickenbach is very active in the PMPA, both on a national and regional basis. "As a technical member, we feel that PMPA is a great venue for keeping in touch with the marketplace and the needs of our customers. It's a great opportunity for us to meet with many of our customers.

"Typically, when members attend PMPA events, they're coming with challenges and looking for solutions," he explains. "They're a lot more receptive to hearing different ideas and different ways to become more efficient. They look to technical suppliers like us for solutions. And for raw material technology, we're a leader that can really help them.

"We can do a lot of very good things with our product and technical support to help companies become better manufacturers," continues Mr. Zimmer. "A lot of the technologies we offer—like the Ugima XL family of high-machin-

ability stainless steels and our SMQ (Screw Machine Quality) bar drawing technology—allow our customers to reduce their costs and keep jobs from going overseas."

Mr. Zimmer points out that one of his company's most prominent faces to PMPA members is applications manager Bob Drab. "Schmolz+Bickenbach has a very good product, so Bob's job is to work closely with our customers to help them realize the full potential of that product. He's on the floor with customers all the time, rolling his sleeves up and providing recommendations."

Mr. Zimmer also says that Mr. Drab is a very active user of the PMPA Listserve. "Bob is extremely quick to answer any questions that come up concerning stainless steel. Even if the questions are outside the stainless area. If he has a contribution, he responds quickly.

In summing up his feelings about the PMPA, Mr. Zimmer thinks that the cooperation among PMPA members is a major benefit. "PMPA is successful because multiple companies come together as one marketplace rather than individual competitors. The spirit of that type of environment is very beneficial. PMPA members work together to expand and maintain their businesses and, ultimately, to become better companies. It's a very unique environment. That's what makes the PMPA so special."

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