

B&B HYDRAULICS FINDS SUCCESS ADDING AFEX FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS TO PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

B&B Hydraulics has had a reputation for quality work, timely service, and competitive prices since their inception in 1989. Headquartered in Hutchinson, KS and servicing several states in the Midwest, B&B offers a wide product portfolio specific to outfitting and repairing vehicles of all sizes with parts ranging from hydraulic cylinders, automated lubrication, and valves, to motors, pumps, hoses, and more. In 2021, after numerous requests from existing customers with heavy equipment, B&B decided to explore adding fire suppression system solutions to their existing portfolio.



QUALITY AND RELIABILITY CEMENT THE DECISION TO WORK WITH AFEX

A natural complement to their existing product portfolio, B&B began the process of searching for the right fire suppression system manufacturer to partner with. They were keen on finding a vendor that mirrored their own position on high quality, reliability, and customer service. After extensive research and communications, B&B decided AFEX Fire Suppression Systems was the best company to partner with based on the company's corporate values, as well as the fact that they manufacture systems in the United States and supply durable, stainless steel components with responsive product support.



Jared Gilstrap, General Sales Manager at B&B Hydraulics, felt confident in his decision to work with AFEX.

“TOO OFTEN OUR CUSTOMERS HAD OTHER FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS THAT FAILED, BOTH IN QUALITY AND FUNCTIONALITY. THE AFEX PRODUCT LINE OFFERS THE BEST INDUSTRY STANDARD.”

A DISTRIBUTOR ONBOARDING PROGRAM BUILT CONFIDENCE

Soon after B&B’s decision to expand their product portfolio, AFEX worked to orientate sales and technical staff on best practices for recommending, installing, and servicing fire suppression systems. B&B took their distributorship seriously, appointing two employees, Jared Gilstrap and Tanner Rayl, to lead the fire suppression business.

AFEX provided Jared and Tanner with targeted sales training on the market, focusing on the needs and challenges of B&B’s end user and equipment dealer customer base, as well as their key industries of mining and landfills. Following the sales training, Jared and Tanner

proceeded to pass the education on to the entire B&B sales team at a sales staff summit. They also traveled with each of their sales representatives to meet with prospective clients and discuss the new fire suppression system solution they had to offer.

B&B was assigned a dedicated AFEX representative, Paul Uzzle, National Distributor Sales Manager, who traveled to the Midwest to make several customer sales calls with the team. Jared Gilstrap related the value of these visits when he said,

“Paul’s presence on sales calls was and continues to be invaluable. His presence at a customer site shows the support from AFEX to the customer and sales typically follow as a result. Paul has really taught our sales staff how to communicate the benefits of the AFEX product line effectively.”



Once the first fire suppression system sale was in the books, AFEX sent a Product Support Representative to the jobsite to provide B&B technicians with hands-on training in the field. They learned best practices for system installation, operator training, regular service and maintenance, and additional sales tips. B&B technicians also take advantage of AFEX's annual [distributor training program](#) in Raleigh, NC. This training event allows distributors to stay up to date on industry trends and learn tips and tricks related to installation, service, documentation, and more.



FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM SALES EXPAND QUICKLY

In a way, the fire suppression system business came to B&B through direct requests from existing customers. But the company has continued to invest time and money into growing this business even further over the past year. Besides equipping their sales staff with the tools necessary to successfully recommend fire suppression systems, B&B announced their AFEX partnership to local equipment dealers, revamped their website, ran television and radio commercials, and started utilizing social media to highlight system installations. These ongoing activities continue to get the word out to B&B's local market.

In addition to these activities, B&B also attributes their success in recommending fire suppression system to several other factors, including:

1. The willingness of every member of the AFEX team to help with any sales, marketing, or service questions and make recommendations for improvement
2. The investment in education and maintaining inventory of the product
3. AFEX system availability and short lead times despite supply chain disruptions
4. The relationships they've forged with other AFEX distributors

“Sales come easy when the product speaks for itself, and we feel valued and consistently encouraged as a distributor. Our customer base has been very receptive to this new product offering and we're thankful for the opportunity to represent AFEX.”

- JARED GILSTRAP