Saw blade cuts downtime

OFS increased efficiency, cut costs with new panel saw blade

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ing time and money for office furniture manufacturer OFS in Huntington, Ind. After incorporating a better-performance blade, production and efficiency jumped at Plant 18's cut-to-length operation as the manufacturer is aggressively expanding its market share.

The cut-to-length operation supplies pieces of particleboard, MDF, plywood and thermally-fused melamine — building blocks of the manufacturer's furniture, wardrobes, end tables, desks and hutches. However, frequent blade changes at 10 minutes per changeover on its four Biesse Selco panel saws added up to an hour and 20 minutes of downtime per shift, which made it difficult to keep up with increased demand.

Blade changes also were frequent on Plant 18's Altendorf table saw, Biesse Selco computerized power saws, chop saws and Biesse Twin Pusher. The old blades had problems with carbide breakage, which increased the potential for machine damage.

"We cut particleboard and MDF 70 percent of the time, TFM 25 percent and plywood 5 percent," says Tony Eckert, plant manager for Plant 18, OFS. "TFM is difficult to cut on a panel saw; it's also hard on tooling and dulls blades very fast. We ran two 10-hour shifts and with the old blades we changed them eight times during a shift."

"The old blades were cutting the material, but it wasn't efficient because they didn't stay sharp very long," says Eckert. "When the blades become dull, TFM chips out and you have a wasted piece. We had to find a better performance blade."

Finding a better performing blade

After trying several blade brands, Eckert was finally impressed with the blade on a new piece of equipment, a Biesse Twin Pusher. "That blade cut better and ran longer," says Eckert.

continued
SAW BLADE

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“Increasing productivity

Plant 18 switched to Freud blades in July 2007 and productivity increased. “We had to reduce saw speeds to 70 percent with the old blades to get a good quality cut,” says Eckert. “We’re now running at full speed and cutting more material at a faster rate.”

Operators noticed how quiet the blades are compared to their predecessors. Relief cuts in the blade create less vibration and a strong tension ring keeps the blade real quiet, comments Eckert.

“We went from yelling to have a conversation at the point where the cut line is to speaking at normal volumes to the operators,” he says. “Our noise levels went from 110 decibels to 86 decibels.”

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