CanAmerican Stone Spreaders

A SEAWAY FLUID POWER CASE STUDY
CanAmerican Stone Spreader:
A Customer Service Success Story

Executive Summary:
Ryan Sinke of CanAmerican Stone Spreader was looking for some help to improve the delivery time of their stone spreader trucks. In discussion with Seaway Fluid Power (SFP), Sinke was able to find a solution for the hydraulic hose related components of their production. The answer lies in the development of preassembled hose kits by SFP that reduced waste, ordering mistakes and crimper breakdowns, all helping to improve CanAmerican’s product delivery and customer service.

About CanAmerican:
CanAmerican Stone Spreaders began as a ready-mix company in St. Catharines Ontario in the early 1980’s. Over time the company evolved into the stone spreader business. The company currently has some 25 employees serving the construction, landscaping and concrete industries.

CanAmerican has remained successful over the years, despite several economic downturns, because of their focus on innovative product introductions and a goal to deliver superior customer service. This has allowed them to establish a well-deserved reputation as an industry leader among their customer base.

The Challenge for CanAmerican:
Adopting a goal based on the delivery of customer satisfaction through innovation has not been an easy path for CanAmerican to take. True innovation relies on a willingness to seek out ideas that are not obviously beneficial, and then turn those ideas into something of value for the customer. The adoption of digital technology within the CanAmerican product line, for example, has led to making their customers jobs easier and resulted in thanks for their “doing something different.” The challenge in seeking to deliver innovative customer solutions comes from the ability to do so over time. Innovation over the long haul requires the development of partnerships with companies willing to adopt the same focus on the use of new ideas to drive customer satisfaction. Part of any innovative approach is the recognition that time spent on tasks not part of your core competency, hose assembly, in this case, have the potential for improvement. Enter, Mike Bowman of SFP with a solution.

How Seaway Fluid Power Helped:
Seaway Fluid Power (SFP) has established themselves as a trusted supplier for CanAmerican. This trust is based on the willingness and ability of SFP to help them resolve issues when they arise, and a track record of supplying high-quality products at a reasonable cost.

Seaway Fluid Power supplies CanAmerican with a range of industrial hoses and fittings for the hydraulics that power their spreaders. The manufacture of stone spreaders operates on a strict schedule whereby production delays lead to unhappy customers. In the past, SFP has managed to
remain approachable when dealing with production issues for CanAmerican and worked to find solutions keeping their schedule and customer commitments in mind. But, for Bowman it became clear that there was more that could be done.

Taking the initiative, SFP came up with their innovative solution for keeping things rolling at CanAmerican for both their production and customer service needs. Recognizing that reinventing the wheel for each situation CanAmerican encountered was not the best way to serve their customer, Bowman worked with Sinke at CanAmerican to create set hose kits and ID tags for their specific product needs. Now, rather than creating an order to place with Seaway Fluid Power from a long list of separate parts CanAmerican can order preassembled kits. The kits are preassembled by SFP who provide descriptions of the contents, tag the individual hose lines and brand the hose sleeving for CanAmerican. SFP then packs the order on a skid for shipping, the same day it is received.

Recognizing that customized hose kits could potentially benefit other customers SFP has moved to implement their success with CanAmerican for other customers in the marine industry and those with repetitive ordering cycles.

There are benefits here for SFP as well. Creating the kits has allowed SFP to utilize slow times in the shop to “build ahead” kits in anticipation of CanAmericans placing orders. It has also led to increased knowledge of CanAmerican’s operation for SFP, lending hope to the development of future innovative solutions.

**The Results:**

So, how has this new approach by SFP helped CanAmerican? Well, for starters Ryan estimates that it has saved some ten hours a week for CanAmerican that they previously had to dedicate to ordering and sorting the products received before being able to act on the task at hand. Additionally, Ryan has seen a significant improvement in their response to their customer’s hydraulic hose issues. Recently when one of CanAmericans customers in B.C. blew a hydraulic hose line, CanAmerican was able to respond quickly and with confidence to the situation. As Ryan says” small things make the biggest difference when it comes to customer satisfaction”.

Seaway Fluid Power (SFP), was established in 1976. Based in St. Catherines, Ontario, SFP provides its customers with quality fluid power products and services. SFP carries an extensive parts inventory of fluid power products such as hydraulics, pneumatics, hose and fittings, stainless steel fittings, instrumentation and compressed air.