

ENGINEERS JOIN SWAT

Chromalox of Pittsburgh, a supplier of electric heat and controls and industrial process applications, established a Swift With Action Team to respond quicker to original equipment manufacturer customer orders. While accepting multiple bids, OEM customers often demand that finished sample products be delivered in 10 days or less. SWAT combines sales, engineering, and production functions to expedite orders. Getting the right heating coil delivered on time could mean the difference between making or breaking an OEM's market expectations.

"Since time is critical, SWAT gets samples to customers within 10 days, and sooner when we have accelerated bid deadlines," said Chromalox design engineer Amy Barker. "To ship on time, we have to receive consistent, high-quality supplies within five to six days." This is typically the case with wire use, she added. Nonstandard wire typically takes from six to 12 weeks from most vendors, she said. Furthermore, many wire suppliers have minimum orders of 40,000 feet, and balked at SWAT's low-volume demands of several hundred feet of wire, she added.

When a manufacturer of color printers for desktop applications searched for a supplier of print head heaters, Chromalox needed to design, manufacture, and ship 10 prototype heaters within five days, but did not have the necessary full-hard wire on hand. Chromalox contacted California Fine Wire of Grover Beach, Calif., a manufacturer of specialty wire products. "CFW stepped in to get us the full-hard wire we needed within our deadline time," said Barker. When Chromalox had to change the wire gauge, CFW sent the new wire via overnight delivery, helping the company meet the OEM's design, delivery, and cost goals, she added.