

NEWS for Immediate Release

Why you should use today's technology to upgrade your machine controls

With the recent success of our "Production Pro" press to press transfer line supervisor, it only makes sense to port this technology into the metal finishing division of our company. Introducing the "Finishing Pro" for metal finishing applications. This new and exciting way to process and monitor metal finishing systems is going to pave the way for the future.

What will the Finishing Pro do for you? Simple answer, make life easier.

The heart of the Finishing Pro system is the PLC controller. We use Allen Bradley control logix and compact logix PLC controllers on our systems, along with Devicenet and Ethernet remote I.O. modules. This makes a completely modular system, allowing us to expand at will, and virtually never run out of programming space. These new controllers allow us to program in a manner never seen before in this industry. We basically break each tank down to core components, and have scripted routines for each tank. For example a tank might need the following, temperature control, rectifier control, overflow and filter control, and agitation control. We treat the whole tank as a module and call up each scripted subroutine for each function. We do this for every component that is part of the line. Once completed all the tank controls are now loaded into the main PLC matrix which is then passed on to hoist control.

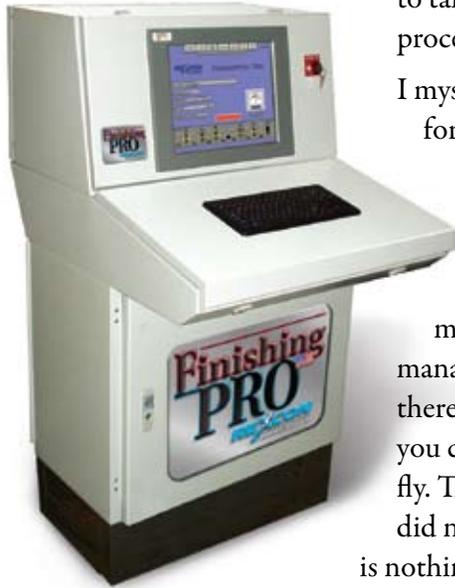
Our hoist control system is like no other. We use the latest laser sensors to determine hoist position. Along with variable speed motor controllers for traverse and lift



functions. This allows us to track each and every carrier though the entire process. No more prox or broken limit switches to maintain on the crane rail. Our hoist program is completely dynamic, the program knows where the hoist is and how long it will take to access the next function. Whatever tank needs tending first, the closest hoist will tend to the tank. No more parts being over treated from sitting in a tank too long.

Let's take a look at the Finishing Pro's Scheduler and Recipe manager. We made this as simple to use as possible. We start off by selecting the sequence of tanks that we want to make into a recipe. Once the sequence has been set, we save the recipe. Now you can edit the recipe and assign what is needed per each tank. Setup soak and drain times, temp settings, rectifier settings, anything that pertains to that tank has a function assigned to it can be changed. Once a recipe is saved, it is simple to call a recipe from the screen and execute it to start processing parts. The carrier that the recipe is assigned to will execute the process, and is tracked though the system according to the recipe. No more cheating here folks! If a tank has a critical parameter assigned to it the Finishing Pro will not let the carrier proceed until it is met. You can edit and assign new recipes, see how long your process is going

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to take, all while your other processes are still being run.

I myself was a plant manager for fifteen years in the metal finishing industry. So this function is coming straight from

my heart for any plant manager or supervisor out there. The Finishing Pro lets you change recipes on the fly. That's right your eyes did not deceive you. There

is nothing like getting a phone call in the middle of the day, just when

you changed your line over to a different process, asking you to squeeze in a few hundred pieces of something you just finished processing one hour before. The Finishing Pro can figure out automatically if the parts can be slipped by what is already being processed. This is done by taking a snapshot of where every carrier is, what process they are currently assigned to, and how long it will take for each tank to become free. The scheduler inserts the new process into the line. So it all depends on what process is being run at

the time a new one is introduced. If it can't be inserted between an existing process, the Finishing Pro will let you know and will auto purge the space needed for the process to fit into the next schedule. This is truly an amazing feature. No more having to move carriers around manually, or purge a whole line out of parts, just to run one carrier through the line.

The Finishing Pro is designed to be operated from a central location. This means no one having to run around the plant turning on controls, opening valves, filling tanks, it can all be controlled right from one location. Also with an auto startup routine your line can be ready to run without having to worry about not being notified if something has failed. You can be paged or emailed right from the controller letting you know what is wrong. Need complete part tracking and reporting? Not a problem, the Finishing Pro can communicate to a SQL server for complete data logging and time date stamping of any parameter that is needed by your quality control department. Options are also available for Auto titrations, SPC charting, and waste water control.

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