Four excuses not to take your enclosure cooling maintenance seriously.

There is an adage that time is money, this is particularly true when it comes to production downtime. Hold ups in production could result in lost money- a lot of lost money!

Losses of upto £480,000 have been suggested that one of the UK's largest automotive manufacturers could lose EACH HOUR; when they experience downtime on their paint plant. Your overheads may not be as substantial as the above example, but that doesn't take away from the fact that the old adage you hear in every corner of business and production is true:

Regardless of your industry and the product you manufacture, production downtime is a crucial performance indicator to monitor because of the direct impact it can have on your bottom line. More downtime equals increased spares/maintenance costs, taken directly from your profit. This could have been invested to meet more pertinent business objectives, purchasing new machinery etc..
Do you ever hear (or even make) any of the following excuses as reason not to tackle climate control provision and maintenance in your production and automation facilities?

1) "I will just fix a problem when it occurs"
In the past, the approach of reactive maintenance was seen as acceptable for most businesses. However, times have changed. The key goals of any sized business are now becoming "increased throughput", "Cost Efficiency", "Continuous Improvement". Potential roadblocks to output targets need to be nipped in the bud and nobody wants to be the one in the morning meeting explaining why yesterday's targets weren't met!

The implementation of a semi-regular maintenance schedule doesn't have to be massively time-consuming. Even something as simple as a weekly visual check of cooling equipment filter mats or any system alarms can alert you in good time to call in the experts, who can then perform a more detailed review

for you.

2) “We just open the enclosure door for a while”
This is treating the symptoms rather than the illness. If you are having to resort to a tactic such as using large fans to blow ambient air into an open enclosure you could be doing more harm than good. Not to mention that this is a massively dangerous solution from a health and safety standpoint.

An enclosure’s purpose is to create an environment in which electrical equipment is protected from ambient contaminants. Having the door open allows a constant stream of dirty air to be pulled into the enclosure. This will then gather in switchgear/connection points and can cause short circuits or block on-board fans which will result in damage to componentry, reduced life and possible critical component failure.

If this course of action is required it can point to the fact that the cooling equipment currently employed is not adequate for the installation, or it requires some level of maintenance to bring it back into working order.

A RiAssure FREE Cooling Review from Rittal is perfect in this instance as your local Climate Control expert will perform a short appraisal of your existing equipment, give you honest feedback as to whether the equipment is adequate, and also provide details/quotations for a service contract to suit your ongoing needs.

3) “My equipment is currently operating, and I haven’t serviced it in months/years”
The problem may be “out of sight, out of mind” for now but the longer your cooling equipment is left unchecked, the higher the risk.

For example, if a fan unit is in a dusty environment and the filter mat becomes clogged, this will reduce its effectiveness to cool the electrical equipment within due to a reduced level of air throughput.

This in turn can increase the enclosure internal temperature. As a rule of thumb, for every 10°C you increase your internal temperature, you halve the

life of the equipment within and increase the likelihood of an unexpected failure.

4) “I don’t have the manpower/we have a company who does that work for us”

Many companies I visit tell me that they outsource their servicing to a third party, however I tend to question what checks they are performing, given that I have been called onto site because an enclosure is overheating!

On one occasion, I asked the customer to speak with his current service provider to understand what checks were being undertaken, because his cooling units were in quite a state of disrepair. It became clear after a short discussion that they serviced “Air Conditioning” in the offices and didn’t even look in the factory…

Obviously, this is not the case for all service providers out there, however climate control equipment becoming increasingly efficient, while new, sophisticated, cutting-edge technology is launched every year. The only guarantee of the highest level of checks and service will come from engineers who have been trained by the manufacturers about the technology and its detailed workings.

Rittal has been manufacturing industry-leading climate control equipment for 30 years and all of our service staff are highly trained on the whole portfolio to ensure they can remedy your issues.

Take the introductory example again and turn the spotlight onto your business. Everyone has budgets and savings targets to hit, so ask yourself, can you afford NOT to have correct maintenance in place?