

Q&A /// INTERVIEW WITH AN INDUSTRY INSIDER

ERIC FORD /// VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AND MARKETING /// GRAPHITE METALLIZING CORPORATION

“Our No. 1 achievement is the engineering, manufacturing, quality, sales, and customer service team we’ve put together to solve our customers’ problems on a daily basis”

What does Graphite Metallizing Corporation do for the heat-treat industry?

Graphite Metallizing Corporation makes a product called Graphalloy. It’s basically a graphite/metal alloy, that we provide in the form of a bushing. We started out in 1913 with some entrepreneurial engineers that figured out how to put graphite and metal together to make electrical contacts for elevators. Over the years, we’ve developed the product for applications in the harshest environments, such as the heat-treat industry.

The main thing that Graphalloy provides to the heat-treat industry is solutions to save maintenance time and money. Graphalloy is self-lubricating, so you don’t need any grease or oil. We have a wide temperature range of grades that go up to 1,000°F in an oxygen environment, and nearly twice that in an inert environment. What that does for people in the heat-treat industry is it provides them with a self-lubricating, high-temperature product, which reduces their need to spend time replacing bushings, bearings, or repairing equipment.

What’s a typical day like for you at Graphite Metallizing?

Graphite Metallizing is based in Yonkers, New York, where we have our foundry, shop, engineering, and support teams. What we do on a daily basis is work with our customers’ engineering and maintenance personnel to develop solutions for their unique problems. It could be a solution for heat-treat ovens, furnaces, furnace tap gates, etc. For example, we provide industry standard cam followers with Graphalloy in place of the needle bearings. It could be diverter pillow blocks, cooling beds, conveyors, louvers, dampers, pot roll bearings, oven cart wheels. Anywhere you have grease and you want to get rid of it, Graphalloy can be a good solution.

How do you work with a customer when they come to you with a challenge?

Our engineers work one-on-one with their engineers or maintenance staff. The first thing we do is make sure they understand what Graphalloy is and what it can do. It is a unique material, and some people have assumptions about how you use it. We help them understand how they can use Graphalloy to save themselves time and money. We make Graphalloy in custom dimensions for the customer when they give us specific information about their application. For new or challenging applications, we often suggest that they test some Graphalloy parts in their specific application.

What has changed the most in the heat-treat world and how



have you adapted?

The things that have changed the most and continue to change — and actually I see it in a positive way — are there are many more consolidations in the industry. You also see many of the older mills that were idle reopening, and you see companies providing more investment into those mills for refurbishing and increasing their capacity. All of those activities are positive for Graphalloy, because as they expand and modernize, many times

they want to reduce maintenance costs by doing away with grease or they need a high temperature material for their cooling beds, conveyors, quench tanks, or other equipment.

One other thing I can say about Graphalloy is it works well when submerged in liquids. It doesn’t swell, so we have a lot of these types of applications, such as in quench tanks. We have one customer where Graphalloy was in their quench tank for 25 years before they replaced it. Graphalloy is a long-lasting product, and that’s why we are very careful to make sure we understand the customer’s application completely before recommending a certain grade.

What do you consider some of your proudest achievements?

I think the No. 1 achievement is the engineering, manufacturing, quality, sales, and customer service team we’ve put together to solve our customers’ problems on a daily basis. Our stated goal is “a satisfied customer who receives a defect-free product on time, every time,” and we all work together to make that happen. One example of this teamwork is we had an automotive engine plant that came to us at a trade show and mentioned that they were looking to replace their greased bearings because every time the furnace door would open, it would fry the grease in the bearings, and they would often have to stop the line to replace them.

Over a period of two years, our team worked with them from testing in one furnace to completely replacing all their furnace bearings with Graphalloy.

The maintenance manager said that this saved them well over \$100,000 a year just in maintenance and repair costs. Now, when the furnace doors open, the Graphalloy bushings keep everything working, since there’s no grease to cook. The initial “test” furnace has been working for over five years now, without the bearings needing to be replaced. ♨



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