



CASE STUDY

STRENGTH IN DEPTH

How RS's large number of suppliers and close relationship with those companies helped a manufacturer protect its engineers



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COLLABORATING WITH CUSTOMERS

Many organisations face challenges around delivering effective maintenance, repair and operations (MRO) procurement that meets the needs of engineering and maintenance teams by providing high-quality, genuine products, but also at a price that allows their business to hit wider efficiency targets. Part of the solution is working with a reliable, innovative supplier such as RS Group, which has an impressive network of more than 2,500 suppliers and more than 500,000 products in its catalogue.

RS has many strategic relationships with suppliers, which helps us to provide a huge breadth of products (and technical support) while also ensuring customers have access to the latest technology and innovation. RS's network of suppliers helps us to maintain our high standards, keep pricing competitive and have the flexibility to offer bespoke solutions for customers that have more complicated needs. RS also has a team of technical experts who can help customers find better solutions to the problems they have.

RS believes in having more than just a buyer-seller relationship with organisations – the complexity of MRO procurement means that the most effective way to affect positive change is to share knowledge and collaborate. This also applies to RS's relationship with MRO suppliers, where we work closely with manufacturers to find innovative solutions for customers and provide support for their needs.

THE CHALLENGE

One customer that has benefited from a close working relationship with RS is one of the world's leading manufacturers of high-powered semiconductors. The company's maintenance team works in some dusty environments and areas where there is a risk of exposure to chemicals in the air, which makes it essential that all engineers have respiratory protection as part of their personal protective equipment (PPE).

During a site visit to discuss PPE with the customer, RS discovered that the customer was struggling to find protective masks to fit employees with beards or other facial hair. The customer was keen to look at other solutions that met the needs of their workers, provided comfort and protection, would reduce the amount of time and cost associated with repeated fitting tests and keep the company compliant with EU safety regulations.

THE SOLUTION

RS's team offered to use our technical experts and strong and in-depth supplier relationships to find the right equipment to meet the customers' needs. They agreed to facilitate a meeting with 3M and the PPE supplier agreed to provide a free 'train the trainer' face-fit test so engineers could try out different respiratory protection and be shown how to use the equipment. In total, eight employees were trained on-site during a two-hour session run by 3M.

The customer chose a powered air respirator with hood. This is a 'loose-fitting respirator' meaning it does not require a tight seal against the face, making it a suitable system for workers with facial hair to use. Due to the loose-fitting nature of these respirators, a fit test isn't required for each employee, which freed up time that was otherwise being taken away from their day job.

THE OUTCOME

The customer has been delighted with the choice of equipment and the new protective respirator has been appreciated by the company's maintenance engineers.

In addition to the added comfort, the customer also hopes to see some cost efficiencies as a result of the change in PPE equipment, given in the long term there will be less consumables used.

The entire process showed the value of the strong and collaborative relationship RS develops with its' customers. By leaning on RS's network of suppliers and taking time to find the right safety solution the customer now has a happier, safer workforce and can also hope to make cost efficiencies in the future.

