

COMPANY PROFILE ///

NUTEC GROUP

SOLUTIONS FOR INDUSTRIAL HEATING AND THERMAL INSULATION

Nutec makes anything that requires combustion systems and combustion equipment and for any applications that require heat. (Courtesy: Nutec)

Nutec Group manufactures high temperature insulation, kilns, and furnaces and supplies quality products and superior service while exceeding its clients,' employees,' and stockholders' expectations.

By **KENNETH CARTER**, Thermal Processing editor



When it comes to heat-treating solutions involving burners, insulation, and furnaces, the experts behind Nutec Group have been meeting those challenges head on for almost 50 years.

Nutec Group controls several divisions responsible for many products used by the heat-treating industry, according to CEO Daniel Llaguno.

Nutec Bickley makes all types of furnaces and kilns. That includes custom-made, large-capital equipment furnaces used for forging, aluminum heat treating, and more for the aerospace and automotive industries. Llaguno essentially referred to that as the metals business unit.

CERAMICS

“And then we have our ceramics business unit, which makes very high-temperature kilns,” he said. “That’s actually where the Bickley name comes from. We make high-temperature kilns for advanced ceramics.”

Bickley was an acquisition made by Nutec in 2000, and it makes kilns for sanitary work, refractories, technical ceramics, and other applications.

Nutec Group also controls an original business called CCS, Combustion Controls and Systems, according to Llaguno.

“We make anything that requires combustion systems and combustion equipment and for any applications that require heat,” he said. “We may build a gas drain or a burner system for an air dryer for the cement industry or for the steel industry. So, within Nutec Bickley, we have those three main product lines — furnaces for metal, kilns for ceramics, and combustion equipment and controls.”

INSULATING FIBER PRODUCTS

Another division of Nutec makes ceramic refractory fiber or bio-persistent fiber products, according to Llaguno.

“This is a high-temperature insulation material, which is used in kilns and furnaces and a lot of industries,” he said. “Nowadays, it’s used in fire protection and a lot of products in construction. But it’s mostly used as insulation and fire protection. The insulation reduces energy consumption, of course, but then for fire protection, it helps with protecting boats or large ships from potential fires. It also protects against fire in stadiums, for example, where you have grease ducts and chimneys from concessions and restaurants going outside. Sometimes, the grease condenses in the ducts in the chimneys and

they have to burn them, so we actually put that fire protection in. That is all ceramic fiber materials.”

For that product, Nutec has plants in Mexico, the U.S., Spain, and Brazil, according to Llaguno. On the furnace side, within Nutec Bickley, the main manufacturing facility is in Monterey, Mexico.

“That facility does turnkey jobs pretty much everywhere in the world,” he said. “We have capabilities of installing furnaces and kilns pretty much anywhere.”

STRONG CUSTOMER BASE

With all the heat-treating applications offered by Nutec, it wouldn’t mean much without a strong customer base, according to Llaguno.

“The customer is at the center of our purpose,” he said. “Our reason to exist is to meet and exceed their expectations. We couple that with a very strong culture within the company based on values, ethics, and to protect and enhance.”



Nutec has gone from being a small, local, family company to one with more than a thousand employees. (Courtesy: Nutec)

When it comes to building furnaces for its customer, Llaguno referred to Nutec’s four pillars: equipment performance, job execution, product quality, and service.

“Those four things are what we pay extremely close attention to, and we want to keep improving on each one of those pillars for the jobs we do for our customers and for the capital equipment we make for them,” he said. “Which is, of course, performance of the equipment, execution of the job, quality of the product, and service. That’s kind of our philosophical approach to our business.”



In order to continue to meet and exceed its customers' expectations, Nutec has worked to make better and more efficient equipment over its decades-long existence. (Courtesy: Nutec)

CONSTANTLY IMPROVING

In order to continue to meet and exceed its customers' expectations, Nutec has worked to make better and more efficient equipment over its decades-long existence, according to Llaguno.

