

COLDSTREAM *and* Secat Inc.



When faced with quality-control problems, an aluminum processing plant is forced to shut down its production line. Across the state, a researcher quickly determines the source of the problem: impurities introduced in the lubrication process. Corrections are made and manufacturing resumes.

This scenario is a story of research resources meeting industry need: the mission of Secat Inc.

Since its founding at the University of Kentucky's Coldstream Research Campus in 1999, Secat has established itself as the premier provider of research and testing services for the aluminum industry.

When customers need assistance with aluminum R&D, Secat provides the most qualified researchers — from its pool of in-house scientists as well as from the University of Kentucky, other universities, and several

national laboratories — at a fraction of the cost for these customers to perform the research on their own.

"We serve as a bridge between industry and the university," explains Dr. Subodh K. Das, Secat's president and CEO. "We talk the language of business while providing the intellectual capacity of a research institution."

Begun as a sister organization of the University of Kentucky College of Engineering's Center for Aluminum Technology (CAT), which Das directs, Secat's focus on cost-effectiveness, quick turnaround, and protection of intellectual property make it a "business-friendly way to do R&D in an academic environment," Das says.

Whether for short-term troubleshooting or long-term projects dealing with IP development, Secat's priority is providing its customers with personalized service.

"It's about personal contact. Your customers have to trust you. We visit our customers in person and get to know their history. That's the only way we can really understand the problems they're having so we can help find a solution."

With its emphasis on face-to-face working relationships, Secat is "an attractive alternative to outsourcing R&D needs to other countries," Das says.

While the costs for outsourcing may be low, because of the distance and lack of international agreements on patents, customers must sacrifice human contact and IP protection in those arrangements, Das explains.

"By leveraging the research resources of our partners, which are already in place, we're making it affordable for our customers to keep their R&D here in the U.S. and have the combination of top-quality research, customer service, and protection of intellectual property they desire."

In just five years, Secat has established a worldwide customer base of 40 companies. It plans to continue its growth with a focus on the beverage can and automotive industries.

In addition to providing R&D and testing services for its customers, Secat also provides education and training, and conducts multi-partner, federally funded research to benefit the aluminum industry.

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