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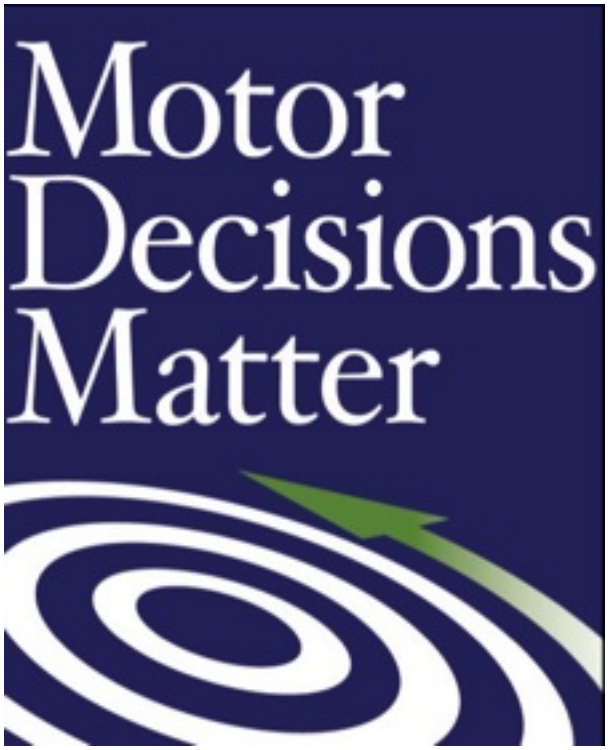
Turn Motor Failure Into Opportunity!



In this economy, it certainly seems that equipment failure is the last thing you need, especially for equipment as critical as industrial motors. Then again, when one door shuts, another often opens. Dealing with a failed motor can provide the impetus to investigate how motor management can help boost your bottom line.

In 2003, Columbia Lighting (Columbia), a manufacturer of commercial and industrial fluorescent lighting products in Spokane, WA, had just this experience. Shortly after initiating a motor inventory at its facility, a motor failed. Rather than just rush to replace the unit, plant personnel used the failure as an opportunity to identify options for improving energy efficiency throughout the facility.

For this company, the first step was to survey and monitor the compressed air system where the motor failure occurred—which included 200 hp and 150 hp motors. After a short period of time, several energy savings opportunities were identified, ranging from simple repairs to modifications to the control scheme. These changes reduced the demand on the motors, which led Columbia to reevaluate the size of motors that were actually needed to get the job done. Ultimately, the evaluation and resulting changes led to an annual bottom-line savings of

$35,510. Further review revealed that additional energy and cost savings opportunities might also be possible through introduction of additional controls.

While every facility and motor system has unique operating and equipment requirements, the Columbia Lighting example highlights themes that are common across industrial facilities: the opportunity to identify savings through simple steps, including making sure that you know your system and equipment—and determining how both can perform optimally. These straightforward steps are, in essence, motor management. Motor management can be as easy or complex as your staff and facility need it to be. Free tools and resources are available from the Motor Deci sions MatterSM (MDM) Campaign to help get you started (www.motorsmatter.org/tools/).

The MDM Campaign is sponsored by utility efficiency programs, motor manufacturers and motor sales and service centers. All of these organizations have a demonstrated expertise in the products and services involved in motor management—such things as electricity use, high-efficiency motors (NEMA Premium®) and best practice motor repair. They share a common goal to improve the way in which industrial motor repair/replace decisions are made. It's also important to note that your local utility may offer equipment rebates to help defray the costs of new purchases, or to upgrade older, less efficient equipment.

When motor failure occurs, use the downtime as an opportunity to evaluate how your motors impact your bottom line. As Columbia Lighting experienced, motor failure can also be the perfect time to identify opportunities to optimize your motor system. To read Columbia's story, as well as other examples of how motor management can achieve bottom-line savings, check out the case studies on the MDM Website (www.motorsmatter.org/case_studies/).

For more info, enter 1 at www.MT-freeinfo.com

The Motor Decisions Matter campaign is managed by the Consortium for Energy Efficiency, a North American nonprofit organization that promotes energy-saving products, equipment and technologies. For further information about MDM, contact Kellem Emanuele at kemanuele@cee1.org or (617) 589-3949, x225.