

Choosing The Optimal Steel Abrasive: More Than Just Shot And Grit!

MFN was able to get an interview with Pierre Coste, Manager of WALUE technical services, a team of blasting experts at the service of Winoa customers.

(?) MFN: Mr Coste, thank you for taking the time to do this interview with us, could you tell our readers a little bit about yourself?

(!) P. C.: I'm the Manager of a team of technical experts, called Walue Members for the MEIA areas (Middle East, India, Africa), greater Europe (Western, Central and Eastern) - This high-level technical assistance team helps our clients on a daily basis through sustained local presence.

Winoa uses its wealth of experience to clearly define its clients' concerns and handle them: they are no longer strangers to the concepts of reducing the costs of a shot blasting operation.

(?) MFN: What preceded your role as Manager of the Walue team?

(!) P. C.: After having been a Walue Member myself with a sustained presence in the field for around ten years, I took responsibility of a team; I built this team around 2 pillars: differentiation and value, an approach known as TCO (Total Cost Ownership), with the goal of spreading this approach among the group's subsidiaries, with the support of the local Walue Members teams.

(?) MFN: What does your and your team's duties involve?

(!) P. C.: As a Manager, I ensure the technical cohesion of a team, in line with the company's strategy, business objectives and with respect for Winoa's charter of values.

My team has been entrusted with 3 main duties: Consulting, Testing and

Training, the fundamentals of which are listening to and assisting the client.

Listening to the client helps us to gain a concrete understanding of the requirements, relay them internally, assist the client and tailor our offer to their needs by developing new products, tools and technologies in partnership with them.

(?) MFN: You've told us about "Consulting, Testing, Training", what is it exactly?

(!) P. C.: These 3 services are Winoa's foundations of differentiation and the guarantor of the success of our TCO approach:

Consulting represents the technical expertise of our Walue Members, which is carried out in our clients' facilities; this advanced diagnosis will help us to identify an initial situation and, alongside the client, set out areas of progression in order to achieve their objectives.

In 2017, 20 Walue Members provided 1,700 days of technical expertise, representing no less than 3,400 technical recommendations made each year.

What we refer to as "Testing" is the offer made to our clients to visit one of our 6 Test Centers (France, Austria, Czech Republic, Brazil, USA, Japan) in order to jointly approve the solutions offered in a practical way.

In front of our client, we carry out blasting on machines that are typical of the ones in their plants, on their parts and, of course, with the product that they currently use. The result obtained on their parts will therefore be the initial reference.

In the 2nd stage, we carry out the same blasting operations, but this time with a new range of shot as well as with settings inherent in its use. The client can observe the results on the parts himself and is the sole judge. The client thus approves the solution that is operational for him that is developed in our test center. This is an invaluable time saver, as Winoa stands in for them to identify the problems and the areas of progression.

Far from the stresses and pressures of their own work environment, the client can get things into perspective, ask the right questions and identify their priorities.



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Interview

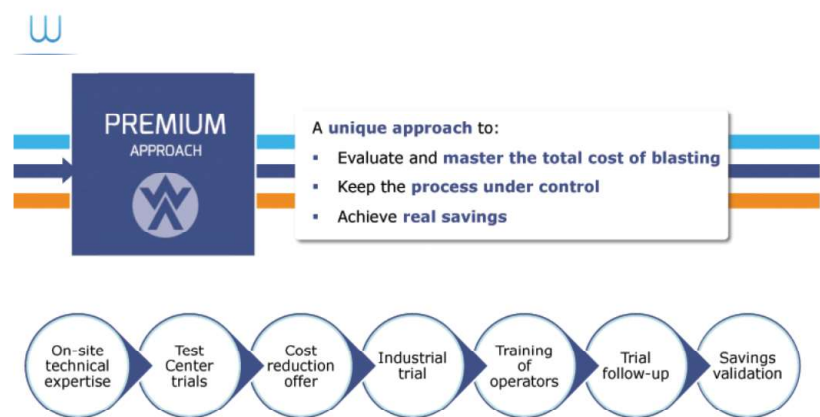
By anticipating what may happen on the client's line, Winoa sells more than just a concept, it sells a zero-risk concept, unique to Winoa, which is also one of the added values of a test, convincing clients from all over the world.

It's therefore a persuasive factor which encourages clients to come and test their parts directly at one of our test centers; from Russia to the Middle East, they don't hesitate to come and spend a few days at one of our Test Centers.

During these test days, a factory tour is organized where the client can learn about the handling of the manufacturing process and WINOA's involvement in terms of respecting the environment with the implementation of its investment and awareness programs on reducing energy costs. There is no doubt that the Cheylas site, the biggest shot factory in the world, sets an example in terms of quality and reliability.

Once the requirements have been identified, the product has been approved and chosen by the client, we move onto the third stage: training and the long-term implementation of the solution. Training is provided to operators, engineers, managers and other hierarchical levels, to train them on the product and its use, so that the common objectives that have been set enable the client to have a sustainable return on investment. This represents more than 250 training days at our clients' sites.

Training sessions are also held at our training center and lead to many discussions and exchanges between the trainer and the participants. Our clients are able to give ideas and discuss their issues freely as the relationship with our clients is founded on trust. Very often the client comes away with part



The 7 steps of a successful Premium approach

of a solution that can be implemented at their own site, or makes an appointment for a technical audit at their company; this is what Winoa proudly builds its success upon!

