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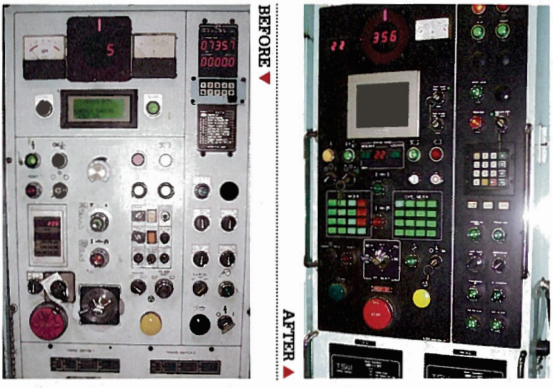

UPGRADING PRESS CONTROLS

Up-to-date machinery can help minimize expenses and boost efficiency

Many in the manufacturing industry know controls, automation and servo technology change constantly. Electrical components become obsolete on a regular basis to make room for more advanced systems.

Bringing machinery up-to-date and executing plans to keep it that way are vital for industry companies to minimize expensive downtime and sustain a profitable operation.

Stampers constantly must look for ways to maintain a modern manufacturing environment. One way to ensure a facility achieves efficient production is to work with suppliers that provide upgrade paths on machinery electrical components. Proactively planning and approaching a structured upgrade path where parts, service, technical support and future upgrade potential are understood before pursuing a long-term supplier agreement can help avoid major downtime situations.

Planning ahead

Whether planned or unplanned, upgrading might be in your future. Companies should review and understand long-term plans, including support, future parts availability and component life span.

Removing obsolete components from a facility is only the beginning of an effective solution. Be sure to identify the following: What type of support does the manufacturer offer? Where and how long will spare parts be in stock? What is the level and availability of service provided? What is the upgrade path for components in the future?

Another key point in upgrading or modernizing an electrical system is to understand the life span and future upgrade potential for components once they become obsolete. Is the next upgrade a direct swap, or will additional upgrades be required? Being prepared is a critical element in minimizing unpredicted downtime. When components become obsolete or are discontinued, having a plan in place will help determine what action a company should take.

Find a path

In addition to identifying obsolete components and preparing a long-term plan, it is also necessary for a company to understand what solution would best benefit its particular manufacturing environment.

One option is to consider a company's needs with its preferred supplier and identify a common upgrade path that will allow minimal inventory stock by using common components.

This approach will keep inventory costs low and also allow stock parts to be standardized across facility equipment. Additionally, training costs are reduced when the staff is able to diagnose and understand in more specific detail a standard brand of equipment.

For years, outdated, obsolete, unavailable and discontinued components have been a headache for manufacturing environments. With proper planning, utilizing relationships with preferred suppliers and understanding the long-term production goals, a company can find numerous benefits by updating obsolete control systems.

These updates can help minimize unnecessary downtime and provide continued success in keeping equipment running efficiently. FFJ

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