

Suits you, sir

CONFIGURATOR Elaflex has developed a web portal where users can virtually 'build' and compare rubber expansion joints and their components

The internet is not just funny cat videos and Justin Bieber. It's so much more than that. The information superhighway now allows purchasers of rubber expansion joints to 'design' and visualise their own rubber expansion joints for use in pumping and piping systems.

German hose manufacturer Elaflex has created a product configurator website for its ERV series of expansion joints, through which users can try out millions of different combinations of ERV components without having to compare endless data sheets.

"Many industrial customers are not fully aware of the comprehensive range and the multiple applications of our large variety of expansion joints," Karsten Ehlers from Elaflex tells HCB. "With the configurator you can easily and clearly see all the possible ERV combinations, not only basic expansion joints, but also more technically complex options with special accessories such as tie rods, flame protection covers and PTFE linings."

How it works

First off, the user must select the type of bellows to be used, whether selecting by ERV type or by the application in which the rubber expansion joint will be used. Elaflex's product range caters to applications in the petrochemical, pharmaceutical, chemical and shipping industries, and with a range of media encompassing water, petroleum-based products, foodstuffs, gases, abrasive media, LPG and natural gas.

Next, the user can select the preferred bellow type, DN-sizes (the diameter of the joint), materials and linings, lengths, flanges

and accessories, while an image of the new joint is built up before on the screen.

Once the process is complete, users can request a price quotation from Elaflex, view data sheets for the different components and compile all the information into a PDF for download.

Customer satisfaction

Elaflex says that the response from its customers has so far been positive, particularly from international clients.

"The main advantage for customers is that their request will be visually constructed during the online assembly, and if in doubt they can still refer to a member of the Elaflex team for confirmation of their choice," says Ehlers. "With this tool we overcome time zone differences and out of hours working. Both sides benefit from flexibility and time savings while direct discussions are still an important part of our daily business and

customers can still contact us should they need to. The conversations are therefore more supportive for our customers once they have used the configurator while maintaining the Elaflex ethos of technical excellence."

Although the ERV Configurator is web-based, customers using it are not on their own. "There is still a 'personal' involvement and customer-specific requests received are handled promptly and efficiently," Ehlers says. Users can request quotes through the site, or get in touch with a company representative for more information.

"The ERV configurator is designed to be user-friendly so even non-technical buyers can easily choose the correct execution," Ehlers says. "[It] shows all the variations and possible options that can be configured in more detail and more efficiently than any catalogue can and in a fraction of the time."

www.ervconfigurator.elaflex.de