



Cox Manufacturing President and CEO William T. "Bill" Cox, Jr. relies on a vast fleet of Tornos machines, including a new SwissNano.

COX MANUFACTURING:

advancing

a legacy

of delivering confidence

When William T. “Bill” Cox, Jr. talks about his business, the conversation turns easily and naturally to the Cox Manufacturing Company’s watchword – Cox delivers confidence – and the Tornos technologies that help him make good on that promise every day.



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Situated in northeastern San Antonio, Texas (US), one of three metropolitan Texas cities that make up the Texas Triangle megaregion, Cox Manufacturing specializes in custom screw machine products and computer numerical control (CNC) turning and machining. The company’s customer-centric legacy began in 1956, when Cox’s father, William T. Cox, Sr., founded the company and started making bobbins for the early computer memory systems.

“We are committed to doing what we say. We don’t give up. Perseverance is one of our core values. We put a lot of emphasis on building systems to manage orders and that helps us maintaining blanket order relationships and ensure quick delivery to our customers,” Cox explains. “Because of the robust processes we have in place, our customers know they won’t encounter any surprises when they do business with us.”

Cox Manufacturing started with his father’s bold bid to start “some sort of manufacturing company” after coming across a Swiss-type screw machine at an auction. Though he had limited knowledge

“The beauty of the SwissNano is the access and ergonomics, which make it so much easier to work with fine, small parts”

about the machine and knew next to nothing about automatic screw machines and Swiss automatics, the senior Cox was passionate about manufacturing and had a prowess for solving engineering problems. Those were the cornerstones on which he built a business that today is a leading supplier of precision machining services throughout the US Southwest. Cox Manufacturing today supplies high-volume, tailor-made components for some of industry’s most discerning customers in aerospace, automotive, trucking, defense and medtech.

Off and running at an early age to continue building the business

Bill Cox’s commitment to the family business began early: After his father’s sudden death in 1968, when he was just 12 years old, his mother took him aside and explained that Cox Manufacturing’s biggest customer was interested in buying the business. Was he interested in someday running the business himself? His answer was an emphatic, “Yes,” and he was off and running in his quest to learn everything necessary to continue building on the foundation his father had established. He quickly learned to read financial statements and joining his mother in meetings with bankers, lawyers, accountants and contractors.

“I realized early on that the diversity of our customer base was limited: 80 percent of our business was with the electronics industry. We were highly dependent on five customers buying the same product from us, and I realized that we needed to learn to make other parts,” Cox explains. After attending Texas A&M University for two years, just long enough to take the courses that would serve Cox Manufacturing and its soon-to-be growing customer base, the 20-year-old Cox began working full-time at the family business.

“What guided me even more than those college courses was reading 15 years of technical conference transcripts that my father had accumulated from the Precision Machine Products Association (formerly the

Bill Cox with Cox Manufacturing’s new Tornos SwissNano.



Swiss-type machine technician Isreal Carrillo with the new Tornos SwissNano.





Cox Manufacturing Deco team members show off their workmanship. Pictured (left to right) are Brad Carrol, assistant team leader; Jose Lopez, team leader; and T.J. Rodgers, apprentice.

National Screw Machine Products Association),” says Cox. “The association also had manuals on corporate financial management, job costing and estimating, and I read those, too.”

Always looking to the future with Tornos technologies

When he joined the business full time, Cox Manufacturing was using Bechler and Index machines, as well as some Swiss-type machines and Index single-spindle cam machines – but Cox was looking to the future. He began buying up used Tornos Deco machines and today owns more than 30 of them.

“The tooling and basic machine strategies are similar, so the wealth of knowledge we had accumulated with the competitor’s machines was transferrable,” he says. “We found that the higher precision Tornos machines were more cost effective in the long run, despite the higher capital investment, because they were more efficient.”

Cox Manufacturing took a big leap in 1980, with its move into a new building constructed on land that Cox and his mother purchased – looking toward the future – when he was still in high school.

“When I look back, it still amazes me because nothing happened overnight. We were thinking ahead, though, by buying that land and building the facility, moving into multispindle machines,” he says. “Today, we have 33 Deco machines, including the Deco 10, Deco 13 and Deco 20 and we still run a few Tornos R10, R125 and MS-7 cam machines, but we are gradually retiring those and replacing them with Tornos CNC machines.”

SwissNano is a perfect fit in more ways than one

Most recently, Cox bought a new Tornos SwissNano and he already has his eye on future SwissNano purchases.

“The beauty of the SwissNano is the access and ergonomics, which make it so much easier to work with fine, small parts,” he explains. “A good example

is a precision brass medical part with +/- 10 microns-tolerances. The stability of the machine and its ease of use make the SwissNano a lot more efficient than other options. Previously, we would have made this part with a Deco 10 and, before that, on an MS-7."

Moreover, he says, the SwissNano fits nicely into the same workshop footprint as an MS-7, and the investment will serve his business well for years to come.

"I know the SwissNano will still be holding tolerances 20 to 30 years from now, and we can rebuild it after 20 years," he says. "This purchase is part of a long-term strategy. Today, we are still experimenting with the SwissNano, but we've tested it on medical, automotive and electronics parts. We see ourselves acquiring more SwissNano machines in the future."

Cox anticipates continued growth for his business. Cox Manufacturing just completed a 6,000-square foot addition to serve as a materials warehouse and plans are in place to add another production facility in the next couple of years.

"I'm very optimistic about US manufacturing," Cox said. "Throughout my career, US manufacturers have been under siege with people being convinced that manufacturing is not important and that the service



A high-volume aluminum hydraulic component made on a Tornos Deco machine.

economy is the future. But I'm seeing manufacturing resurging in the US, and I know we can compete with the right technology. Tornos technology is part of the equation for us."

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A highly precise brass medical device component produced on Cox Manufacturing's new SwissNano.

