

April 2008

Feature undertaken by Ian Ritchie for Food Processing magazine

1. What is Brammer, and what does it do? When was it founded and where is it based?

BRAMMER is Europe's leading distributor of industrial maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) products and services. We specialise in providing fast and friendly local service and offering same or next day delivery of the parts and technical expertise needed by manufacturing companies to keep production running smoothly.

Our comprehensive product range covers Power Transmission, Bearings, Seals, Fluid Power and General Maintenance. We are the authorised distributor for many of the world's leading manufacturers and can help customers to consolidate their MRO spend to achieve economies of scale and consistency of service through a single trusted source.

BRAMMER was founded in 1920 in Leeds by Harry Brammer, an innovator in belts and power transmission. Today the Company remains British owned, registered on the London Stock Exchange, and has operations in thirteen different countries, employing 2,400 people in 300 branch locations. In the UK we have 83 branches strategically located in key towns and cities supported by a National Distribution Centre located in Wolverhampton.

2. What has your company got planned for the rest of 2008?

2008 will be another exciting year for the Company. We have just launched our new edition of 'The Essential Maintenance Catalogue' – a 1,360 page book featuring some 40,000 of the key products used regularly by maintenance engineers. This is a handy reference guide for them to help them source all the products they need from all the key brands they use. We have also just announced that FESTO have authorised BRAMMER as a national distributor of its entire product range.



Our team has already been trained and we look forward to building a strong relationship with FESTO and to providing their world-class products to our customers. And we recently opened our innovative Centre of Excellence. This 5,800 square foot facility is unique in the MRO world. We of course show-case the product range of many of our key suppliers, but we also demonstrate their products in use in a range of applications, whilst providing a 21st century training environment and conferencing facility. We will also continue to focus our resources on continuing to provide excellent local service to support our customer's production operations, while applying our expertise and experience to help them reduce costs on an ongoing basis.

3. What are the biggest challenges facing your company?

We play an important role in identifying opportunities for improvement in maintenance management that have a direct influence on costs and productivity. Our challenge is to use our experience to identify ways that can help our customers improve their production output and efficiency, whilst reducing costs.

Our investment in a nation-wide branch network, skilled staff and substantial stocks of our comprehensive product range is designed to enable customers to achieve the cost benefits of supplier reduction. Often we meet companies who are being highly inefficient in their procurement of MRO products and services. BRAMMER offer them the opportunity to consolidate their spend and eliminate many of the costs associated with multiple suppliers of the same products and services. Vendor consolidation is a trend that will continue to deliver savings to industry as purchasing professionals streamline business processes to reduce costs. Suppliers that can reliably provide a comprehensive range of components and services will continue to offer an attractive opportunity to rationalise the supply base.

4. Do you have any thoughts & views on relevant legislation & how it affects your company?

Environmental regulation and Health and Safety will continue to have an increasingly significant impact on UK industry. Effective management in both areas is a vital aspect for all management teams across the country.



The health and safety of the work-force is a fundamental responsibility for all management teams. At BRAMMER we are committed to improving the working environment for our people. For example, we recently received OHSAS 18001 accreditation of our health and safety management system at our National Distribution Centre; we have conducted a driver risk assessment and are providing additional training; and our Leadership Team review Health and Safety at the top of the agenda at our monthly meetings.

With regards to the environment, we believe that cost-efficient energy management in all areas of the manufacturing process is a stand out opportunity for most manufacturers in the UK. We recently conducted a survey of several hundred UK manufacturing companies and were surprised to discover that only 50% have a formal energy management policy and action plan. A further 30% admitted to taking opportunistic steps to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, whilst the remaining 20% take no action of any kind. Best-practise in this area suggest that to deliver the maximum benefit, time needs to be taken to identify the specific areas of the business where the biggest improvements and potential cost savings are achievable, rather than focus on changing just one or two individual components.

5. Who are the people involved in the management of Brammer?

As Managing Director, I am responsible for a business that employs over 800 people in the UK, based across our 83 Sales & Service centre locations, our head office and National Distribution Centre. Of these, some 600 are employed in customer facing roles, either meeting customers on-site or supporting their enquiries at our branches. We also have a dedicated team of engineering specialists in fluid power, motors and gearbox applications and drives and automation. This team work with customers on larger projects to solve problems or change processes.

6. Can you name a case study in which your product has been applied at the Centre of Excellence?

Many of the products in the Centre of Excellence have been used in case studies, particularly within the food and drink sector. We have extensive experience in this industry and understand the special needs relating to the production processes.



For example, we understand the impact to production lines of constant wash-down, high sustained speeds and high temperatures, plus we understand that hygiene regulations require the application of special lubricants, or lubricant free parts. We also recently held a training seminar for 30 engineers from one of the world's leading food and drink manufacturers and have other similar events booked in the coming months.

7. Any thoughts on the state & future of the food industry?

UK food manufacturing can have a strong future and continue to play a key role in a successful and globally competitive UK economy. To achieve this goal there are many challenges to be addressed in an increasingly competitive market. Not least, the need to achieve cost effectiveness across the whole production process.

8. What is it about your plant/process that puts you ahead of your competitors?

From sourcing and supplying the parts our customers need – when they need them – to working with them to improve production efficiency, or reduce working capital, BRAMMER understands the challenges facing manufacturing companies in the UK. We are also committed to driving continuous improvement initiatives throughout our own supply chain as we believe this is a vital aspect of convincing customers that we are the right long-term partner for their MRO supply needs. As evidence of the capability of our own supply chain, BRAMMER were finalists in the 2007 European Supply Chain Excellence Awards – great recognition from industry peers of our competitiveness and professionalism.

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