

SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE KEEPING INDUSTRY IN MOTION

Altra Motion is a global leader in designing, engineering, and manufacturing quality couplings, clutches, and brakes. Service and support is a key focus for the local subsidiary.

An increasingly important element of Altra Motion's offering is the professional service technicians extending support to customer needs.



REX SINCLAIR, ALTRA MOTION AUSTRALIA'S

national sales manager, explains how the local subsidiary is committed to providing expert, support and service for their broad range of products.

"We have 28 major brands who manufacture coupling, clutch and braking products. These include Svendsborg Brakes, Formsprag Clutch, Industrial Clutch, Marland Clutch, Wichita Clutch, Guardian, Bibby Turboflex, Stromag Brakes and Lamiflex couplings. Altra brands are recognised and operate in various applications in a variety of major key markets. These include mining, energy, marine, defence, food processing, steel, material handling, packaging, shipping and ports, and the crane and hoist.

"Our vision is to provide the Australian market with world-class products and support these with service expertise for the life of the product. We understand our products are very often integral components in the critical infrastructure operated by our customers. So, an increasingly important element of our offering is the professional service technicians who extend support to our customer's needs," he said.

Altra Motion is heavily engaged with key markets set for exceptional growth over the next decade or so. Sinclair is aware that business confidence will be a significant issue with uncertainty surrounding the ongoing impact of the global pandemic.

"Although we are engaged with markets predicted to boom over the next decade, or so, we can see a certain degree of business uncertainty because of the pandemic. With this uncertainty comes



Rex Sinclair, Altra Motion
Australia's national sales manager

a reluctance to release funds for capital expenditure. When capital expenditure is curtailed, budgets focus on maintaining and extracting the maximum performance from existing equipment.

"Altra Motion is a manufacturer of couplings, clutches and brakes and an essential element of our offering is to be a Service Partner. For example, suppose customers are not able to invest large amounts of capital in new equipment. In that case, we can help by maintaining existing equipment to the highest levels with our service and maintenance packages.

"We offer genuine OEM Spare parts and maintenance. Our team of Service Technicians go onsite to complete commissioning work, service products or troubleshoot with the latest test equipment.

"They are factory trained, driving purpose-designed service vehicles with the equipment required to conduct servicing and maintenance programs quickly and efficiently. In addition, we have several workshop facilities around the country, providing us with the ability to entirely overhaul equipment and bring the product back to a brand-new condition and factory specification.

Sinclair explains how Altra Motion provides predictive maintenance plans.

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"Realising the critical nature of our products, we take a proactive approach to service programs. Products are inspected at designated and regular intervals, which recommends an inspection every three months and a service every six months."

which recommends an inspection every three months and a service every six months. Because our couplings, brake and clutches are components within a piece of overall equipment or critical infrastructure, every application is different. We work with the customer to provide the correct support, maintenance, and servicing levels and meet their specific requirements.

"Take a mine site as an example. We will be engaged to service and maintain the componentry playing a critical role in their infrastructure. This might include the cranes they are operating or the massive conveying and bulk transporting systems. We will work with our customers to understand their shutdown schedule and ensure we service the equipment based on their requirements. Working to their schedules causes minimal interruptions because shuts to these types of operations can be extremely costly. We will also work directly with the OEM providing spare parts and overhauling and servicing components," he said.

Sinclair explains the typical applications for Altra Motion products.

"Typically, you will find our products operating in ship to shore cranes loading and unloading containers. We also have our components in Coal and Iron Ore ports, operating on shiploaders, stackers, reclaimers and conveying systems operating in the major stock yards throughout the port's infrastructure.

"Many of our customers are operating 24 hours, seven days a week, and our products play a critical role in terms of maintaining productivity and output. A failure of a component can prove catastrophic in terms of lost production. We are prepared for such events with our Altra Motion 24/7 technical support.

