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One-Stop Repair for Medical Device Manufacturing Equipment

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

From engineering to fabrication, finishing and assembly, medical device manufacturing incorporates a range of advanced mechanical, hydraulic and electronic technologies into its processes. With many enterprises utilizing digital design and prototyping systems, automated fabrication, CNC finishing, and multi-axis, laser-based quality assurance systems, the demands for effective and timely repair or replacement of equipment are often critical.

Given the vast array of parts involved, the seemingly straightforward task of maintaining equipment often presents 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 medical device fabricators, often with facilities strategically located near major manufacturers or manufacturing regions.

Specialized equipment

Fabricators of medical devices incorporate manufacturing technologies that are common to many industries, ranging from aerospace to consumer electronics.

For example, companies that make surgical implants, orthotic devices and medical instruments often employ sophisticated CNC systems to maximize productivity and control. Although CNC systems may be unique in some

aspects, many platforms, such as the Siemens 840D include sub-systems and components that are similar or common to other industries such as digital drives and motors, connectivity to many types of tools through standard interfaces such as Ethernet, and easy integration to many different CAD/CAM systems.

In addition, medical device manufacturers utilize a variety of spindles, spindle motors, arbors and tools to automatically perform precise machining operations such as drilling and milling.

There is no shortage of mechanical or hydraulic components. High-purity hydraulic pumps, mixers, motors, cylinders, rotary actuators, pneumatic valves, servo valves and blowers are used to provide automated handling of

liquids, degassing systems, liquid-end assemblies, and flow cells.

Finally, manufacturing systems often contain sophisticated electronic control elements, such as robotics, PLC controllers, environmental sensors, and HMI control panels that are designed to display real-time status information and alarm monitoring while also recording critical production-related data for on-the-fly analysis of events, system troubleshooting and process improvement.

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 usually 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 its size and expertise in many industries from automotive to aerospace, they are equipped to offer an array of repair services under one roof.

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



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cards for power supply, I/O, communication and memory, as well as HMI control panels. For robotic elements, their extensive expertise is used in other industries such as 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

A repair service company such as K+S Services is unique in the industry because it has 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 twelve facilities across the globe, including the U.S., Mexico, Canada, and Europe. More than just a store front 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.

A photograph of a yellow ValueRail safety guard rail. The rail is made of high-strength steel and is shown in a factory setting. A QR code is visible in the upper left corner of the image.

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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.

Some repair service companies provide additional specialized programs like K+S' Smart Total Asset Management Program (STAMP) where 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 level of service 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 such as Chrysler, DePuy, GE Healthcare, GM, Ford, Goodyear, Stryker and Siemens which are among the well over 800 manufacturers successfully serviced by K&S Services.

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.

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