

## **Think Additive Manufacturing is too expensive to invest in? Think again . . .**

Additive manufacturing or “3D” printing is one of the most exciting innovations in the production world. This technology provides organisations with opportunities to improve production times, reduce waste and increase cost efficiency. Yet, in the United Kingdom, the potential of additive manufacturing remains largely untapped.

For years, businesses have assumed that the investment costs associated with acquiring AM equipment make this solution inaccessible for smaller manufacturing entities. However, the truth is that 3D printing technology might be more affordable than you’d think.

Here’s your guide to the truth about “AM”, and why it’s crucial for the UK to start joining the race for manufacturing excellence.

### **Is the UK Missing Out on AM Manufacturing Opportunities?**

According to reports published by the UK government, our country has the ideal environment in place to support additive manufacturing capabilities. We’re equipped with university-level courses that teach individuals how to make the most out of the latest products, as well as a solid foundation of companies that already apply AM to prototyping and tooling processes. The UK is also home to well-situated centres for additive manufacturing regulation.

Yet, despite the practically unlimited opportunity, many UK companies don’t have the knowledge, resources, or insight to embrace AM as a part of their production toolkit. Only 17% of UK companies have experience with 3D printing, compared to 24% in China and 37% in Germany. Even the organisations investing in AM technology only generate about 1% of their revenue with the devices.

The UK is quickly beginning to “lag” behind other countries when it comes to additive manufacturing, which means that leading corporations are looking for support in other areas, leaving the UK economy to dwindle.

### **Croft Filters Has a Way Forward**

The good news is that things are starting to change for companies interested in the possibilities of additive manufacturing. Reports are available to organisations that want to learn more about the possibilities of 3D printing, and in the last 5 years, the government has invested around £200,000 into awareness, growth and innovation schemes.

Unfortunately, despite the official efforts of the government, there is still one major concern that’s facing businesses ready to take the path of 3D printing – and that’s to do with cost. In the past, the machinery required for additive manufacturing has been too expensive for smaller manufacturers to consider.

However, thanks to new production processes and technology, AM components are becoming more affordable. What's more, pioneers in manufacturing like Croft Filters are introducing new ways for smaller companies to access the tools they need in a way that suits their budget. We're proud to say that we can rent our AM machine out to companies by the hour, complete with an operator to help them achieve their goals.

### **A More Affordable Way to Innovate**

According to the latest government reports, the high-value manufacturing sector for the UK can deliver up to £3.5 billion per year for the UK economy. What's more, the sector will also support up to 60,000 jobs in the knowledge economy and generate new opportunities for highly-skilled individuals. Here at Croft Filters, we're doing our part to make additive manufacturing more accessible to businesses of any size.

As part of our AM machine rentals, we can provide a range of additional services to support your needs. For instance, we can prepare your files to ensure efficient printing and building. If required, we can also offer staff that you can rent by the hour to work alongside your team and enhance your designs for additive manufacturing. Croft Filters will even work with clients on their finished product.

While our rental options make additive manufacturing machines more accessible, the benefits of 3D printing unlock new opportunities for cost-efficiency too. AM solutions enhance the designs of parts and components in ways that weren't previously possible with old-fashioned machines. You can graduate metal thickness to improve strength in specific spaces, produce unique internal features, and create minute details in complex parts.

### **Joining the AM Revolution with Croft Filters**

Additive manufacturing is quickly becoming one of the most valuable technologies on the market, helping businesses of all sizes to remain competitive on a global scale. Unfortunately, at this point, the UK is not keeping up with competitors around the world in their 3D printing efforts.

As the industry becomes more competitive, it's crucial for businesses to begin reversing this trend by bringing more additive manufacturing opportunities into the fold for SMEs. According to Robin Wilson of Innovate UK, unless we adopt additive manufacturing by 2025, British companies may lose our chance to win the race for high-value global manufacturing.

Just as the UK government has begun to do their part to support AM solutions with new strategy papers and ideas, Croft will be doing what we can to assist our clients too! Reach out to Croft Filters today to find out more about hiring an AM machine.