"From the moment a customer contacts us, we ascertain the situation and determine what their needs are. They might require technical support on the phone or involve sending a technician to conduct more in-depth troubleshooting to solve the problem. Depending on what the fault is, our technicians will be able to repair and replace onsite. But if this is not possible, we can bring the product back to one of our workshops where it is repaired and returned to the site ASAP," said Sinclair.

Compliance has become a key issue for industry sectors, with major mining houses and Tier One builders seeking assurance that products meet exacting industry standards in terms of safety. Sinclair explains how the Altra Motion brands reach and surpass these high levels of compliance.

"The quality of our product range and its ability to comply with the highest industry safety standards is because of our intensive research and development processes. In addition, our international design, engineering, and manufacturing facilities are fully accredited to ISO 9001. Compliance and accreditation are important to our organisation and why our products are of the highest quality. We are confident that our genuine parts will perform even in the toughest of applications because of the international manufacturing standards and accreditations. This ensures our customers will receive a premium product that will offer outstanding productivity and reliability," he said.

There is a wear and tear factor with componentry because the equipment is being used every day, but some components on some equipment wear quicker than others. Resulting in the wrong oil or lubricant added to the



Service vehicles are equipped to help conduct servicing and maintenance programs quickly and efficiently.

application or an operator not doing the right thing with the equipment. Sinclair explains how his service technicians identify these issues and how Altra Motion aims to educate the market on better work practices. Servicing is only one part of the solution; he says that education and awareness of preventive maintenance practices are just as important.

“We offer both remote and onsite diagnostics depending on the clients’ requirements and preference. We can identify these types of issues through our IIoT system and the monitoring this provides. Also, when our service technicians are on site, they can identify issues by utilising our test equipment for diagnostics. We can connect to the machine whilst its operating and can see exactly what is happening.

“With this technology, we can look at issues relating to brake pads, for example. By examining the results from the test equipment, we can see why they are wearing at a faster rate. We can examine the results from the data logging, make calculations to ensure we have the right brake for the application, or determine if we need to change to a different brake pad material, or the brake application rate requires tuning, or if the rapid brake wear is a result of mistreating the equipment. We have the expertise to analyse the data here in Australia along

with support from our factories,” he said.

Sinclair explains what a crane business can expect from Altra Motion regarding service and maintenance outside of their relationship with the equipment OEM.

“We encourage users of our products to contact us directly. They can call through on 1300 ALTRAMOTION; they will be able to speak to someone 24/7. This number will put the customer in touch with one of our technical representatives who will work out the issues and problems. We would then engage our engineers at our various factories to come up with the right solution.

“In most instances, our overseas factories, particularly in Europe, are working with the major crane OEMs, and our componentry is included in their equipment, so we have strong relationships in place. Regarding tower cranes, the Australian market is more end user-driven, with only one local manufacturer, whom we work with,” he said.

“We also work very closely with a large Australian crane manufacturer. We supply several components for their products, including parts for specialised winches. The customer has a winch division, and we have been successful on several projects relating to ship loaders and mining. These winches are designed to maintain constant tension

on conveyor belts.

Altra Motion products are exposed to key markets which are currently experiencing exceptional growth. Sinclair explains how the business is keeping pace with this growth.

“We are a ‘solutions driven’ organisation. We understand that our products are already installed in customer cranes. Still, we can support the customer as being a Service provider, as well as a manufacturer. Whatever the reason, we are here to support and service our customers.

“Right now, we are in the process of expanding the business. We are recruiting and training more technicians; we’ve just moved into a new facility in Mackay in North Queensland, which is more than double the size of our previous facility. So, we are indeed growing our business to cater for the increased demands we see across the various markets.

“It is the same in construction and particularly infrastructure. With the Federal and State Governments investing well over \$100 billion over the next decade, we see a once-in-a-generation construction boom. Increasingly, the productivity, efficiency and reliability of the equipment being utilised on projects will be critical to the success of this construction program,” he said. ●