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## **“PHENOMENAL TRANSFORMATION” FOR SUB-CONTRACT ENGINEERING COMPANY**

G A Engineering (Scotland) Ltd, one of the North East’s leading sub-contract engineering companies, truly demonstrates a culture of continuous improvement. Evolving from a one machine operation in the basement of a garage, the company has recently completed the second part of a major three phase programme of investment in their factory on the West Pitkerro Industrial Estate, Dundee, increasing capacity, improving and expanding facilities and establishing a state-of-the-art training centre.

Since 1992 G A Engineering has been growing its business and reputation by offering clients the latest manufacturing techniques allied to the finest craftsmanship, supporting a diverse customer base within oil and gas, chemical, computer, nuclear, medical and machine tool industries. Oil and Gas is the primary market, and G A Engineering manufactured components are exported all over the world, for use in some of the world’s harshest environments.

Specialising in high precision CNC turning and milling, G A Engineering has diversified in recent years with spark eroding and wire eroding facilities, and has just invested £250,000 in a new horizontal machining centre. Four machines are currently on order representing an investment of £500,000, with the first two on schedule for delivery this month (July) and the second pair currently being built in Japan for a September delivery.

G A Engineering offers substantial experience of working with a huge range of materials, including plastic, brass, aluminium, a variety of stainless steels and exotic materials such as Inconel, Monel and Duplex. Expertise stretches from the basic to more complex components, underpinned by a Master-cam post processing system. CNC Turning capacity is from 3 mm to 900 mm diameter, up to 3.2 metres length, and CNC milling capacity is up to 1.5 metres.

The recent investment in G A Engineering’s Dundee site will be of great advantage to the growing business, featuring a 100 per cent expansion of the shop floor to 20,000 sq ft, a new office facility, a training room for apprentices, a £30,000 gym, shower rooms, new canteen, and large meeting room.

For Managing Director Gordon Deuchars it has been a challenging but worthwhile process. “It has been hectic and often frustrating to coordinate all the work that has been done over the last twelve months but looking back it’s absolutely amazing what has been achieved. We’ve spent £1.5 million on the extension and new machinery to take us forward – achieving more in a year than most companies probably do in a lifetime! It really has been a phenomenal transformation.”

**“turning out quality”**



This motivated approach to improvement is not new for Gordon Deuchars, who began his career as an apprentice turner with various local engineering firms. Having witnessed what he viewed as short-sighted management and resulting difficulties and closures Deuchars felt compelled to start his own business with a more focused, long term strategy. Investing in a single lathe, Deuchars dedicated his free time to his own account, while working full-time for another firm and also sub-contracting to it. In 1993 he received a £1,000 grant and a £2,000 loan from the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT), investing the funds in a second lathe and hiring his first employee. G A Engineering has never looked back, and despite significant expansion and diversification it remains true to its original vision of a well managed, forward-looking company with a real commitment to quality.

This progression is perhaps part of the reason for Deuchars' view of investment of time and funds into training as the key to future success. A significant portion of the recent investment, £50,000, was channelled into creating state-of-art training facilities, reflecting a great emphasis on skills development. "There is a lack of skill out there particularly in engineering and so we have taken matters into our hands," said Deuchars. "We have six apprentices at the moment, and plan to take on another six by the end of the year and I view this as crucial. Our apprenticeship scheme has been ongoing over the last seven years and we are now reaping the benefits. Our past apprentices are time served now and helping to train the next generation of the G A Engineering workforce; it's a continual cycle. We rely on having good quality workforce coming through, we can only grow with the team we have and we have to train them in our products, our way of manufacturing and our machine capabilities – you can't expect that skill to be out there because that's just not the reality. We are one of few companies taking this bull by the horns and it is so worthwhile – along with investment in a wider range of machines, training has helped us to boost turnover from £750,000 when we first moved into this factory five years ago to £3.5 million, and expanded the workforce over the same period from twelve to forty two and growing."

Gordon Deuchars is continually looking at ways to take G A Engineering forward. Though ambitious, the recently completed improvements at the factory – on the manufacturing side and on admin facilities including the training room – mark just the first two phases in a three phase plan. Phase three will involve extensions to the company's testing capacities and storage facilities, which are scheduled to happen by the end of the year. Tailoring improvements to meet customer demand, G A Engineering is also responding to one customer's request for the company to carry out hydro testing on some assemblies, with an investment likely to be made in the near future.

Throughout all improvements, G A Engineering's key selling points remain the same; "The key thing we sell is service, quality and reliability," said Deuchars. "That is where we really differentiate. We are more or less 'open all hours' and we are looking to develop that; I don't intend to build any more manufacturing capacity at the moment but do plan to sweat the asset by building up our night shift to twelve employees between now and the end of the year. That's how we will continue to meet the needs of our customer base and accommodate growth of the business."

**“turning out quality”**



G A Engineering is clearly a company with ambition, though Gordon Deuchars is insistent that the company's core values will not be compromised, "We are ambitious and will continue to see growth but always in a manner that allows us to maintain our service, quality and reliability. In this game we are only ever as good as our last job – our last job was excellent and we will be keeping it that way! That's supported by a very stringent inspection process and the fact that we always know that we can deliver. Our top five customers account for 65 percent of business, the top ten account for about 85 per cent, and I feel that with a fairly small band of customers you can give them the service they deserve. Take on too many and you end up letting people down – something we are not in the habit of doing,

"However perhaps the best indicator of our commitment to service, quality and reliability is that in fifteen years in business we have never had a sales rep – all of our business is won on word of mouth and repeat business. That lets me know we are doing something right!"

**“turning out quality”**