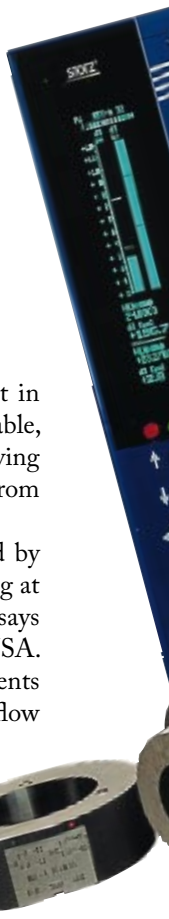
AIR GAGE NOT IN USE?

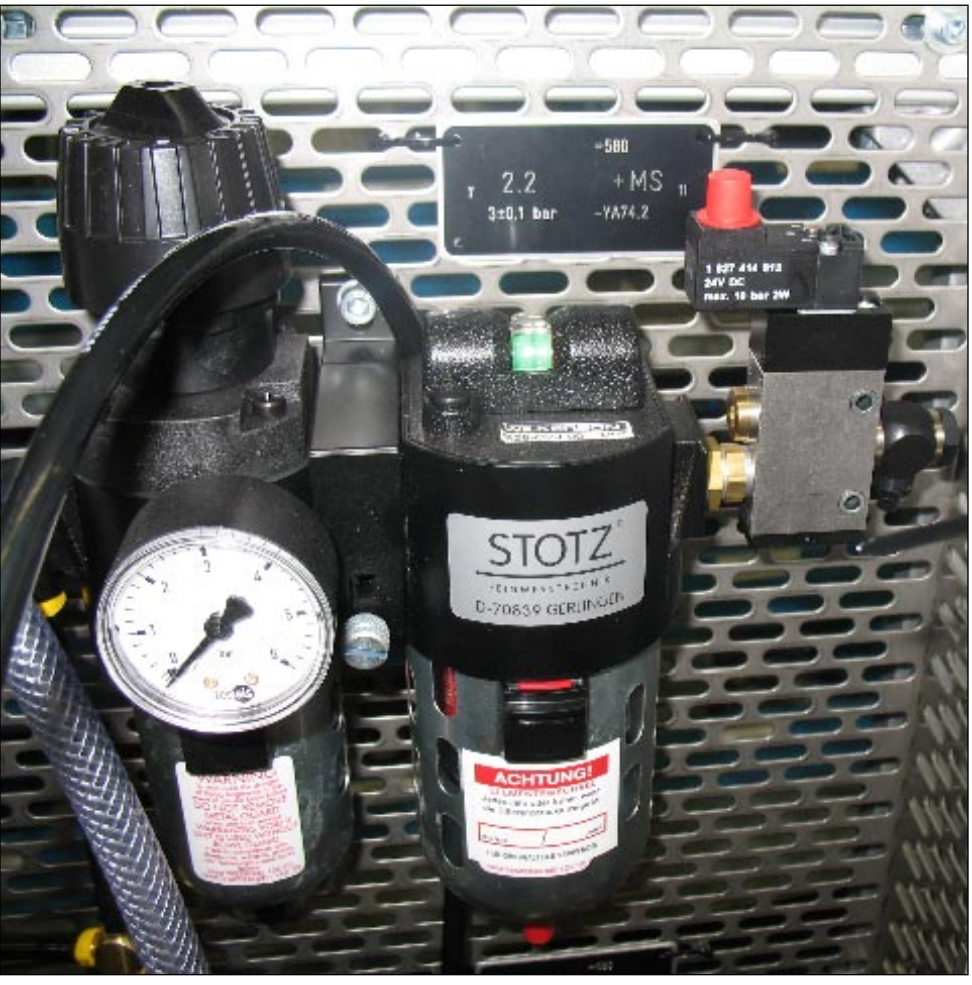
New technologies available to conserve 40% or more in direct costs



Air gages in a typical shop or QC department are used only about 10% of the time.

Unfortunately, it's impractical and inefficient to turn off these units when not in use, as doing so would require an extended period of time to restart, balance and stabilize the measurement to achieve the desired accuracies. Since air gaging, by definition, requires the precise measurement of the air flow across the surface of the part being evaluated, this stabilization in the air flow is critical to running an efficient department and maintaining the proper protocol in measuring procedures.

Imagine, however, that you could connect the air column to a digital I/O regulator switch, to turn down the air flow when the unit is not in use. Such technology is now available, and it has substantial energy saving potential, according to a release from Stotz USA.



Installation illustrating a shutdown mechanism on an air compressor that reduces the air flow by 90% when the air gage is not in use, thus saving substantial energy costs for the shop.

The air flow can be restricted by as much as 90%, while still flowing at a consistent and measured level, says Chris Koehn, president of Stotz USA. Because of this, the measurements taken when the air returns to full flow will be accurate and repeatable. Meanwhile, the energy savings can be substantial, Koehn says.

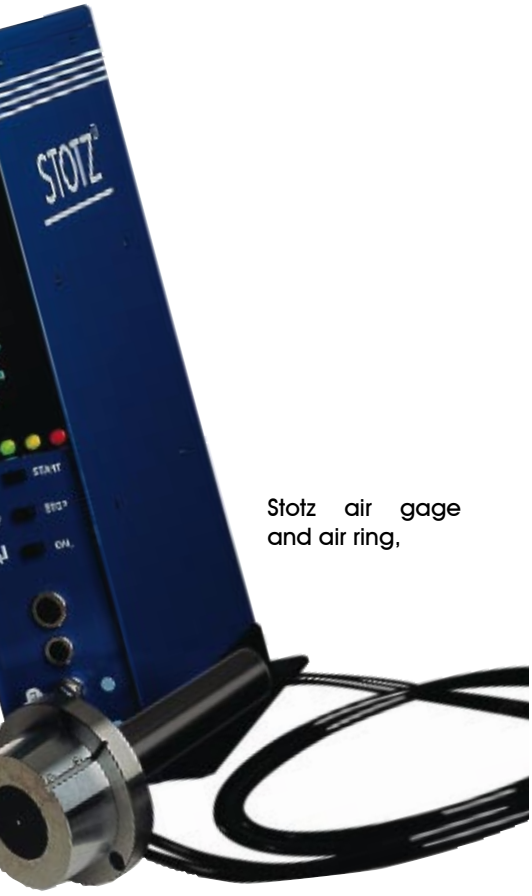
To be optimally beneficial, this type of technology must have the proper interface between the column and the power supply to function effectively. In one configuration, a proximity switch is positioned in the gage holder, and the air flow can be triggered when the gage is removed from the holder.

Another means of arranging this type of controlled but not entirely restricted air flow is to use a pushbutton actuator on the face of the column control panel or a foot pedal actuator.

While it is difficult to calculate the exact cost savings to a shop, owing to the various factors of on-time utilization and local energy costs, most shops have air blowing as much as 95% of the time without being used for gaging, Koehn says.

"If your compressors don't need to run, in order to produce this unused air flow, the savings can be quite substantial," Koehn says.

On average, a 40% or better savings in direct energy costs per



Stotz air gage and air ring,

compressor would be reasonable.

"If you're using air gaging at the present time, talk to your supplier about auto-shutoff switching and other forms of actuation for a reduction of compressor use," Koehn says.

Such equipment can also be configured to upload the data on actual on/off time via an Ethernet or Profibus cable with RS232 or RS485 serial interface for monitoring of the energy consumption, so the validation of such an investment is readily available . Also, on more sophisticated air columns, there would be no need for an external pressure regulator, as the column usually has such controls onboard.

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