



## Case Study

# Benchmarking Fluid Power Distributors

### Background

The British Fluid Power Distributors Association is the national trade association for the distribution of hydraulic and pneumatic components and systems. The products are used in a diverse range of customer industries varying from mobile construction equipment, aerospace and transport applications to machinery used in industries such as food processing and packaging.

Distribution forms over 30% of UK business. The majority of fluid power distribution companies being small and owner managed. As such, in the main they have received little formal management training. They are often constrained by limited resources and available time.

### Project Summary

Allman Horrocks Consulting (AHC) was approached initially to make an impartial analysis of the distribution sector. Also to be considered were the supply chain through the manufacturers and the customers. The objectives were to apply the management training expertise of Allman Horrocks to the fluid power distribution industry, to provide a cost-effective opportunity to companies to assess their own performance and thereby raise the status of the industry.

The BEST project essentially was a research exercise using benchmarking to assess Business Excellence. It was based on the model developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and which had been successfully implemented with several clients by AHC over the years. The technique in effect enables a company to identify its strengths and weaknesses and to compare itself with the best practice in the industry and to highlight those aspects of their day-to-day business where they need to take action.

### Testimonial

“Through a series of detailed questionnaires the initial study enabled distributors to look at the main factors affecting their businesses and their relationships with their suppliers and customers. Despite the incursion into their already business schedules the companies that did participate were able to immediately recognise the benefits in spending time in thinking about how they ran their businesses. The research questionnaires used in the exercise were subsequently augmented by a series of workshops enabling companies to discuss their findings and to learn from each others experiences.”

“The most satisfying aspect of the project however was the one-to-one sessions between a company’s senior management and an Allman Horrocks consultant. For those company staff who volunteered their time for these collective discussions it was invaluable. It was surprising how many participants, often from very small companies, had never been given collective time to openly discuss how their companies were run. All who took part expressed their appreciation to Allman Horrocks for this vital and useful management training.”

“It was clear from the exercise that there was a need for some form of management support pack. The support packs were warmly welcomed and augmented with further workshops and offers of assistance from the Allman Horrocks team with advice and training to individual companies.”

“Collectively the project has had considerable impact on fluid power distributors. There are considerable pressures on the industry and many small companies find it difficult to compete with changes in the supply chain. The invaluable contribution made by Allman Horrocks Consulting has enabled fluid power distributors to respond positively to these changes and ensure the continued growth and prosperity of the industry.”



Neil Percival, Director 1986-2001, British Fluid Power Association (retired)

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