



## CASE STUDY

# Auto Parts Manufacturer Switches to Panasonic Cordless Assembly Tools

# Panasonic

Wesco Production Tools, an innovative supplier of industrial assembly tools and expertise, is the exclusive distributor and integrator of Panasonic cordless assembly solutions in Canada. With facilities in Ajax, Ontario, and Surrey, B.C., Wesco has been a key supplier to the Canadian automotive industry for more than 40 years.

## ⚙️ CHALLENGE

A Tier 1 auto parts manufacturer was paying up to \$100k per year in maintenance costs for the pneumatic tools used by workers on its assembly lines. To operate these tools, the company had to maintain an extensive air delivery system, with compressors that consumed large amounts of electricity.

## 🔧 SOLUTION

Wesco devised a Panasonic cordless assembly solution that would replace the customer's expensive pneumatic tools with more cost-effective, battery-powered tools. Featuring a much longer maintenance cycle, the Panasonic mechanical pulse tools could be easily maintained by the customer's in-house technicians.

## ✅ RESULT

By switching to Panasonic cordless tools, the auto parts manufacturer reduced the cost of tool replacement by 50%, saved up to \$100k annually in maintenance, and downsized its electricity-intensive air delivery system. The first Panasonic tools purchased by the company have so far provided double the service life of the previous pneumatic tools, at a significantly lower cost.

## Time to Replace Outdated Assembly Tools

One of Wesco's longtime customers, a leading Tier 1 auto parts manufacturer, had been using pneumatic tools for years on its assembly lines. Maintaining the pneumatic tools required specialized tools and technical training so it wasn't feasible for the customer to do the work in-house. Instead, Wesco was contracted to provide comprehensive repair and maintenance services, keeping the tools in peak operating condition. A Wesco technician would come in once a week to repair the tools, as needed, and perform routine maintenance as per the recommended service schedule. The pneumatic tools' short maintenance cycle was costing the customer \$1,000 for every day the technician was on site, plus the cost of replacement parts, totaling \$70k-\$100k annually.

When the manufacturer initially purchased these assembly tools, a pneumatic solution had been the best available option. But times had changed and Wesco's longstanding relationship with the customer positioned them to recommend an updated assembly solution that would be more cost effective for this manufacturer's specific application.



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Rob Anderson  
General Manager,  
Wesco Production Tools

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## Cordless Assembly Tools Offer a Better Solution

In an effort to reduce the customer's annual operating and maintenance costs, Wesco proposed a new, more robust solution: Panasonic cordless tools. A high-performance, low-maintenance alternative to traditional pneumatic assembly tools, Panasonic mechanical pulse tools consume a small fraction of the energy required to power pneumatic tools. Compared to the customer's old pneumatic tools, Panasonic cordless tools can perform 70% more fastening operations before requiring preventative maintenance—and no specialized tools are needed to maintain them. Because of Panasonic's reputation for tough, reliable equipment, Wesco was confident that the customer would greatly benefit from a modern Panasonic assembly solution.

At Wesco's recommendation, the auto parts manufacturer tested Panasonic cordless assembly tools and was impressed with the results. As the old pneumatic tools came due for replacement, the customer swapped them out for our more resilient cordless models. So far, three lines have been switched over and two more are slated to receive the new tools. Panasonic has also been a game-changer with respect to maintenance because our innovative tool design enabled Wesco to train the customer's in-house maintenance team to perform all preventive maintenance themselves.

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## Panasonic Assembly Tools Deliver Big Savings

The cost of changing over to Panasonic cordless tools was half the initial purchase price of the old pneumatic tools, a major savings for Wesco's customer. Our tools are powered by highly efficient rechargeable batteries, not compressed air, so the customer was able to immediately cut operating costs by reducing the size and complexity of the air delivery system. Net electricity consumption dropped significantly as the customer replaced air compressors with battery chargers.

In just three years, the customer also realized savings of \$200k-\$300k in reduced maintenance costs, spending less than \$1,000 to maintain the Panasonic cordless tools during that time. It has been six years since the customer switched over the first assembly line to Panasonic tools and those tools are still in operation. The old pneumatic tools were on a three-year replacement cycle so the Panasonic assembly tools have provided twice the service life...and counting.

In addition to these direct cost savings, the customer has realized other benefits from switching over to Panasonic cordless tools, including increased freedom of movement—no air hoses—and a healthier workplace, with air tool oil vapor removed from the plant environment.

Thanks to Panasonic's innovative technology and Wesco's dedication to excellence, this Canadian auto parts manufacturer is now more competitive than ever.

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