



SPAL
AUTOMOTIVE

CASE STUDY



Driving force in
refrigerated transport
GAH is cool customer
for SPAL



Suffolk based GAH Ltd is a UK leader in the growing 3.5 tonne refrigerated vehicle marketplace; it specifies SPAL high performance fans for the thousands of refrigeration units manufactured by the company each year to meet the exacting home delivery and store replenishment demands of the major supermarket chains.

“We continually design and develop new products to keep pace with changing market demands,” explains GAH Refrigeration Director Shaun O’Farrell. **“Our reputation within the industry is for innovation and uncompromising quality – that’s why we specify the best quality components, working with our preferred fan suppliers SPAL,** who share our values and can support us in delivering solutions for our customers, whether food, pharmaceuticals, samples such as water, blood and plasma, or any other perishable product that requires temperature controlled transportation.”

Long life and reliability

GAH not only design, manufacture and sell refrigeration units, they also provide service and maintenance contracts to fleet customers, so while high performance is key, **the reliability and length of life of critical components such as SPAL fans impacts directly on the bottom line.**

Since moving to long-life SPAL fans some 10 years ago, Shaun O’Farrell confirms that performance is up and service costs are down. “We have a network of around 50 service engineers across the UK to support our customers,” he explains. “There are obvious costs involved in servicing refrigeration units on site. At one time, our service intervals were three times per year, but now we only need to service our units twice a year, which obviously reduces our costs. We specify SPAL Long Life fans because we need to know they will be reliable and last as long as possible – we expect them to deliver at least 10,000 hours.”

SPAL has been on a mission to highlight to the industry that cheaper fans imported from areas such as the Far East and Eastern Europe

– some even passing off as SPAL genuine parts – represent a false economy. Their message is that investment in original equipment invariably pays dividends in the long run - and Shaun agrees.

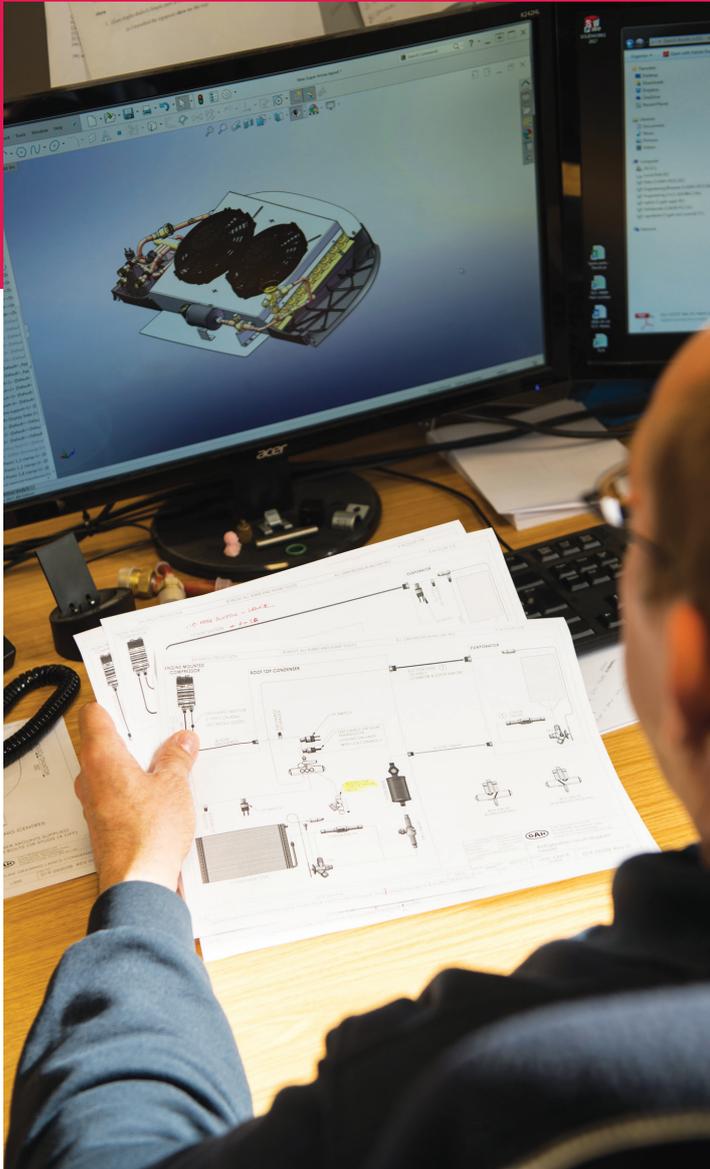
“Using cheap copies of OEM fans can prove absolutely disastrous,” he says. “For the sake of cutting corners, you end up with a fan that’s less efficient and has a shorter life; this eats into profits and more importantly, undermines your reputation with customers. At GAH, **we always promote SPAL fans on all applications, for manufacturing and service – because it’s a high quality genuine product that we can trust.** Cost is not always the important factor, we know we can source cheap fans elsewhere, but cheaper is not always better.”

