



Address: Rolwey House
School Close
Chandlers Ford
Eastleigh
Hants
SO53 4BY
UK (United Kingdom)

Email : bdsales@rolwey.com
Phone : 023 80258966
Fax : 023 80258989



A trusted manufacturing partner with an eye for quality

You might think that the intensity of the manufacturing supply-chain relationship between East and the West is a relatively recent phenomenon - fifteen, twenty years at most. Well, there's one company based at Chandlers Ford in Hampshire that has been setting up manufacturing contracts with, and purchasing products from Far Eastern suppliers for more than 30 years and has developed this activity into something akin to a fine art.

When **Blue Diamond** started to supply machined components over 30 years ago, the emphasis was on quality, reliability of supply and competitive prices. Today, these principles remain at the heart of the company's component supply service, but the scope and volume of components that can be supplied has increased dramatically. The range of machined components now includes turned parts and sub-assemblies for applications as diverse as submersible pumps, fabricated metal guards and handles for domestic showers, in both ferrous and nonferrous materials and stainless steel.

Apart from its recognised design expertise and established quality audit trail and traceability systems, Blue Diamond has, over the years, also gained a reputation for problem solving. A recent example involved the design and manufacture of a special hinge assembly to support a heavy glass door. The manufacturer had approached all its usual suppliers but none came forward with a proposal that would provide the desired corrosion resistance and load bearing capability. Blue Diamond used its SolidWorks CAD application to design a component that had aesthetic appeal, and which met the mechanical specifications. Following customer approval of the design, the prototypes were manufactured and the functionality of the design confirmed. The novel spring-loaded hinge assembly (illustrated) was subsequently manufactured in stainless steel to ensure its corrosion resistance.

In another example, the company was appointed to help with the design and manufacture of a bracing bar for a frameless glass shower panel. Initially, the customer sought a standard off-the-shelf component, but the search proved fruitless, so it approached Blue Diamond with a view to developing a bespoke product. Time-to-market was an important issue, so the whole project was on a very short time scale. All drawings were originated by Blue Diamond and prototypes were obtained from an approved low cost base Chinese supplier in just ten weeks.

The design comprises a glass saddle, which can be bonded or fastened into position, an adjusting boss, an arm (that can be cut to length without the cut being visible), and an anchor block. The assembly components are supplied in chromium plated brass, brass-effect or white finishes, and are delivered to the client in custom packaging, complete with fixtures and fittings kits – a single part number item that considerably reduces the client's inventory and parts handling requirements.

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