Master Distributor Increases Flexibility and Productivity with Finn-Power Crimper

Since its founding in 1950, I.R.P. Industrial Rubber Ltd. has evolved from a small end user distributor to an industry-leading, nation-wide wholesale distributor with locations in Mississauga, Ontario, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

IRP's product line consists of industrial hose, couplings, clamps, Flexaust ducting, sheet rubber, matting, and conveyor belting. The company offers such value-added services as hose assemblies, pressure testing, Canadian Registration Numbers, internal and external swaging, crimping, rubber slitting, gasket cutting, and rubber fabrication.

I.R.P. Industrial Rubber Ltd. offers a full range of industrial rubber and PVC hose. Today's market demands a wide variety of hose couplings and fittings from economical styles for low-pressure water service to more critical applications, such as chemical and petroleum transfer that require coupling "systems".

For a number of years, IRP utilized a swaging system as a method of attaching fittings to the hose. In 2009, the company was looking for a better way to produce hose assemblies on large diameter hose. According to Ted Flewwelling, IRP's vice president, the swaging process entailed purchasing additional dies whenever the OD on the hose changed. "We were limited to the die range on the swager," explains Flewwelling. "We were looking for a machine that gave us more options and flexibility to fabricate the hose assemblies. In addition, a growing number of customers were asking us for clampless assemblies that were not cost effective with the swager we had."

Ted Flewwelling (left) and Steve Wickham inspect a job crimped on the FP160. IRP can now crimp from 3/16 inch ID all the way up to 6 inch ID hose with just one machine.

In September 2009, IRP purchased the Finn-Power FP160 extra heavy duty crimping machine with a maximum hose ID size of 6 inches. The Finn-Power FP160 is an ideal choice when a variety of sizes and types of fittings are produced in large quantities. This crimper is especially suited for manufacturing large volume orders. High capacity, flexibility, and complementary control options put these machines in a class of their own.

Increased productivity and flexibility

"The market has changed, and today there is more demand from the manufacturing sector for hose assemblies without clamps," says Flewwelling. "With the FP160, there is a wide range of our products that we can now crimp. With our old equipment, we were limited to swaging up to 4 inch ID hose. After the crimper was installed, the first order we received was a rush from one of

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Customer Profile

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our distributors for a project at a steel mill for 6 inch ID hose. We purchased the ferrules from our supplier and easily crimped the hose. The FP160 has dramatically increased our productivity and flexibility. We're more competitive because we can now quote jobs with quicker deliveries than we could do before."

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Steve Wickham, IRP's assembly area manager, is also impressed with the FP160. "I like the crimper's speed and accuracy," explains Wickham. "I also like the automatic settings and its ability to work in inches and millimeters. The machine's height is very workable and does not put a strain on your back. We can now crimp from 3/16 inch ID all the way up to 6 inch ID hose…so we don't need multiple machines. The 6 inch capability allows us to make assemblies that we couldn't do before, and has given us the ability to crimp onto thin walled lay-flat style hose, which we couldn't do before we got the Finn-Power machine."

Controller

The FP160's controller memory has the capability to store information on individual jobs. "We can look back and see the history and know that when you were successful before, you can be successful again," says Wickham. "When we have a repeat job that's coming up, instead of us starting from scratch we can see what we did in the past, we're able to pull the specs out of the machine's memory and get started on it immediately."

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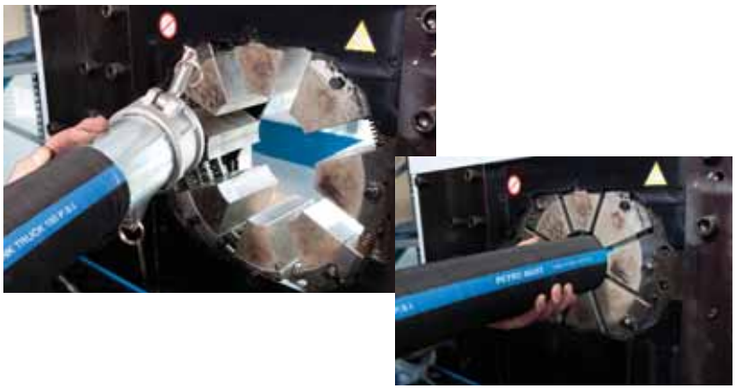
The FP160's wide opening is also a notable feature for IRP. IRP has the ability to open the dies quite wide so that they are able to get large end fittings through it without having to worry about running the whole length through. The 6 inch capability allows the company to make assemblies that it couldn't do before.



The FP160's wide opening is also a notable feature, according to Wickham. "We're not just able to do the 6 inch…we can open the dies quite wide so that we are able to get large end fittings through it without having to worry about running the whole length through," says Wickham.

Wickham also highlights the crimper's electronic backstop – an adjustable depth stop which allows the user to set up the machine for larger production runs. The electronic backstop can also be set up to trigger the crimping cycle. "The FP160 automatically goes through the cycle merely by touching the back of the plate," says Wickham.

Quick Change Tool System

Another Finn-Power crimper feature that IRP likes about the FP160 is the Quick Change Tool System (QC), which allows the entire die set to be changed in one easy operation. The pins on the QC Tool engage the QC holes in the dies. As the master dies open/close, the die segments are released from the master dies and retained by the QC tool. The die segments are held to the tool by a magnet. The die set then can be stored in the QC storage rack. In this way, the segments are kept in complete sets and are always used in the same order.

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Other features include:

- Versatile control system
- Fast, efficient, and accurate crimping
- Flexible change over from multiple to single-piece production
- Smooth operation through fast approach combined with slow crimping
- Operated by push button, pedal (optional), backstop device, or using semi-automatic function

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"Now that we have the FP160, our distribution network knows that they can rely on us more for custom work than they could in the past," concludes Flewwelling. "Specialty work is a growing part of our business. As a master distributor, we are expected to do specialized work like crimping and testing for customers. We always knew that Finn-Power was the best name in the business when it comes to crimping, especially for what we were looking for. The local Lillbacka dealer, Mark McGuire from MAG Tool Inc., has done a tremendous job. He has provided excellent training and stops in periodically to check on the machine to ask if we have any questions. The factory support from Lillbacka has also been outstanding."

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