

## Case Study: Aqastrip MPS

# Stripping hooks and racks proves to be a source of revenue.

**“We are saving \$300,000 every year.”**

A plumbing hardware manufacturer continued to innovate and grow to the point where they produce 200,000 parts per day, all of which needed to be powder coated with a long lasting, guaranteed finish. Downtime can be a killer! All of these parts wind their way through a cavernous building neatly attached to an in-line conveyor from pre-treatment, several rinses, powder application and curing ovens before inspection and packaging.



Along for the ride are all the customized racks and fixtures designed to maximize the process and improve productivity. However, as the faucets, handles and parts are powder coated so too are the racks. Stripping, cleaning and maintaining the racks is vital to assure a consistent finish and proper grounding in the spray booth. The previous process was a fluidized sand bed that required 3 times the number of racks for the 24/7 work flow just to keep up. There were many challenges associated with this process:



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### Aqastrip MPS Features & Benefits

- 67% reduction in the labor costs
- 30% reduction in real time accidents
- Strip time reduced to 15 minutes
- Man-hours allocated to replace and repair racks reduced from 3 to 1 worker per shift.
- Aqastrip® MPS has not been replaced in 4 years, only make-up solution has been required, making maintenance very simple.



- Sand residue carried into the washers on the pre-paint line destroyed pumps, risers and nozzles, which led to paint failures and increased maintenance costs.
  - Racks were constantly being removed from the powder coating line, collected and shipped to the fluidized sand bed.
  - Problems continued to arise with racks having metal fatigue due to the high temperatures of the fluidized sand bed. This led to a rack repair cost of \$350,000 per year.
  - Production was shut down for 6 days per year for maintenance.
- Power outages destroyed the parts that were trapped in the fluidized sand bed.
  - There were health and safety issues due to the physical handling of the hot racks after stripping and potential fire hazards due to organic material being burned off of the racks.

Because of the cost and lack of control over their rack stripping operation, this company decided to set up an in-line rack stripping system as part of the powder coating line.

Integrating the stripping process into the powder coating line has reduced rejection rates, provided for a more consistent, uniform and reliable coating on the faucets and fixtures.

The plant manager estimates the company will save \$300,000 annually in labor and costs associated with replacing and repairing the racks.

“Many people don’t realize that paint stripping is a value-added process. I think this case proves otherwise.”

**Larry Ensley**  
Technical Service Manager  
Hubbard-Hall

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