



The Valve Doctor stands up at BSM Valves

During these days, when the production and delivery of valves takes a considerable amount of time, sometimes more than thirty-five weeks, a niche market has been developed in which companies, who specialised themselves on the production of requested valves paired with short delivery times of around six weeks are the big winners. The Dutch organisation BSM Valves is one of those companies and they invited Valve World to visit their headquarters and production facilities in Breda, the Netherlands. We spoke to Managing Director Mr Peter Besseling and Marketing advisor Mr Govert Coers, about this niche market in the flow control industry, the reasons for BSM Valves success, and their expectations for the near future.

By Christian Borrmann

History

Today, it may enjoy a good reputation as fast-track manufacturer of valves but when established 20 years ago BSM was active in a different sector. "We started off as trading company for flanges and fittings made from special alloys," explains Mr Besseling, "and round about fifteen years ago, we decided that having an own machine shop could be

very useful for BSM to extend our range of products for our customers." And indeed it was! Once the company set up its own machine shop, they quickly saw the opportunity to produce valves and valve components for the oil & gas and petrochemical industries and BSM Valves was born. "Obviously, having the manufacturing skills is only part of the story," explains Mr

Besseling. "To be a credible partner, you also need a detailed understanding of the market. We therefore were fortunate to attract highly experienced staff, such as my colleague Govert (Coers), who had a knowledge of the market and understood where we wanted to go with BSM Valves." Almost immediately after joining, Mr Coers saw a huge opportunity for BSM Valves

The R & D department of BSM Valves where, amongst others, the valves with special requirements are designed and developed.



newest actions. "Shortly after I started at BSM, we started to specialise ourselves on the production of valves on request, since we saw that there was the most potential for our company." All this is now seven years ago and since then BSM Valves has become one of the most important fast-track valve production companies with a well known name in the global valve community. BSM Valves has a special focus on the oil & gas / on & offshore and the petrochemical industries and Mr Coers explains why: "Although we also produce valves or components for other industries, for instance the power and the chemical industries, we are really strong in hydrocarbon. The reason for this is quite simple, as this is the sector that requires many valves made from exotic materials, or to special designs. That is because the valves are exposed to corrosive and

erosive media that can quickly destroy standard valves."

Global connections and global activities

BSM Valves customers are not restricted to Dutch Valve trading companies but also include Valve distributors all over the world, Mr Coers: "We work very closely with these companies because they are the ones who are in direct contact with the end-users. They know exactly what the customers are looking for and together we can determine the best engineering solution."

Although the company has a large global network, BSM Valves is always keen on extending this excellent network by exploring and developing new markets. Says Mr Besseling: "For example, you know that the Russian, Brazilian, and Chinese On & Offshore industries are very important and emerging markets at the moment. We therefore travel extensively to meet with the local companies. Our aim is to

understand how the industries work in each country and to be able to establish and intensify our relationships with the different valve distributors, agents and engineering companies."

Valued service

In order to keep up the important global connections with the trading companies, BSM Valves writes service and communication in capital letters. Says Mr Besseling: "We believe that fast communication and good service are the core values of our business. If clients know they can rely on us to provide the valves they need, they will have more faith in us and become regular customers. In serving customers, we keep all options open, including making the valves ourselves or sourcing them elsewhere using our vast network."

Asked if he could elaborate, Mr Coers answers: "You see, we do not just produce valves on request. We act as trouble shooters for the trading companies. If they can't find the valves



BSM Valves' production facilities.



they need elsewhere, we can first try and help them with our sourcing expertise or international relationships. You'd be surprised what valves can be found sitting on the shelf around the globe – provided you know where to look. If that doesn't help, then we start to produce these specific valves on short notice. Very often it can also be the case that we only produce one single valve because that is all the customer needs for their application. This is also the reason why our clients sometimes refer to us as the 'valve doctor'. Companies turn to us when

they run out of options and they need their problems to be solved on a short term basis." – "And I think the term 'valve doctor' is a good description for explaining to companies and other people what we do and how we approach our work," adds Mr Besseling.