Strict safety standards

For GAH, it’s important too that SPAL fans meet the strict industry standards required to comply with the European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA) legislation, which applies to components - such as refrigeration units – that are attached to a vehicle. This ensures that components meet all current environmental, safety and security standards.

“We need to be able to demonstrate that our units are EMC tested so that they comply with legislation and won’t interfere with the van’s electrical system, otherwise we simply wouldn’t have permission from the VCA to manufacture our products in the UK,” says Bob Peak, Engineering Director at GAH. “Accordingly, SPAL fans have been subject to a validation process and grade review on safety standards. It is critical for our high profile customers that we – and therefore, they – confirm to EU legislation.”





GAH has expansion into Europe firmly in their sights. Already the company has established a network of service agents & dealers across Europe, with service centres in place in Germany, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium and Poland.

“The UK home delivery market is relatively well developed, but there is a growing appetite for home delivery services across Europe and accordingly, we’re in conversations with supermarket chains in countries like Germany – however, our manufacturing will remain in the UK,” Shaun confirms.

Lighter, quieter and more flexible

The trend towards smaller, lighter vehicles able to carry more weight into residential areas is driving the development of lighter, quieter and more flexible units, says Shaun. **“SPAL fans score highly here as they are lightweight and are not noisy in operation – an important consideration when you’re making deliveries in residential areas.”**

3.5 tonne vehicles at maximum gross weight fully loaded means more product transported and fewer journeys, which is more efficient, more cost-effective and more environmentally friendly.

GAH has developed the first ever ‘Flexi-temp’ solution, initially driven by the requirements of specialist pharmaceutical couriers needing to transport temperature sensitive products at different temperatures in separate compartments to avoid cross contamination. This super-flexible solution, unique to GAH, has subsequently been enthusiastically embraced by specialist couriers as it allows ice-cream and frozen goods

to be transported and delivered in the same vehicles as other foodstuffs needing to be kept chilled or at ambient temperature. The latest version of the technology enables different compartments of the same vehicle to be heated/chilled or frozen simultaneously, requiring 4 different fans.

Latest innovation

The latest innovation from GAH features fan speed control, which enables the fans to run at the most efficient speed for the required temperature of the vehicle. For small vans operating in residential areas, the required temperature can be achieved quickly, then the speed of the fan may be lowered. The benefits include lower noise levels and improved fan life, leading to reduced costs. According to Shaun, the new solution will be rolled out on all models.

Commenting on the successful partnership of the two companies, Managing Director of SPAL UK, Matthew Morris said, “Our pedigree is built on the development of market leading cooling systems for the automotive industry and we apply the same high standards of design and development to every sector we serve. We have an increasing focus on the refrigeration marketplace and are proud to partner with GAH, now our largest customer in the sector; and look forward to supporting the company as they roll out their products across Europe.”



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For quality, reliability and outstanding performance,
always fit genuine SPAL parts.