SEARCHABILITY: THE AMAZON EFFECT?

REX LARKIN, VICE PRESIDENT SALES AND MARKETING, REELCRAFT

How has Amazon.com changed the way we do business?

The internet of things (IoT) is forcing manufacturers and distributors to be better, faster and stronger. The bar continues to rise and we can no longer have a static website that simply says who we are and how to contact us. End users will not spend 10 seconds on a site that does not offer them quick access to the information they need to make a decision. Like it or not, we live in an information now, text message society and must conform to it.

Easy product selection: Successful websites offer end users quick and easy product selection with relevant attributes that within a limited number of clicks narrows the choice to a manageable number of SKUs.

Customers want complete information fast: Locating the product you need by itself is not enough. The end user wants to also find any and all relevant information, operation guides with exploded views, all related service parts, rich product data, multiple images or, better yet, 360 degree views, as well as how-to videos.

I want it tomorrow: "If you can't ship within a day, I will find someone who can!" Expectations have increased so much and distributors can't possibly stock everything, putting a much greater demand on manufacturers to be that stocking source ready to drop ship.


LARKIN

REDUCE COSTS WITH PROPER HYDRAULIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

JOHN JOYCE, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, BRENNAN INDUSTRIES

The basic foundation to perform proper maintenance involves two primary functions:

1) Preventive Maintenance

Preventative maintenance (PM) is crucial to maintaining the service life of equipment and reducing costs associated with unplanned equipment shutdown. This is particularly important when maintaining a hydraulic system. Ignoring the hydraulics in a PM plan can cause catastrophic failure that may not be detected until it's too late. A hydraulic fluid PM plan should follow the equipment and filter manufacturers' recommended maintenance schedules, take into consideration the working environment and use test points (see below) to draw samples from the line for fluid testing. Regular standards and procedures should be documented and adhered to for the proper maintenance of any equipment with a hydraulic system.

2) Corrective Maintenance

System components should be inspected during preventative maintenance to address any anticipated issue before failure occurs. Ideally, the need for corrective maintenance can be identified and addressed in preparation for a scheduled or planned shutdown. Be sure any repair of components is performed properly. If not, issues may arise that can cause even greater harm.

If a component needs to be replaced before its anticipated life cycle, the reason should be documented in the PM plan and corrective measures put in place to eliminate having the issue occur in the future.

MONITORING HYDRAULIC SYSTEMS WITH TEST POINTS

Pre-installed test points should be placed at regular intervals along the fluid line to monitor system conditions. Test point quick couplings are used to monitor pressure, vent a system or draw fluid samples for testing. They provide easy access and are used to identify problems before they occur. The couplings connect quickly and easily to measurement, control and switching devices, providing leak-proof connections before the ball check is open to minimize contamination of the hydraulic system. A self-locking metal cap seals the fitting to further protect the system from the environment. It is best practice to have pre-assembled test pressure monitoring kits on hand at all times. These kits are available with everything required for instant pressure checking regardless of style of the OEM's existing hydraulic systems.

Regular monitoring of system performance, analysis of fluid and scheduled fluid changeover are the keys to a long service life of equipment and components. Without proper maintenance, systems will fail and cut into operating profits. Yet even more importantly, they are crucial to preventing a burst line or hose that can cause physical harm.


JOYCE

PREMIUM HOSE COVERS SAVE MONEY

RANDY KISH, MANAGER, CONTINENTAL INDUSTRY HOSE, NORTH AMERICA

Every business owner likes to save money. After all, savings can positively impact the bottom line. One of the best ways to save money is to select products that will give you a maximum return on your investment. That's especially true when it comes to hydraulic hose and fluid power products, often considered commodity products.

The top reason for hydraulic hose failure is abrasive conditions to the exterior of the hose. Choosing the best abrasion-resistant hose cover will save money in the long run.

Over several years, we have conducted tests to evaluate the difference in the abrasion resistance of hydraulic hose covers in several companies' (and our own) products. All tests were conducted at our Norfolk, Nebraska, facility using the industry standard ISO 6945 Abrasion Test. The test involves a metal abrasive scraper that moves back and forth across a hose sample with 25 Newtons' downward force. The weight loss was recorded for each hose sample after 2,000 cycles. To understand the long-term effects, we even recorded data after 10,000 cycles, which is five times the ISO 6945 Abrasion Test requirement.

We also tested various sizes, primarily the popular 1/2-inch and 3/4-inch hoses. In all tests, hose using a premium abrasion resistant cover outperformed the standard neoprene cover from 200 to 350 times better.

Our conclusions were that using a premium cover on a hose is an exceptional value and provides extended hose life, especially in demanding abrasive applications. Extending the life of a product obviously means your customers spend less money over a period of time that, in turn, saves downtime replacement and ultimately, money.


KISH