Flexible friend

QUALITY COMBINED WITH THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE TO CUSTOMERS’ EXACT REQUIREMENTS ARE THE HALLMARKS OF THIS SPECIALIST ITALIAN GEAR PUMP AND MOTOR MANUFACTURER

Whether producing some of the smaller components, such as bushings, for its seven families of gear pumps and motors, or customising them for some of the most prestigious names in the off-highway industry, Marzocchi Pompe can truly be considered a specialist in this field – from start to finish.

With its strong focus on quality throughout its entire production process, which is based in Bologna, Italy, rather than a low-cost country, the old adage, “you get what you pay for,” certainly rings true. An annual turnover of several hundred thousand pumps and motors means that OEMs who are seeking the cheapest possible parts for high-volume machinery – from start to finish.

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This gives a distinct advantage for medium-sized OEMs or perhaps global producers with low-volume ranges or specialist requests, who need parts taking to the precise requirements of their vehicles.

"If an OEM went to one of the biggest hydraulic suppliers and said, “We produce 20,000 units per year, but we need you to modify the pump design,” it might well get a positive response,” says Aldo Toscano, sales and marketing manager at Marzocchi Pompe. “But if you’re a 500 machine-per-year customer, and asked if a shape, you’d probably be told to make do with the standard design. We are quite different – we make only gear pumps and gear motors and we are very flexible, so it’s very difficult for us to say ‘No’!

Of course, not every potential size or flow combination will be immediately available off-the-shelf, so a request will therefore be met with a feasibility study, and as long as there are no problems in terms of economy or availability, the process can begin. The company’s sales and technical departments enjoy a close relationship that can be a great benefit to the customer during these early stages – ensuring that, even in times of high demand when time is scarce, the exact specifications are provided from the outset. This means that development can begin from the correct starting point, without requiring constant, excessive feedback between the supplier and customer that can lead to otherwise avoidable iterations. As alluded to earlier, having a sister company – Lavin – that specialises in the interaction between gear and body, is a distinct advantage.

Now’s the time

The worldwide market may have slowed, but as the move towards Stage III/Tier 4 emissions gathers pace, now is the time for vehicle manufacturers to concentrate their efforts on R&D, and collaborate with suppliers on future projects.

"In the last two years, customers were more concerned with meeting demand and were happy with the components they had,” says Toscano. “Now we see a lot of customers that are more interested in discussing alternative sources for their components.

Despite its focus on medium-volume production vehicles, this does not prevent some big names that Marzocchi has served for years staying on the supplier’s 500-strong client list. These are manufacturers that view the supplier’s focus on gear pumps and motors as a positive, appreciating the extensive range of models and options that such a narrow focus makes available. Besides that, these customers are drawing on Marzocchi’s know-how, high quality and performance as well as strong production capacity.

In the materials handling sector, the company has a strong – if often indirect – presence, through the use of its pumps in mini power packs. The forthcoming launch of a new low-noise pump – another fruit born of the long R&D partnership with the University of Bologna – should further boost sales in this market.

At the heart of the range for the mobile market is, of course, the famous ALP/GHM aluminium and cast-iron-flanged pumps and motors. Before 2000, the company was a bigger player in the industrial market. But as Marzocchi grew, many of its four families helped to give Marzocchi a strong foothold in the industry and to extend displacement from 0.19-200.3cc in eight groups according to gear size (0.25, 0.5, 1, 2, 3, 3.5, 4).

Maximum operating pressure varies on average between 230 bar (3,300psi) on aluminium models and 280 bar (4,100psi) for cast-iron versions, creating products that are suitable for perhaps 95% of mobile applications (but stay tuned – an extensive range of new products is due for launch over the next three years).

One-way traffic

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