

New Hempel plant mark of firm's strong growth

The new plant in Jeddah's Second Industrial City is the most advanced solvent based coatings plant in the Middle East and is part of the company's growth strategy, says Group Vice-President KARSTEN PEDERSEN

HEMPEL, a leading global coating company, has recorded a new industry milestone with its new state-of-the-art plant—the most advanced solvent based coatings plant in the Middle East.

Built with an estimated cost of \$8.5 million to build, the technologically advanced factory represents the latest investment by Hempel group as part of its belief and contribution in the growth strategy associated with the 2030 vision of the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince and Chairman of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs Mohammad Bin Salman.

The facility in Jeddah's Second Industrial City spans across 15,000 sq m and can produce up to 12 million litres per year of supply coatings to the marine and protective segments.

This investment is a significant step towards maintaining and growing Hempel's leadership position in the coating industry—and as the supplier to one of the world's top leading oil companies, Saudi Aramco and their business partners, says a company spokesman.

The inaugurate ceremony was held in October 2019, was attended by Middle East – West Chairman Essam Mohammed Al Suhaيمي,

Group Vice-President Karsten Pedersen, Country Manager Yusuf Al Sayed, Hempel management, valued customers, local government officials and local media. Production started in September 2019.

“The new solvent-based coatings plant marks a significant milestone for Hempel in Saudi Arabia, which is a vital market for us. We strive to continuously improve the quality of products and service for our customers using cutting-edge technology,” says Pedersen.

On his part, Al Sayed says: “This facility is going to play a significant role in boosting local economy and creating new job opportunities, all in line with our commitment towards making the 2030 vision a reality”.

Meanwhile, Hempel has launched a new generation fire-protection coating, Hempafire Optima 500—specifically designed to improve the productivity of passive fire protection (PFP) coating applications. It achieves this by reducing the number of coats required and the process time required to apply them, saving time and costs.

Hempafire Optima 500 helps to maintain the stability of steel structures in large infrastructure buildings such as airports, stadiums and commercial centres by delivering up to 180 minutes

protection against cellulosic fires, being optimised for 120 minutes. It is a one component waterborne acrylic intumescent coating with zero volatile organic compounds (VOC) and can be used for both open and closed steel sections.

Hempel's Group Product Manager, Cellulosic PFP, Roger Soler, says: “When developing Hempafire Optima 500, we created a coating to enhance efficiency for customers by increasing their productivity and reducing costs. Thickness build-up of the coating can be achieved in less coats that dry faster. Thus, application costs and time to deliver are reduced. We also wanted a coating that outperforms in warm climates such as those found in the Middle East and in parts of Europe. We've managed to achieve this without compromising the protection or the aesthetic finish.

Hempafire Optima 500 is fast drying and highly resistant to sagging. The application which can be delivered in two days as part of Hempel's PFP system, outperforms in warm conditions and provides two-hour fire protection in ISO 12944 C3 interior environments. It dries to an excellent aesthetic finish meaning there is minimum surface reworks to achieve the required cosmetic finish when applying a topcoat. The

ease of application allows customers to improve their painting process by reducing the number of coats needed, minimising drying times and maximising the speed of the application.

At 40 deg C, it comfortably holds up 750 microns (µm) dry film thickness (DFT) per coat, and can be overcoated in just three hours. For applications where speed is the key, coats of 500 µm DFT can be applied every 75 minutes and recoated with a PU topcoat after 16 hours. This means that the whole system - primer, PFP, and topcoat - can be applied and dry to handle within a 48-hour period.

Hempel specialises in the production of coatings and paints for products used in interior decoration and insulation to protect buildings from extreme weather conditions. It relies mainly on R&D and advanced manufacturing technologies to produce high quality products which in turn contribute to the company's efficient functioning.

Hempel Saudi Arabia was established in 1973 with four main branches in Riyadh, Jeddah, Jubail and Yanbu and a factory in Dammam. The company has a dominant stake in the Saudi market and has contributed to the preservation of many vital buildings in various Saudi cities through its technologically-advanced products.

The cost of obsolete metering equipment

James Holt, GM, and Colin Lightbody, Technology Manager, Proserv Measurement reveal that ageing, unreliable kit can hit revenues and a metering system essentially equates to a “cash register”

NO MATTER what area a business operates in, improving the bottom line is the one guaranteed way of enabling it to flourish.

In oil and gas, with its dependency on economic predictions and the day-to-day pricing of hydrocarbons, running a tight operation and maximising profitability is essential.

Nothing encompasses that more than fiscal metering, as James Holt, GM, Proserv Measurement explains: “Metering effectively allows operators to monitor exactly how much oil or gas they are producing from their wells 24/7. In a custody transfer, or financial transaction, both buyer and seller need to know the exact quantities agreed to are being delivered.”

Holt adds that a metering system essentially equates to a “cash register” and any slippage in the accuracy of the readings could see a seller either oversupplying the customer, thus giving away millions of dollars of oil for free, or even short-changing the client, risking subsequent legal action and reputational implications.

Colin Lightbody, Technology Manager, Proserv Measurement suggests the simplest way for an operator to ensure their fiscal metering equipment remains accurate is to prioritise its maintenance:

“Whatever the fiscal flow meter reading indicates, that's what a customer will get billed on. So, the reliability of that piece of kit is vital to safeguarding the integrity of all transfers.”

Proserv is headquartered in the UK but it has an extensive network of facilities across the Middle East, including in the UAE and Saudi



Holt (left) and Lightbody ... metering allows exact monitoring of oil and gas wells

Arabia. Lightbody has seen that across the Arabian Peninsula, like elsewhere in the world, ageing measurement equipment, and the risks attached to it becoming obsolete, is a growing problem.

When key components fail, operators are left with a significant issue. “After a time, flow meters will inevitably become obsolete and they

are crucial pieces of equipment. If the manufacturer can no longer support them, or provide spare parts, the operator's metering capability and visibility will just collapse once a meter finally breaks down.”

James Holt implies outmoded flow-metering equipment could even be a differentiator in agreeing a deal. “Customers want to know that

their supplier has traceable, certified metering equipment that is fully maintained. In other words, they have the best available kit, maintained to the best available standards. That provides the trust required.”

Holt believes operators should turn to specialists, like Proserv, who not only install metering solutions but can also manage “the whole lifecycle of the system” for the client, including phasing in new upgrades. This would create the reassurance needed to prevent equipment from becoming obsolete.

Colin Lightbody compares trusting in obsolete metering equipment to maintaining an ageing car: “Regular maintenance might help to keep that car on the road for several extra years but the older it gets, the harder it will be to source and repair a vital part when it finally breaks.

“If an operator's obsolete flow meters break down on a large field in the Middle East with its multiple partners, there is a contractual obligation to maintain production. The operator cannot just stop pumping for several weeks to find a new metering solution, as the extended supply chain is expecting that oil or gas.”

Lightbody reveals an operator would have little choice but to trust in the measurements of third parties, including its customers. “In a time of increased efficiencies and maximised returns, this represents a disaster. The operator would simply not know how much oil or gas it is producing or how much is being transferred from A to B.

“Millions of dollars of revenue could be lost due to a lack of regular maintenance and an effective strategy.”