case study

Leaked: Magna Exteriors

Brammer Buck & Hickman

Powered by RUBIX

Cost Savings

Improved Efficency

Reducing Servicing Costs

Brammer Buck & Hickman, Europe's leading distributor of industrial maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) products and services has supplied Magna Exteriors, manufacturer of lightweight structural components for the automotive market, with considerable savings through its Compressed Air System Audits.

Founded in 1957, Magna began working with General Motors and today makes everything from automotive seats to powertrains. The Magna Exteriors side of the company has a portfolio of products that includes access systems such as liftgates, exterior trim, modular systems, front-end modules including fascia, active aerodynamic systems and other lightweight structural components for automotive, commercial truck and other industrial markets.

The Challenge

Magna Exteriors installed an Elcomponent's sub metering system in its Banbury plant in 2014, initially to monitor electricity usage on motors. It moved to the next stage - measuring the air produced – ensuring the sub metering system covers all of its air lines, enabling it to identify who is using what air, what machines can be switched off, etc.

"One area that we knew needed addressing was air leaks" states Paul Howard, Energy Improvement Co-Ordinator at Magna Exteriors. "We could actually hear them hissing. Air is one of the most expensive forms of energy. It's free to breathe but is very expensive to compress and pressurise!"

Up to 30% of a compressor's output is lost through air leaks - a significant source of wasted energy and money. Further problems associated with air leaks include:

- Drops in system pressure
- Air tools function less efficiently
- Decreased system equipment and compressor longevity
- Additional maintenance
- Unnecessary compressor capacity added

The Solution

Brammer Buck & Hickman's Compressed Air System Audits address this through identifying leaks and providing recommendations to improve the efficiency of that system.

Brammer Buck & Hickman's Compressed Air System Audits benefit customers through:

- Optimising usage of compressed air
- Reducing energy wastage
- Noise reduction (air leaks are noisy!)
- Extending equipment life
- Increasing productivity.

These factors have significant cost saving implications.

Working with Magna Exterior Systems we introduced a Leak Detection Program for the Compressed Air Systems. We analysed the system using ultrasonic technology and provided a detailed photographic report on any leakage found in the system, showing the location, size and cost of each leak. The customer's maintenance crew then took over to address the leaks using the report as a road map.

Low cost Flow Meters have also been installed at our recommendation to monitor and measure the air rate as part of an autonomous preventative maintenance.

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The Outcome

At Magna Exterior Systems, the Audit exceeded expectations:

- In the three years this program has been running, the three compressors in constant use have been reduced to two plus a back-up.
- The energy cost savings are in excess of £130,000
- They are now using just two thirds of the energy and have reduced their servicing costs.

"Brammer Buck & Hickman went around the plant to identify and measure the air leaks" comments Paul. "They produced a fantastic, detailed report, including photos, details of the size and nature of the leak, plus the costs of that leak. The report also included a list of the itemised parts required to prevent each leak, with full costings."

"Our technicians went around the plant using these reports and signed each off as they completed the work. What's more, we did the same six months later – and every six months from then – and audited the results so we have proof of the success of this approach. It has really improved our energy efficiency. Plus, it was a very low-cost service that was refundable if we didn't receive the equivalent in energy savings; of course, we easily did this!

Another useful aspect to this service is the safety data provided by Brammer Buck & Hickman. Compressed air is potentially very dangerous; it can damage equipment and cause serious injury. Knowing where the potential risks are is important and Brammer Buck & Hickman were able to recommend and provide suitable equipment to address any such issues."

> "The work Brammer Buck & Hickman have done for us has been great. Magna Exteriors has 325 plants across the world and is the second biggest car parts manufacturer. We have formal means of sharing best practice and energy saving solutions and recently I presented this compressed air service to my counterparts in Europe and they were very impressed. They will be looking to adopt this service Europe wide through Rubix."

Paul Howard, Energy Improvement Co-Ordinator at Magna Exteriors

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