



Case Study: Toyo Tanso

Manufacturer of isotropic graphite finds I/O and PACs to match the tough industrial demands of their process

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CASE STUDY: TOYO TANSO

Manufacturer of isotropic graphite finds I/O and PACs to match the tough industrial demands of their process

Graphite is a form of carbon that has been used by mankind since as far back as the 4th millennium B.C., when it was used for decorating pottery. Later it found its way into use as a refractory material to line molds for cannonballs, resulting in rounder, smoother balls that could be fired farther, contributing to the strength of the English navy.

Today graphite is used in many applications including batteries, steel production, brake linings, foundry facings and lubricants, pencils, and electric motor brushes.

Some of today's graphite applications require a finer grade graphite, called isotropic graphite, that has more stable properties than the graphite used in applications of the past. This graphite is used primarily in semiconductor and solar panel manufacturing.

One manufacturer focused on delivering isotropic graphite is Oregon-based Toyo Tanso USA. Toyo Tanso USA is a subsidiary of Toyo Tanso Japan, which was the first company to achieve mass production of isotropic graphite.

Their products are used in a variety of applications today, including nuclear power, which requires high reliability, electrical discharge processing, where accuracy is everything, and semiconductors to support today's massive demand for new technology.

Toyo Tanso USA also offers a variety of services related to graphite, including silicon carbide surface treatments. These surface treatments protect substrates from customer process environments and also control the generation of particles and gas from the substrate.

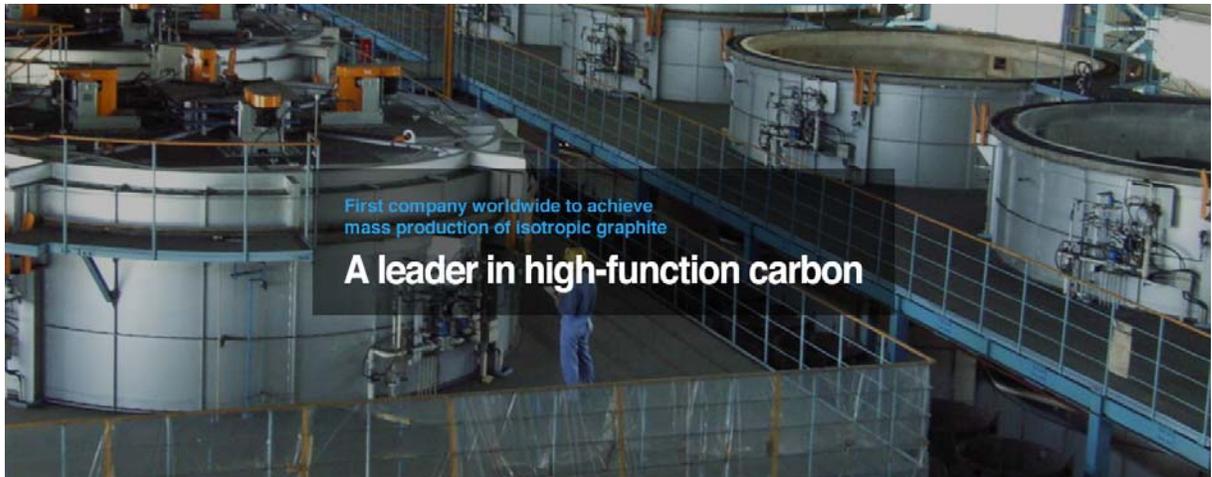
Toyo Tanso's process also ensures excellent blister resistance, while improving the abrasion and oxidation resistance of the substrate.

THE CHALLENGE

Toyo Tanso performs their surface treatments in a tough industrial setting.

"Our production environment is very busy and physically demanding, yet requires precise control of all the interacting systems," says Peter Souvanna, IT Manager for Toyo Tanso USA.

Souvanna is responsible for managing the batch automation process systems that perform the silicon carbide surface treatments. The treatment process is performed in multiple vessels that act as reactors, where the coating process takes place. These multiple vessels have varying specializations and require careful management to ensure that each process is successful and within specifications.

