

Q&A /// INTERVIEW WITH AN INDUSTRY INSIDER



ED WYKES /// DIRECTOR OF FIELD SERVICE AND AFTERMARKET SALES /// AFC-HOLCROFT

“From the minute we walk in that door to the minute we leave, the customer knows exactly what we are doing in their facility.”

What is your role at AFC-Holcroft?

I'm the Director of Field Services and Aftermarket Sales. I have a two-prong responsibility. One is the aftermarket parts and services, the other is field services. They go more hand-in-hand than what most people would think. It's one place where a customer gets answers to field service work and also the parts they might order.

What new technology does the Aftermarket Group offer?

We have a very deep bench of aftermarket people. We've got six inside-sales people here in our Aftermarket Group, and they're well versed, not only in AFC-Holcroft equipment but equipment from industry pioneers like Pifco, Dow, Thermal Alliance, and Aichelin. AFC-Holcroft continues to support each and every piece of equipment produced under the banner of any of these companies. Our parts and service team can advise you of any design improvements that have been implemented since the installation of your furnace equipment, ensuring that you have the safest, most efficient repair/replacement solution.

We do engineering optimizations to bring customers' equipment into a modern capacity. We get many requests from customers that say, "I've got this old furnace; I'd like to upgrade it." Or, "I've got this other piece of equipment to test that's not working right." We have 20-plus engineers who keep their fingers on the pulse, always evaluating our current equipment and recommending improvements and/or safety updates. AFC-Holcroft has all of our customer needs covered.

Green initiatives such as reduction of utility, elimination of water-cooled devices, converting gas to electric heat, etc., are offered through AFC-Holcroft Aftermarket group. Companies are always interested in reducing their carbon footprint. We have the tools and resources to evaluate their equipment and make recommendations on how to achieve this.

Our Aftermarket and Field department has outside salespeople who regularly make customer visits to fulfill customer requests, evaluate upgrades, perform technical reviews as well as inspect equipment. Our Field and Aftermarket groups work together with our New Equipment Sales to ensure all customer needs are met. We provide on-going training on all types of heat treatment applications, newly engineered equipment and maintenance of older furnaces. Recently, our field department, engineers and skilled trades received certification in NFPA combustion safety after completing a two-day comprehensive training class.

Why are inspections important, and how does the Aftermarket Group address this?

These inspections are important for insurance, plant safety, uptime and elimination of unexpected downtime. We perform NFPA safety inspections and general inspections, repairs, and updates on all industrial heat treat equipment. Along with those inspections, as part of our PM (preventative maintenance) program, we'll advise of critical spares, take inventory of what spares are stocked, review their PM schedule, make recommendations, and advise on PM interval and scope. The intent is to ensure the customer is not having unplanned downtime but, in the event they do, the right parts are onsite. AFC-Holcroft will always provide a report for any inspection or work done at our customer site.



How often should an industrial furnace be maintained, and how important is regular maintenance?

Regular maintenance is key to keeping equipment running its best. By and large, we like to do a hot and cold inspection every six months on a piece of equipment.

For all new equipment, we provide an owner's manual that includes recommended maintenance intervals. We also offer custom PM schedules or custom maintenance schedules as needed.

The PM and maintenance schedules are geared toward making sure the customer is maximizing their uptime. Scheduled maintenance or PM is not an interruption to production. We often see customers with a strong PM having little to no unexpected downtime. Production takes precedence, and inspections take time. Our inspections can provide insight into what needs to be replaced 6, 12, 18 months from now.

What are the top priorities for the Aftermarket Group?

Responding to all customer requests within six hours. Being able to turn around quotes to customers within a week. Providing industry leading service. Minimizing customer downtime by ensuring they are armed with the correct information about their equipment and the parts to serve them. Ensuring the customer knows the status of their orders and making sure that, from the minute we walk in that door to the minute we leave, the customer knows exactly what we are doing in their facility and having a detailed record when we're gone. ♣

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