

Company Profile

ALLIED SINTERINGS, INC.

Peter K. Johnson



Figure 1. Diana and Mark Foster manage growing P/M parts business.

Allied Sinterings, Inc., Danbury, Connecticut, is a small company with a big reputation for making high-precision, small, intricate P/M parts. Owned by Mark and Diana Foster, a congenial brother-sister team, the company produced more than 200 million P/M parts in 1998, Figure 1. "We're configured for small P/M parts," said Mark Foster, president and sales manager.

A successful, niche player in the P/M market, Allied's sales increased 24% in 1998. The company's greatest strength is producing short and long-run jobs on presses in the 2-5st range. Production runs range from 60 pieces to 50 million pieces, made from stainless steel, iron-base and some brass and bronze powders.

Founded in 1959 by Axel Madsen and Gifford Foster, father of Mark and Diana, the company began in a converted diner with four employees. Axel Madsen was a very creative toolmaker and Gifford Foster, an RPI-trained engineer, focused on managing the business successfully. He assumed full ownership of the company after Madsen died in 1987.

Located in a 1,487m² (16,000ft²) building on a 5-acre tract, Allied has 35 compacting presses (1/2 - 50st), three sintering furnaces, in-house tool room and secondary equipment such as tumbling/finishing, drilling & tapping, grinding, and oil/plastic impregnation. Fine-pitched gearing is a specialty and AGMA Class 8 gears are guaranteed, Figure 2. A humpback sintering furnace designed, in the late 1970s by Robert Talmage, consultant, is still operating, Figure 3.

Production is based on two full shifts, five days a week and a skeleton third shift to keep the sintering furnaces operating. The first P/M parts company to be ISO-9002 certified, Allied sells to medical and consumer product markets and recently third-tier suppliers to the auto market. Most customers are in North America, but Allied also exports to China, Denmark, Switzerland, and Singapore. Sales are handled through manufacturers representatives based on long-term relationships.

At 33, Mark Foster runs a lean management team responsible for engineering, finance, tooling and production. Diana Foster, corporate secretary and treasurer, joined the company in 1970 and handles safety in addition to administration, human resources and finance.

Mark Foster joined the business in 1989 at the request of his father. He has a degree in management from Nichols College in Massachusetts and worked summers learning the