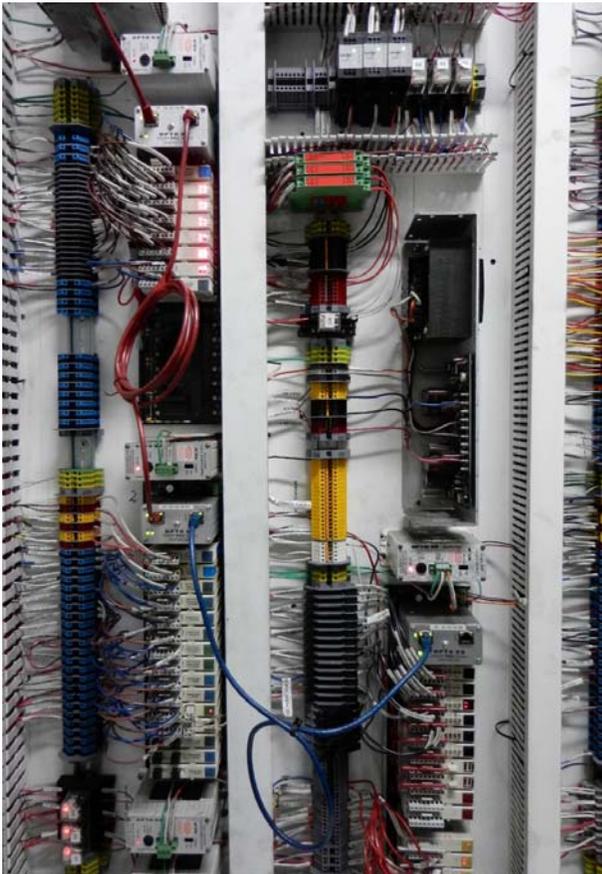


TOYO TANSO

To automate their batch process, Toyo Tanso needed something rugged and able to survive in their demanding production environments, with a lot of I/O options and controls that could be easily programmed and deployed.

THE SOLUTION

Toyo Tanso USA implemented the Opto 22 SNAP PAC control system to automate their surface coating process.



As an I/O processor, the SNAP PAC brain independently handles functions such as latching, thermocouple linearization, watchdog timers, and PID loop control. These functions continue to work on the brain even if communication with the SNAP PAC controller is lost.

A total of 8 separate programmable automation controllers (PACs) are used to manage the batch automation process. Each controller is configured to communicate with other controllers to leverage the distributed control and intelligence features of the Opto 22 PACs and ensure system uptime.

The I/O modules and PACs are responsible for everything: controlling pumps and motors, temperatures, and power and pressure to the vessels; heating the vessels; and supplying cooling water during the coating process.

Pressure and temperature are both controlled using PID loops that run on the PAC's built-in I/O brain. Other dynamics inside the vessel are also controlled using the SNAP PAC system, including dozens of valves in each vessel.

The PAC and I/O monitor pH and pressure during the coating process while maintaining critical setpoints using PID loops and a variety of other control points to manage Toyo Tanso's proprietary coating process. In total the vessels use over 1,000 I/O points for control and monitoring during batch process runs.

Souvanna found the flowchart programming style of the PAC Project programming tools to be very easy to use.

"The scratch pad features of the controller make it easy to move data in and out of the controller," he notes. "Ladder logic is useful for basic on/off procedures and control. But for a complete software solution for batch process automation, the Opto 22 SNAP PAC and PAC Project tools are far superior.

"Ladder logic can be difficult to troubleshoot. The ability to step in and out of a control block to pinpoint exactly what's happening in the process makes troubleshooting much easier.

"And the HMI tools that come with the product offer many standard features built directly into the software that allowed us to build rich HMI screens to know exactly what's going on with our process at all times."

KEEPING THE PROCESS SAFE

Toyo Tanso USA also implemented the *groov* mobile interface tool to develop a gas monitoring system that can be accessed directly from operators' mobile devices.

During the coating process, a number of potentially dangerous gases are used. *groov* acts as a backup to the standard control system HMI. Wherever operators are, they have access to alert notifications and system status directly from the mobile device using an interface served from an industrially hardened *groov* Box.

"The *groov* Box also supports unlimited concurrent connections and user accounts, allowing the entire plant to use a single *groov* Box for all of our operators," says Souvanna.



Some of the more than 1000 points of I/O the Toyo Tanso USA factory uses in their SNAP PAC control system.

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- Peter Souvanna, IT Manager
Toyo Tanso USA

Souvanna also took advantage of the redundant Ethernet jacks on the PAC controllers. Each controller is connected to both the production network and the business network.

"If there's a broadcast storm or network outage on the business network, the controller isn't affected and continues to operate," says Souvanna.

ABOUT OPTO 22

Opto 22 was started in 1974 by a co-inventor of the solid-state relay (SSR), who discovered a way to make SSRs more reliable. Opto 22 has consistently built products on open standards rather than on proprietary technologies.

In early 2013 Opto 22 introduced *groov* View, an easy-to-use IoT tool for developing and viewing mobile operator interfaces—mobile apps to securely monitor and control virtually any automation system or equipment.

Famous worldwide for its reliable industrial I/O, the company in 2018 introduced *groov* EPIC® (edge programmable industrial controller). EPIC has an open-source Linux® OS and provides connectivity to PLCs, software, and online services, plus data handling and visualization, in addition to real-time control.

All Opto 22 products are manufactured and supported in the U.S.A. Most solid-state SSRs and I/O modules are guaranteed for life.



The company is especially trusted for its continuing policy of providing free product support, free training, and free pre-sales engineering assistance.

For more information, visit opto22.com or contact **Opto 22 Pre-Sales Engineering:**

Phone: **800-321-6786** (toll-free in the U.S. and Canada) or **951-695-3000**

Email: systemseng@opto22.com

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