

PRA

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Case Study | Surface Coatings | Hampton, UK

Founded in 1926 as a membership organization and independent test house, PRA now functions as a commercial company. As part of a larger organization called PERA, PRA focuses on new product development and research for customers ranging from paint manufacturers to the raw materials suppliers to the end user. This new area of focus is in addition to offering technical consultancy, business intelligence, and continuing to act as an independent test house to the industry.

The Challenge

As a company that serves a multitude of customers, PRA started to experience an increase in their workload. Although this is what every company strives for, they found themselves under distress as their testing system, which was 34 years old and no longer supported, stopped working. Angie Miller, PRA Technical Manager, realized that they were able to outsource the testing part for their customers, although this was not an ideal situation. They didn't want to lose out on new projects.

"We need the ability to quote more work. If we're able to have the ability to test in-house, that's what we want to do. Purchasing a system with up-to-date technology—one that had endless opportunities for our immediate

needs, as well as for future prospects, is what our lab is currently researching" says Miller.

Recently awarded an important new project that could not be outsource, Miller started to research solutions that allowed PRA a vast range of flexibility and capability. The decision to "future proof" their lab was based not only on this new project, but the needs and demands their customers will require down the road.

"It is imperative for us to purchase a system today that gives us the ability to perform all types of tests in the years to come," says Miller.

Another factor of consideration was looking for a solution that could utilize their existing grips from their previous testing system— allowing PRA to stay on task with the broad range of their current testing capabilities.

The Solution

Keeping their "must have" list in mind, PRA met with their local Instron team and decided to purchase Instron® 5960 for their research needs. The versatility of the system offered the flexibility for PRA to use their existing grips and to add-on various accessories—along with way—that fit with the future needs of their customers.

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"It's been great ... after the system was installed and we received our training, we've experienced no hiccups with the system or the software," says Miller.

The Results

Using the 5960 system for nearly 9 months, PRA has been making good headway on their current project. And because the instrument is so versatile, they are realizing that they don't need to purchase all accessories or add-ons at one time, but only when new work comes in.

This ability to add additional capability when needed gives PRA the chance to quote a vast range of projects and to broaden their technical offers, while being able to save money.