

Applications for Plasma Cutting Technology

Industry: Agricultural equipment manufacturing

Equipment: Powermax1650®



Agricultural parts fabricator increases productivity and significantly lowers operational costs

Hypertherm's Powermax1650 provided Plecor with:

- 40% drop in operating costs from faster cut speeds and longer consumable life.
- 30% increase in equipment productivity.
- Less outsourcing in cutting gauge material due to improved edge quality.
- Fast return on investment.

The company and products

Plecor S.R.L., a 40-year-old fabrication company, produces a variety of metal parts for manufacturers of agriculture equipment, such as planting and harvesting machines. Their CNC plasma table generally runs 12 hours a day – 5 days a week to meet demand. Of the parts they fabricate, 90% of them are mild steel and 10% stainless steel. Nearly 80% of the metal cut is under 1/2-inch (12 mm) thick.

The problem

In response to meeting customer demand for excellent product quality and very competitive prices, Plecor S.R.L. of Rosario, Argentina need to evaluate their current cutting process and find ways to lower operation costs. The company operated a Hypertherm MAX100 on a CNC table to cut the needed parts for the various customers and industries they serve. The MAX100 performed very well, however the newer Hypertherm systems offered longer consumable life, providing lower operating cost and more uptime.

The solution

The local distributor recommended to the operator, Victor Lopez, that the company upgrade to a new Hypertherm system – a Powermax1650. Mr. Lopez was initially skeptical because of the exceptionally high performance ratings that were featured on the Powermax1650 literature. "The Powermax1650 looked so good on paper that we had our doubts," said Mr. Lopez.

As a result, he challenged his distributor by saying, "if the Powermax1650 delivers 50% of what you claim, I will sign the purchase order as a commitment from our end." With that said, a system was left for evaluation and in only a few hours of operation, Mr. Lopez saw first hand how well the system operated and purchased the Powermax1650.

Benefits

Shortly after the installation of the Powermax1650, Plecor had experienced a significant improvement in cut quality, as well as a 40% decrease in operational cost. In addition, they are now getting faster cutting speeds which have improved the productivity of the equipment by 30%. With these kinds of results, the Powermax1650 has paid for itself in only 10 months of operation. But it doesn't end there!

The use of Hypertherm's FineCut™ consumables has enabled Plecor to begin cutting parts that have traditionally been outsourced. FineCut, designed to provide significant increases in cut quality on thin-gauge metals, results in a narrower kerf, a greatly reduced heat affected zone and virtually no dross. It is these results which prompted Mr. Lopez to begin cutting these parts internally – thus eliminating the need for sending the parts out and therefore significantly improving his cost position.

Mr. Lopez is very pleased with the decision to upgrade but he still has his MAX100 and says, "it is very durable – it is spectacular but next to the Powermax1650, for economic and productivity reasons there is no comparison."

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