

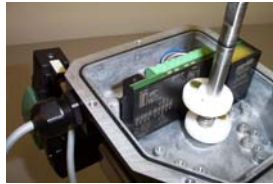


# Manufacturing in the New Millennium

## PROFILES IN INNOVATION

**L**et's start with a given. Today's economy demands flexible, quickly shifting manufacturing capabilities.

Want Proof? Unilever is the world's largest manufacturer of consumer goods with products such as Degree, Dove and Suave and the formulation of a Unilever personal care product has a life of less than a year. Driven by an increasingly demanding consumer, new formulations and products are flowing through the process lines at Mach speed.



In the pharmaceutical arena the promise of powerful, disease-specific treatments from the breakthroughs in genetic research has the entire industry buzzing with global projects to develop and deliver these new medicines.



Ironically, a company that is helping to bring many of these new processes and fast track projects to fruition is one that twenty years ago started as just another of the many valve companies serving the general industrial marketplace.



SVF Flow Controls, Inc. is located in Southern California, an area known for its high-tech and aerospace industries.

Though valve manufacturing does not rate amongst the leading technology businesses, SVF has over the years tapped into the superior talent base surrounding their headquarters to augment their burgeoning "specialty" business since their inception back in the early 80's.

The radical transformation of SVF from an industrial valve supplier to one of the premier designers and manufacturers of flow control systems was part of the planned evolution of a company that has continually responded to the demands of the global marketplace.

"Companies do not stay in business today if they do not accept their role in the process of innovation," says Wayne Ulanski, Executive Vice President for the firm. "Today's chemists and scientists in research labs throughout the world are creating products and processes that will be constructed tomorrow. Our role is to provide the valve and flow control systems they will need. To do this we must be flexible and responsive and we must remain close to the latest technologies in the materials and controls that will become part of our future offerings."

In the 1980's SVF was one of the first companies to integrate an ISO automation package for their full range of ball valves thereby entering the high-end of the process marketplace. "Our standard manual valve products had reached a maturity stage," says David Steel, president of SVF. "That didn't mean there was no growth, but not the



## PROFILES IN INNOVATION

kind of growth we had experienced in the past. We saw what we believed to be a significant opportunity to get into the higher, value-added products, services and solutions.”

Today the automated package from SVF ranges from the latest fieldbus communication protocol (*ASi* and *DeviceNet*) to sophisticated “multi-control” packages for both pneumatic and electric actuators to satisfy a wide range of control schemes.

Their *Aero-Lite* actuator is a high performance pneumatic actuator produced from a “technopolymer” that withstands corrosive environments yet is in an extremely light weight design. “Our pharmaceutical customers as well as the major A&E’s who service them have been an important part of our product development strategy over the past few years,” says Ulanski. Indeed, the SVF *CleanFLOW* ball valve now enjoys a global reputation for design and application. As a fully-compliant ASME/BPE valve, the *CleanFLOW* valve meets the strict Bio-Processing Equipment directives and is installed in the clean steam systems used to sterilize critical bio-processing systems.

Though SVF continues to concentrate on the innovations in controls and automation to serve the chemical process, pharmaceutical and semiconductor industries, they have not ignored the needs of their industrial customers. Their new “8” Series valve was recently re-designed in response to their customers using weld-end valves. Three-piece ball valves utilize body

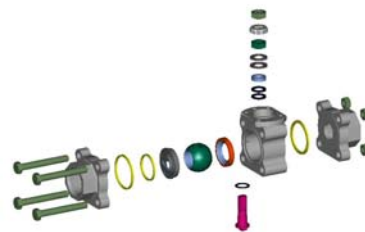


seals to contain system fluids. The “N8” valve is designed with special high temperature seats for steam and thermal fluids. These valves are almost always welded into the pipeline and the heat of welding can damage the body seals. To avoid this, installers had always been instructed to disassemble each valve before welding. The time, cost and potential for loss or damage to the seals was an industry-wide concern. The SVF “8” Series valve now features a fully-encapsulated body seal which eliminates the need for disassembly. Contractor savings are in the thousands of dollars for even a small installation.

### Delivering the Goods

“Product design basics and quality are a given in today’s business battlefield,” says Ulanski. “We were experiencing a significant increase in requests from customers for us to deliver products in a time frame that was unusually demanding in our industry. To remain a preferred supplier we had to modify our manufacturing practices to provide instant-access to our core products.”

The “*ReFLEX*” manufacturing protocol was developed by SVF to meet such demands. Market and production



forecasting of components and subassemblies allows SVF to respond



# Manufacturing in the New Millennium

## PROFILES IN INNOVATION

quickly to even the more sophisticated valve assemblies. The SVF slogan, "What do you need today?" iterates their ability to provide a wide range of flow control products with an almost instantaneous delivery response time.

Unlike many of their larger competitors, SVF can develop and deliver custom valves without layers of management and committees. Their *ProSpec* program (short for process-specific) offers customers valve capabilities for unique and often severe applications. The process begins by dispatching one of their sales engineers to meet with the client. Within hours the product analysis and prototype planning is in the hands of their engineering department.

Process engineers, A&E's, skid makers and contractors often require technical drawings of products in developing their piping schemes and bid packages. For these customers SVF produced their *CAD Now!* program. Featuring a powerful "configurator", the *Cad Now!* database is populated with valve, actuator and control accessory drawings along with datasheets and manuals to support each product. "Cad Now! is another of the differentiating factors that we present to the marketplace. It's an easy to use resource that complements the enormous technical support we provide through our website ([www.SVF.net](http://www.SVF.net))" says Steel.



The strategy for success at SVF includes an ongoing recognition that all business

is a people business. By combining sophisticated technical support through their website with a talented and well trained customer service staff, SVF hopes their customers will continue to rely upon them to fulfill their needs.

*"It's like we say every day, What do you need today?"*

"Our customers are the true beneficiaries of our business strategy; quality

products that reduce installation costs, improved lifetime performance, controls to integrate with highly efficient bus architectures all combine with innovation, intelligence and caring responsiveness," concludes Ulanski. "It's like we say every day, *What do you need today?*"