"I think the industry, in general, is looking for tighter controls, for increased quality, and for better efficiencies," he said. "And that takes us to always push us for improving our technology with different fuels — alternative fuels — and tighter controls. But it mostly involves us always trying to be more efficient and produce better quality in our furnaces and equipment as well as in our insulating materials. That's a clear trend, and we need to follow it. One key advantage that we have is that, since we are involved in different industries, the key components of the furnaces and kilns are the same: insulation and combustion equipment controls. We actually take technology from one industry to another, complementing the technology, and we end up getting the best of each industry for the product we make for one

industry. I think we've been able to achieve that in a successful way."

SELLING SOLUTIONS

Part of Nutec's unique approach to satisfying its customers is in how it sees what it produces, according to Llaguno.

"We don't sell commodities at all — not even in the fiber business; we sell solutions," he said. "We always try to go beyond. We don't sell out-of-the-box furnaces. We go and try to understand very clearly what the customer's needs are and why he is looking for a new piece of equipment or why he is looking for such insulation. Once we understand the roots of what he needs, then we can actually help him steer the solution and find out a solution that will better fit his needs. Rather than asking for a box with such volume and such temperature, we actually question and try to go beyond that to offer a very specific, custom-fit solution for them that will perform better for their needs."



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to keep growing. We have opportunities and challenges, of course, but we have made it very clear that we want to keep growing in a sustainable way, which means having strong foundations in talent and culture. Transcending borders and becoming a successful, international company are some of our main achievements. We also take care of the talent of the people of our company. We take care of them, and we develop them. We not only hire them, but we also want them to grow with the company as well.”

IN BUSINESS FOR 48 YEARS

Nutec began in 1975, but it’s still a private and family-owned company started by Genaro Cueva Sr. as a combustion equipment manufacturer, according to Llaguno.

“In fact, it was a licensee of a North American manufacturing company out of Cleveland, and we still have a very close relationship with them,” he said. “Back then, we started making burners and valves for the Mexican market exclusively.”

In 1985, Nutec began producing ceramic fiber insulation, according to Llaguno.

“We put in a small manufacturing facility, and we started producing high-temperature insulation, ceramic fiber,” he said. “The next logical step was to make furnaces.”

Since Nutec was already producing key components of a furnace, what is now Nutec Bickley started designing and manufacturing furnaces and kilns for various industries in 1990.

That growth was rapid and steady, and through various other acquisitions and innovations, Nutec is preparing a solid foundation for itself as it moves into the next decade.

“I’m excited about the future,” Llaguno said. “I think, whether we like it or not, the pandemic exposed some weaknesses in the supply chain worldwide. There is this very strong need for nearshoring in different blocks in North America, Europe, and Asia. That movement is here to stay, and it will provide growth for years by building new and more efficient factories closer to end customers. That will provide for growth in our industry in North America. Certainly, it’s a big block, which means Mexico, the U.S., and Canada for sure will experience investment. Europe will also have to do that and Asia as well. When those suppliers relocate closer to the end customers in more efficient factories, they will need equipment; they will need installation; they will need the kind of products we make, and we are here to partner with them in their efforts. I actually feel like there is good future for the industry, and Nutec is going to be an important part of that.”



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Within Nutec’s fiber business, the company has created an applications engineering department, according to Llaguno.

“We have application engineers who actually find what the best solution will be for product needs,” he said. “And in the furnace and kiln business in Nutec Bickley, it’s always about what the best solution for the customer would be as far as designing a new piece of equipment.”

GOING GLOBAL

Being able to serve its customers’ needs by taking production and innovation to the next level has been instrumental in Nutec’s achievement of transcending borders, according to Llaguno.

“It’s gone from being a small, local, family company into a thousand-plus employee company,” he said. “But more than anything, we’ve done it in a sustainable way. We haven’t deviated from our values and culture, and that’s the way we want to keep it. We want