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New Tube Shrinking System Quadruples Production Capacity for Catheter Manufactures

Equipment Supplier Develops Automated System Featuring Unsurpassed Process Control

LOS GATOS, CA – (January 3, 2004) Beahm Designs, Inc., a leading supplier of catheter manufacturing equipment, today announced the first release of the Shrink Cyclor 810A , a shrinking system greatly advancing the yield of productivity for medical device manufacturers.

Tube shrinking, also referred to as tube laminating, is a widespread technique used by medical device engineers in the catheter manufacturing process. During the tube shrinking process, heat shrinkable polymer tubing is laminated onto a catheter shaft.

Four-Part Processing Achieves Higher Throughput than Manual Technique

The most common tube shrinking process involves manually drawing the tubing through a stream of heated air, typically a hot air gun, or a hot air station. This technique is highly unreliable and is limited to one product per cycle.

Longer length tubings pose a greater challenge as they are especially time consuming and limit throughput. The unique design of the Shrink Cyclor 810A automates the process and offers catheter manufactures the ability to process up to four catheter shafts simultaneously at lengths up to 71" (180 cm), substantially increasing productivity.

Precise Process Control Results in Higher Yield

The manual process is highly dependant on a skilled operator capable of drawing the tubings at a consistent rate through the hot air stream. Slight variances in draw rate often result in uneven tube recovery. Large industrial ovens often produce air pockets because shrink tubing recovery isn't uniform resulting in low yield. The new Shrink Cyclor 810A addresses those problems by automating the process of traversing a focused and uniform hot air stream along the length of the tubings to be laminated.

Features Flexibility and Ease of Use

In addition to higher throughput and repeatability, the Shrink Cyclor 810A offers multiple length and speed transitions within a single cycle. Engineered for flexibility, the Shrink Cyclor 810A works with a wide range of traverse lengths and speed settings, controlled by an operator key pad. Additional features include tubing guides to center the product within the heat zone and independent temperature control of each product processed, ensuring a high level of consistency. Additionally, the Shrink Cyclor 810A eases the challenges of process validation, by eliminating the variances associated the manual and industrial oven techniques.

Seeking to Provide Engineering Options

According to Beahm Designs Chief Technology Officer Brian Beahm, "Shrinking systems are our company hallmark. The new Shrink Cyclor joins our family of tube shrinking systems and offers four times as much throughput as our 210A, enableing our customers to produce more product with increased yield. "

Manufacturing engineers are realizing the benefits of this new technology. “The Shrink Cyclor has been essential to our catheter shaft lamination process. Prior to receiving this product, we used an oven process to laminate our catheter shafts, which produced low yields due to the inconsistency of the laminate material’s longitudinal growth characteristics. The Shrink Cyclor is a durable machine and has performed over 100,000 cycles since installation with no downtime. We’re very pleased with the results”, states Jose Garcia of Lumend, Inc., a Redwood City, California-based catheter manufacturing company.

About Beahm Designs

Beahm Designs, located in Campbell, California, is an industry leader in supplying national and global catheter manufacturers with premier manufacturing equipment. From custom equipment to a complete line of catheter manufacturing systems, Beahm Designs equipment provides solutions for improved catheter productivity, repeatability and ease of use.

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