

A buffer with style

In the future, KOHLER SDMO's rental power generators are going to include an elastomer component with a textured surface. From KOHLER SDMO's design patent, the developers at Angst+Pfister struck out in a creative direction so that during loading and unloading, the generators impress – and their visual appeal is not lost.



Abrasion-resistant, weatherproof and visually appealing: Angst+Pfister developed the leather-like surface texture in no time at all.

So what exactly does the customer want? This is the question driving the employees of Angst+Pfister whenever a new project begins. “Even with smaller projects, we generally visit the customer to have a look at their current situation and to get a thorough grasp of their challenge,” says Raphael Friedli. He works as a senior engineer in Anti-vibration Technology for Angst+Pfister in Zurich. This approach allows him and his colleagues to come up with the best possible solution – mostly in one sweep. “It was just the same for SDMO Industries”.

The eye decides

SDMO Industries S.A. is located in the heart of France. The company is No. 3 worldwide in the power generation business, capable of generating electricity even under extreme conditions – such as on oil

rigs or in the desert. A segment of their business is the design and sale of specific generators to rental companies, which can be used – for example, at events. Performance and reliability are what count for KOHLER SDMO. Their products are high-quality products and robust in the long term. “The generators need protective bumpers so that no damage is done when these mobile units are loaded on forklifts and carted around,” explains Raphael Friedli. And the protective bumpers have a visual impact. It was important to KOHLER SDMO that the function of the bumpers was more than to support the reliability of the generators. Their appearance also mattered and the generators had to look good and retain their appeal and high-quality for a long time. The previous usually smooth rubber surface can, however, show scratch marks after a short time without a lot of force being applied.



«It is essential to be close to the customer and to understand exactly what you are working out solutions for.»

Raphael Friedli, Senior Engineer Anti-vibration Technology, Angst+Pfister Group

Maintaining close ties with the customers

“KOHLER SDMO then asked what we could do with the surface texture of the protective bumpers so that the generators stayed looking good for as long as possible.” Ultimately, the metal-rubber components should make the KOHLER SDMO products stand out on the market – as a brand with high quality standards. “To make this possible, it is crucial to be customer focused and exactly understand the purpose of the solutions under development,” maintains Raphael Friedli. He and the engineers at Angst+Pfister's International Research & Development Centre drew their inspiration from plastics technology. The idea was to give the protective bumper a kind of leather look, as is already known, for example, from the plastic parts of car interiors. “I had never seen anything similar for buffers,” says Raphael Friedli.

Documenting quality

Producing rubber with a surface like this was no great cost factor. “We are in a position to do this efficiently,” explains Raphael Friedli. The surface patterns are first tool etched with acid. To perfect the look, Angst+Pfister also painted parts of the metal plates, to which the bumper rubber is attached, black. The bumpers, however, not only had to be and remain immaculate, they also had to protect the generators – additional qualities are required: They must be abrasion-resistant and weather-resistant. That means that they should withstand UV and ozone exposure and be resistant to humidity-damage. “We have achieved all these qualities with a special mixture based on EPDM polymers,” reveals Raphael Friedli. Wherever KOHLER SDMO's mobile generators are placed – thanks to Angst+Pfister's good-looking protective bumpers, they will perform well for years to come and project the quality image of the manufacturer.



The generators are equipped with protective buffers so that the forklift trucks do not leave any damage when loading and unloading.