More than a shot manufacturer, Winoa positions itself as a solutions provider and a partner that is committed to improving the performance of its clients' shot blasting processes.

(?) **MFN:** You also provide internal training, how important is this?

(!) **P. C.:** Training on a new product, a new technology or a new service is invaluable. Winoa has formalized training and created the "WINOA Academy", a mandatory 15-day course held at the Cheylas site that combines theory and practice and must be taken by all new technical and commercial employees. This "internal institution" guarantees the group's consistency in terms of customer service; it's also the hallmark of a world leader.

(?) **MFN:** Is the Technical Assistance at Winoa therefore a real factor of differentiation?

(!) **P. C.:** It's one of our differentiating factors which has evolved over a few decades. If it was initially purely technical expertise on a machine, today this assistance has been enhanced with a whole range of innovative tools and technologies: thermal cameras, cost calculation software and automatic cleanliness evaluation tools are all technologies that are now part of our sales representatives' and technicians' toolboxes and have become vital elements of the success of the client's expertise.

(?) **MFN:** You have spoken to us about the TCO Approach - can you tell us a bit more about it?

(!) **P. C.:** The TCO "Total Cost Ownership", technical approach available in the www.wabrasives.com website, is a component that is known about and appreciated by the majority of our clients and is identified by the "WACOST" technology which we developed 15 years ago and are constantly refining. WACOST is part of the DNA of our engineers and sales force; every action we carry out for our client is guided by a single concern: what is the real gain for our client and how can it be measured? The aim of this technology is to be able to make a calculation of the cost of the blasting operation before and after the implementation of the improvement measures.

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It is also one of our foundations of economic differentiation - we have been the pioneers of this technology by creating and presenting to our clients a piece of software specifically for financial reviews. Since its launch in 2001, all of the clients who have chosen to place their trust in us and go with this approach have achieved an average saving of 10.5% on the cost of their shot blasting operation. Building on this success, we are now continuing to make WACOST available anytime and anywhere with the creation of a specific iPhone app which will allow our technicians/sales representatives to calculate and optimize the cost of a shot blasting operation in real time.

(?) MFN: How would you describe the difficulty of finding a shot blasting solution on a case-by-case basis?

(!) P. C.: There is no particular difficulty as there is a solution to each problem and the solution is our job. Our real challenge is understanding and enabling clients to prioritize their goals because, through the overall vision of client improvement, it's necessary to be able to quantify what is most important to them; it's up to us to help them strike the right balance between shot blasting, their machine and the operators that will implement it.

As a world leader, we must also remain humble and explain to the client that the miracle shot does not exist and that



W Abrasives mobile app for a more efficient field technical support



WACOST: the W Abrasives blasting process TCO software

success lies in the balance between the 3 parameters mentioned above (Consulting, Testing, Training). It's our responsibility to demonstrate this and it is the strength of our approach.

(?) MFN: What place does technology have in your job/area of activity?

(!) P. C.: The technology is at the cutting edge. Our role is to develop the tools of tomorrow and ensure that our teams, by mastering these tools, educate our clients effectively. The Value Members are composed of engineers whose mission is also interpersonal and educational. The world of shot blasting is very competitive and our clients face the same challenge of remaining leaders in their field. Through innovation we bring our clients new services which will help them to advance and set themselves apart. Winoa anticipates its clients' needs by developing innovative technologies each year.

(?) MFN: Today, which of the technologies developed brings Winoa the most clients?

(!) P. C.: Among these technologies, we can mention two that have been well received by our clients:

The measurement of hot spots by a thermal camera system on an iPhone

- this technology is all the rage among our clients because:

It allows for an adjustment of the hot spot in 30 minutes; it takes 2 hours without this technology.

It's a convenient size, the thermal camera fits in a pocket.

It has great flexibility in terms of use as there is no longer any need to stop a machine, this tool can be used at any time. The WACLEAN tool for automatically measuring cleanliness, designed and patented by Winoa, has achieved worldwide success with clients who want to move away from the subjectivity of a measurement made with the naked eye. Thanks to WACLEAN, all clients can obtain a reliable measure of the degree of cleanliness of the blasted surface. This tool has become indispensable for most of our clients.

(?) MFN: Do you envisage any other technological innovations?

(!) P. C.: Yes, of course, it goes without saying and it's the duty of a world leader. The goal this year is to create a stand-alone device that is able to measure residual dust levels on the part.

We have made this choice because, following the success of WACLEAN, our clients have shown support for the development of a new tool which will make their measurements simpler

and more reliable. We are therefore responding to this challenge.

(?) **MFN:** Regarding the environment, what efforts do you make on a daily basis or in terms of strategy to incorporate a so-called "green" economy?

(!) **P. C.:** WINOA has been committed to respecting the environment for a long time and this commitment remains a priority. It should be noted that shot blasting is one of the least polluting cleaning activities as it avoids the use of more harmful chemicals, while the shot just degrades into a simple steel dust. Nevertheless, Winoa has set up waste recycling programs and developed its Phenics concept which revolutionizes shot blasting in outdoor conditions by enabling the recovery and recycling of abrasives (steel shot) even in urban areas or in nature.

(?) **MFN:** What advice would you give to our readers?

(!) **P. C.:** "All that is worth doing is worth doing well" - I have made this maxim my own! I have chosen to do everything with passion and it's this passion, as a world leader, that we need to pass on to both our colleagues and our clients.

MFN would like to thank Pierre Coste for this interview!

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