Quick solutions

A recent example of BSM's good service and their unique skill set and rapid response elitists came when Statoil had some problems with a number of valves on one of their bigger platforms. They had been ordered for a

shut down but were rejected for whatever reasons. "The problem for Statoil was that there was only little time left before the platform was supposed to be functioning again. So, they needed a large number of metal seated ball valves in a very short time and all that during the summer months," tells us Mr Besseling. "That meant for us that we were asked to produce more than one hundred 2 inch to 6 inch metal seated ball valves for high pressure processes within an 8 week timeframe." Next to this production series BSM Valves developed, together with the client, a special valve which had to meet some specific demands regarding design and application. Mr Besseling continues: "We developed a very good valve and when all the valves were finished, we had them shipped to Statoil, one week before the actual deadline. As you can imagine, Statoil were very pleased with our work. That job really helped us to leave a mark in this business because of the importance of the project for Statoil."

"Another usual case, where we jump in and help out, is for instance, when a company did not order the right number of valves because they either forgot one or two or they need more than they calculated before hand. Then the trading company asks us whether we could manufacture those missing valves, very similar to the Statoil



example that Peter (Besseling) just gave,” says Mr Coers. However, BSM Valves does not only manufacture missing valves. It also invests a lot of efforts into the research and development of valves. These investments enable the company to offer the clients even more services. Mr Coers explains: “One might think that a company that is so concerned with fast-track delivery is not going to take very much interest in research and development. But in fact, the opposite is the case at BSM. For example, when we get involved in some very specific problems, i.e. a situation where a customer needs to have a standard valve adapted to meet his special requirements, we and the customer strongly benefit from our research and development expertise.”

Costly, but cost-effective

Therefore, it will come as no surprise to hear that having valves made to order carries a financial premium. “Companies understand that working with us is not the cheapest way to buy a valve. Moreover, it is exactly the other way round: It is one of the most expensive ways of manufacturing valves because to meet delivery times we cannot wait for castings but we produce the valves from bars and forged materials. This together with the short delivery time and limited batch production is what makes our valves more expensive than others,” states Mr Besseling. “But the companies who contact us understand that. Our way of producing valves seems only to be expensive at first sight but we provide clients with the most cost-effective solution because we help them to quickly solve their emergency cases.” When asked if the volatility of metal prices plays an important role for the production prices, Mr Besseling answers: “No, not really. The metal price has no real effect on our production costs. You see, when the trading companies come to us with a request for specific valves, we will produce these valves according to the corresponding metal price on the

market and the companies pay that price because they know that we are their last option in avoiding long shut down times.”

One other reason for the high but cost-effective prices is that BSM Valves owns a large stock of raw materials and semi-finished products as well as a large variety of single valve pieces which, if necessary, can easily be assembled and then sent out. Mr Coers: “This stock is together with the people who work here, the heart of the company. This combination enables us to give our customers the short lead times of around six weeks, which they expect from us when they have emergency cases, where the valve is needed as soon as possible. So, although the price seems to may be quite high, the company knows that it can expect high quality valves when these are sent out to them and that we helped them to avoid a long down time.”

Expectations for the future

Asked where Mr Besseling and Mr Coers will see BSM Valves within the next five years, Mr Besseling answers: “That is difficult to say. We have experienced rapid growth in the past five years that no one could have forecast. So, the only thing I can say right now is that we will continue to grow as we did before and in five years time, BSM Valves will probably be twice the size it has now. Business for us has never been any better.” One of the reasons for the continuation of BSM Valves healthy growth is the fact that they produce everything in house. Mr Coers: “To us this is a very important fact. Many valve companies outsource a lot of their work and we



The stock of raw materials from which the valves will be produced.

try to avoid this wherever this is possible. Keeping work in-house means we can control quality and production and by doing this we ensure that the deadlines are met.” And Mr Besseling concludes: “Therefore, we decided it would be the best choice for us and, of course, for our customers to have everything under one roof, so that we were able to produce and deliver the valves according to our promised four to eight weeks lead time. And we will continue to do so in the future.”

Facts & Figures

Name:	BSM Valves
Founded:	1994
Managing Director:	Peter Besseling
Headquarters:	Breda, The Netherlands
Number of employees:	45
Key markets:	Oil & Gas, On & Offshore, Petrochemicals