

NEW TOOLS

All-in-one phase converter promises easy installation

By A.J. Hamler

EDITOR

As professional shops increase in size, the addition of large, three-phase equipment is sometimes necessary to keep pace with the competition. While a variety of three-phase woodworking machines is readily available, bringing three-phase power into the shop to get them up and running isn't always easy.



Kay Industries' Phasemaster MA-R rotary phase converter can bring three-phase power into shops receiving only single-phase electrical service.

Utility companies often charge high rates for three-phase power where available, but in some parts of the country obtaining it at all is sometimes impractical — if not outright impossible.

Kay Industries of Indiana has recognized the difficulty shops have in getting three-phase power, and has successfully marketed a growing line of phase converters. Now, they've taken a step further with the introduction of the Phasemaster MA-R converter, a system that promises to simplify the process of adding three-phase power to the shop.

"The downside of converters has always been the fact that it's still a piece of electrical apparatus that requires some knowledge of components like switches, fuses and the like," said Larry Katz of Kay Industries.

"We decided that the best way to offer a converter is to package it in a way that enables woodworkers to get on with what they do best, which is making things out of wood," he said. "What we did was take all the components that you'd normally have to purchase separately, and integrate them all into one point-of-use device which incorporates the single- to three-phase conversion capability with all the connection accessories."

Katz said that because the MA-R converters are self-contained, the installation process is much faster than when installing individual components.

"The principle advantage is that you can put it in place and literally be making three-phase in minutes," he said. "It comes down to the simplest case of two wires in, and three wires out."

The MA-R converters can be set up to supply intermittent power to individual machines requiring a three-phase supply, or they can be configured to supply power to an entire shop at the flip of a switch. A side-mounted control box on the converter houses the unit's disconnect switch, fuses and terminal blocks.

The Phasemaster MA-R converters are available in a range of systems to cover horsepower requirements from 1-1/2 hp to 150 hp, but Katz said Kay Industries has made converters as large as 500 hp for companies with special needs.

"Realistically, you rarely run into woodshop requirements much larger than 20-hp units, except in the case of some of the bigger molders," Katz said. "One converter can run a lot of motors in a shop."

Pricing varies depending on the configuration, but Katz said a typical small-shop 3-hp unit would sell for \$695, while a 15- to 20-hp unit would sell for \$2,500 to \$3,000.

For more information, write number 988 on the Reader Service Card in this newspaper, or contact: Kay Industries, 604 N. Hill St., South Bend, IN 46617. Tel: 800-348-5257. Web site: www.kayind.com.