

COMPANY PROFILE ///

KOLENE CORPORATION

***CUSTOM-
DESIGNED
AND CUSTOM-
ENGINEERED
EQUIPMENT***

Examples of FNC heat processing.
(Courtesy: Kolene Corporation)

Kolene Corporation is a global leader in the cleaning and conditioning of metal surfaces for a wide variety of industries, including aerospace, automotive, defense, foundry, stainless steel, and general manufacturing.

By **KENNETH CARTER**, Thermal Processing editor

Sometimes, a company's trek through history takes interesting turns — meaning that what was being produced at the beginning of the journey may end up being nothing like what's made today.

Kolene Corporation is such a company.

When it first opened its doors in Detroit in 1939, the company's focus was making chemical formulations for dry-cleaning solvents. But through years of expansion — as well as trial and error — Kolene now produces molten salt chemistry used for the cleaning and conditioning of metal surfaces for a variety of industries.

"We have a full line of heat-treating and quenching salts, as well as equipment and technical service capabilities," said Dennis McCardle, executive vice president of Kolene Corporation. "We also provide ferritic nitro-carburizing (FNC), also known as salt bath nitriding (SBN) chemistries as well as the associated equipment, and in-house lab service capabilities."

McCardle said he has been with Kolene for more than 30 years, which seems amazing in this day, but longevity and expertise is the norm at Kolene. There is hardly any staff turn-over.

PROBLEM SOLVERS

Kolene's rich history and innovative experience has contributed to the company's strong foundation of solving difficult manufacturing challenges, according to McCardle.

"We have a diverse portfolio of different processes and technologies," he said. "We combine the chemistries with our operational equipment capabilities while maintaining the equipment through our technical service team to provide turn-key systems."

Eight decades of experience means Kolene can offer its clients specific assistance regardless of what challenge may arise, according to McCardle.

"We approach challenges as a team," he said. "We have multi-disciplined groups at Kolene. When faced with a challenge, we bring in the whole team together and look at it from several different angles to see how we're going to come up with a solution for the customer."

MILITARY HISTORY

Kolene plays an integral part for the U.S. military's MRO operations at the U.S. Army Depot in Anniston, Alabama, and Red River Army

Depot in Texarkana, Texas.

Kolene has a long history of working with the military, according to McCardle. One of the company's earliest clients was the U.S. Navy, who approached Kolene during World War II with a challenge to prepare cast iron bearings for babbitting with lead to be used in place of tin.

"During World War II there was a tin embargo," he said. "The U.S.



Dennis McCardle, executive vice president of Kolene Corporation, has been with the company for more than 30 years. (Courtesy: Kolene Corporation)

Navy came to us and asked, 'Can you develop an alternate technology to prepare bearings for babbitting (metal) without the use of tin?' This process is still in use today in multiple industries."

EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY

A lot can change in order to serve both past and current customers when a company has been around as long as Kolene. That includes equipment requirements that are more technical and complex, according to McCardle.

"We've evolved from what started out as very simple combustion systems, manual handling systems, and basic pollution abatement systems to highly automated systems that are efficient as well as environmentally friendly," he said. "It's remarkable how the processes have changed to meet industry needs, and we're in constant development. Additionally, Kolene's R&D lab is capable of developing



Kolene produces molten salt chemistry used for the cleaning and conditioning of metal surfaces for a variety of industries. (Courtesy: Kolene Corporation)

new chemistries as demanded by industry.”

GLOBAL LEADER

Kolene has an important role in industry world-wide, according to McCardle. Kolene Corporation has become a global leader and an industry standard for the cleaning and conditioning of metal surfaces for a wide variety of industries. These industries include aerospace, automotive, defense, foundry, stainless steel, and general manufacturing. Kolene provides its customers with custom-designed and engineered equipment, specialty chemical formulations, and complete treatment processes. Kolene has a long history in the heat-treating industry as well.

“We’re growing our presence in the heat-treat industry with our equipment, service, and spare parts,” he said. “After an absence of many years on the chemical side, Kolene is back, and we now provide a full line of heat-treat chemistries including FNC, heat-treat salts, and quenches.”

CONTINUING TO GROW

McCardle expects the industry and Kolene to keep growing and changing.

“I see it continuing to evolve; I really do,” he said. “I think there are always going to be exploring technologies that are out there to try to enhance and improve the manufacturing techniques that are being used today. I’m hopeful and mindful that manufacturing is going to be settling back into the North American forefront with a more established presence going forward. You’re going to see a lot of things that we manufactured here come back and realize the benefits once again in the United States or in North America proper.”

With that declaration, McCardle said Kolene will continue to offer the best products and services to the many industries it’s proud to



John Shoemaker, Kolene founder, left, in the original molten salt bath test facility. (Courtesy: Kolene Corporation)

call its customers.

“We’re proud of 82 years of our profitable operations,” he said. “We’re proud that we’re a fourth-generation, family-owned company that treats its employees like family, and everyone loves to work here.”

Kolene also will have a booth (#1533) at Heat Treat 21 in St. Louis, Missouri, September 14-16.

“Come visit us,” McCardle said. “We’d love to talk to you.”



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