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One-Stop Repair for Plastic Molding Equipment

Plastics manufacturers speed repairs and reduce costs by working with single source for full gamut of molding machine repairs from mechanical to hydraulic to electronic.

With nearly 16,000 plastic manufacturing facilities in the United States, and 4,000 in Canada, each operating a multitude of machines, the investment in capital equipment for plastic injection, extrusion and blow molding is immense. So, too, are the demands for timely and cost effective repair and/or replacement of component parts to keep the equipment in good working order.

Given the vast array of mechanical, hydraulic and electronic parts involved, the seemingly straightforward task of maintaining the equipment is often more of a logistical nightmare that involves farming out components to a variety of specialty repair shops with variable capabilities, quality, pricing and turnaround time.

Fortunately, the repair services industry is responding

by broadening its capabilities to provide more of a one-stop-shop service for plastic molders, often with facilities strategically located near major manufacturers or manufacturing regions.

Molding Equipment

Although the equipment today varies in form and function, the basic process of plastics molding often involves components common to other industries. For example, in plastic injection molding, heating elements, servo motors, gear boxes, brake assemblies, actuators, and hydraulic devices play a critical role in filling, clamping, and ejection control operations.

In addition there are sophisticated electronic elements, such as PLC controllers to HMI control panels that are designed to display real-time status information and alarm monitoring while also recording critical data for analysis.

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Given the variety and complexity of machine components, repair or replacement often involves sending specific components out to specialty repair shops. For example, a hydraulic component repair shop does not have the capability to also repair motors, a motor repair shop cannot replace power supplies, I/O, memory or communication cards in sophisticated PLC systems and robotic equipment must also be repaired at a dedicated facility.

However, where these services can converge are with larger international repair service companies such as K+S Services. Due to size and expertise in many industries from automotive to aerospace, they are equipped to offer an array of repair services under one roof.

For the plastics industry specifically, it is rare to find a repair service company such as K+S, that offers the full gamut of repair and replacement services for plastic injection, blow

molding and extrusion equipment.

This includes the repair or replacement of components, including major manufacturer brands for the mechanical (servo motors, gear boxes and gear reducers, brake assemblies, vacuum pumps and blowers, air/fluid pumps, ballscrews) to the hydraulic (pumps, motors, cylinders, rotary actuators, servo valves).

In addition, the company can handle sophisticated electronic components including, replacement of controller cards for power supply, I/O, communication and memory, as well as HMI control panels. For robotic elements, K+S draws on its extensive expertise in the automotive manufacturing industry.

Regardless of the type of part, it is important to look for a repair company that will conduct an initial evaluation to identify the probable cause of failure, and then repair and test the part according to the manufactures specifications and test procedures.

Proximity of Repairs

K+S Services is also unique in the repair service business as it pursued a strategic model of expansion by opening new locations in close proximity to existing major plants, as well as geographic regions that attract and support U.S.-based manufacturing.

The company now operates eleven facilities across the globe, including the U.S., Mexico, Canada, and Europe. More than just a storefront with a lone representative that coordinates with a larger office, these repair facilities are fully equipped and functioning shops with managers, technicians and spare parts at each location.

Proximity, after all, has many advantages for the manufacturer. First and foremost, having a repair service in close proximity means repairs can be completed faster and the maximum possible uptime maintained. Today, most manufacturing plants need replacement parts quickly due to decreased on site spare parts inventory.

In the event of an emergency, turnaround time is practically negligible. Cases exist where a part has been picked up in the morning, repaired, tested, and returned that same day.

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If physical proximity in terms of location has its benefits, there is no relationship closer than having a repair service representative stationed within the plant itself.

In K+S's Smart Total Asset Management Program (STAMP), customers are assigned a full-time, on-site account manager to serve as a one-stop facilitator and manager of all repairable assets within a specific plant.

This includes tracking all repairs, expediting when required, shipping or delivering to and from the nearby repair facility, maintaining database integrity, streamlining and stabilizing procedures, generating a wide variety of reports and keeping the customer informed throughout the process.

Proof of the success of this business model rests with the number of corporations ascribing to it. Major companies such as Continental, GM, Firestone, Ford, Goodyear, GE Air, Chrysler, and UTC are current STAMP customers. K+S successfully services well over 800 manufacturers.

For more information, contact K+S Services, Inc. Headquarters; 15677 Noecker Way; Southgate, MI 48195; (734) 1-374-0400 or 800-542-1331; sales@k-and-s.com; or www.k-and-s.com.

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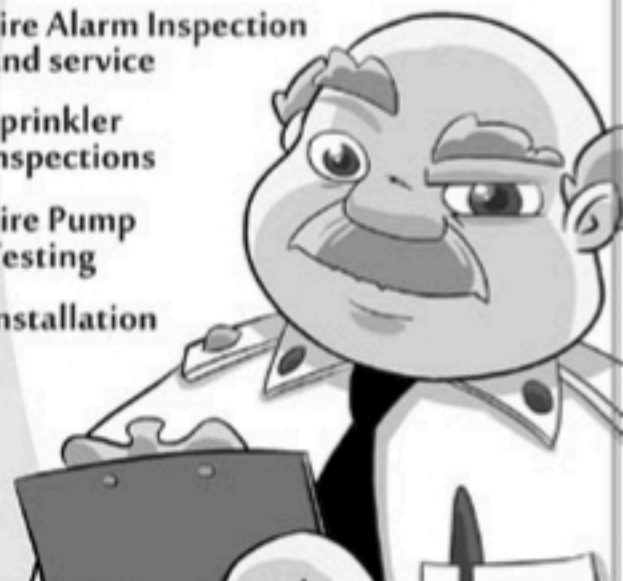
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