**APPLICATION NOTE**

**PIC furnaces usually have two chambers with two independent vacuum systems:**

- **First a Melting chamber**, where alloy is melted / poured / allowed to solidify, is equipped with a high vacuum pump system with a diffusion pump.
- **Second a Mould / load lock chamber** for mould introduction is equipped with a medium vacuum pump / booster combination to pump down to typically less than 0.1 mbar in a maximum of 60 seconds to avoid any temperature drop in the mould.

Both melting and mould chambers collect large quantities of dust and particulate material that can reach vacuum systems especially during fast pump down.

**Where is vacuum used?**

Precision Investment Casting (PIC) is a process carried out under vacuum to produce complex mechanical components such as turbine blades.

The ceramic mould is created by dipping the shaped wax into a ceramic slurry. The mould is then dewaxed by using a high pressure steam autoclave which rapidly flushes out the wax. The shell is then fired at high temperature to sinter the ceramic particles together. The metal is melted by induction and then poured into a ceramic mould with the component’s shape.

**Typical precision investment casting systems**

**Typical Layout For PIC Operation**

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**edwardsvacuum.com**
## Solutions

### Dry pumping systems - Recommended technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GXS dry screw pumps and GMB booster combinations</th>
<th>MAXX vacuum systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• GXS160, GXS160/1750</td>
<td>GXS pump range is systemised with pXH mechanical boosters available in two models:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• GXS250, GXS250/2600</td>
<td>• pXH4500, displacement 6,766 m³/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• GXS450, GXS450/2600, GXS450/4200</td>
<td>• pXH6000, displacement 8,358 m³/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• GXS750, GXS750/2600, GXS750/4200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefit: Dry pump systems substantially reduce maintenance and operating costs.
- Increased tolerance to particles created by the melt
- Clean residual vacuum
- Elimination of oil back streaming which is a source of contamination and de-gassing in the furnace
- Large water vapour pumping capacity aids drying of the new chamber lining
- Elimination of oil mist at the exhaust and external oil leaks

### Oil Sealed pumping systems - Conventional technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stokes microvac rotary piston pumps with EH and 6” Stokes booster combination</th>
<th>Diffusion pumps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>• 212J</td>
<td>• HT10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 412J</td>
<td>• HT16B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 612J</td>
<td>• HT20B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefit: Generally, oil sealed pumps have high operating and maintenance costs. If oil sealed technology is to be used, piston pumps are the vacuum pump of choice.
- Rugged and less sensitive to dust and vapour handling
- Low rpm operation for the longest pipe life cycle
- Efficient, time proven design to deliver ease of maintenance
Edwards’ Benefits

GXS dry screw pumps

160 m³/h - 750 m³/h primary pumps with pumping speeds up to 3,450 m³/h with vacuum boosters. Equipped with an intelligent on-board controller with extensive communication and automated control capabilities.

- **Highly reliable**
  - Ability to handle harsh processes

- **Low maintenance cost**
  - No unplanned down-time

- **Increased productivity**
  - Longer intervals between services

- **Safe operation, consistent output**
  - Automated control of your process

MAXX vacuum systems

The GXS pump range is complemented by the new generation of pXH large mechanical boosters for an integrated flexible modular skid design.

- **Variety of pump combinations ensure optimized configurations**
  - Delivering the performance required by your processes

- **Easy to upgrade**
  - Whenever you need more capacity
Diffusion pumps

Our Industrial, high throughput diffusion pumps are ideal for the precision investment casting application.

- **Increased productivity**
  - High throughput pumping

- **Stable performance**
  - High backing line pressure

- **Better end product quality**
  - Low oil back streaming

### Microvac rotary piston pumps

Packaged with EH range or 6” series of mechanical boosters.

- **Value for investment**
  - Low rotational speed enables the longest pump life cycle

- **Easy maintenance on site**
  - Robust simple mechanism for high reliability and ease of rebuild

- **Proven, tested; peace of mind**
  - Over 80 years of time tested proven performance

Global contacts

**EUROPE**
- UK Crawley +44 1293 528844
- UK (local rate) 08459 212223
- Belgium Brussels +32 2 300 0730
- France Paris +33 1 4121 1256
- Germany Munich 0800 000 1456
- Italy Milan +39 02 48 4471

**USA**
- Niagara (toll free) +1 800 848 9800
- **BRAZIL**
  - Sao Paulo +55 11 3952 5000
- **ISRAEL**
  - Qiryat-Gat +972 8 681 0633

**ASIA PACIFIC**
- China (toll free) +86 400 111 9618
- India Pune +91 20 4075 2222
- Japan Yachiyo +81 47 458 8831
- Korea Bundang +82 31 716 7070
- Singapore +65 6546 8408
- Taiwan R.O.C. Jhunan Town +886 3758 1000

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