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The Future of Air-Conditioning - Environmentally friendly, energy-efficient evaporative coolers

By Duncan Pratt-Thompson, Head of Sales, Scott Brothers Ltd.

Current Trends

Global warming and energy efficiency are topical issues. With an amplified volume of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases, temperatures are rising. If this rise in temperature continues, more cooling options will be required in the future. Much work is underway to try to ensure that potential harmful effects caused by traditional refrigerants used in air conditioning units are limited and to develop safer alternatives. As a result, concerned heating & ventilation businesses are progressing energy efficient products, such as portable evaporative coolers, with no refrigerant gases, which present a more environmentally friendly solution to air conditioning. Additionally, there is increased interest in coolers that are low power rated, such as evaporative coolers which have an 'A' rating. Most industry professionals and decision makers choose to install fixed air conditioning units to cool entire premises. However, portable evaporative units can be positioned strategically to cool "hot spots" in offices and buildings and in areas that may require consistent temperatures, offering a viable alternative to costly fixed air conditioning units.

Retailers' Caution

The changeable British climate and overriding worries linked with global warming often make people wary of costly fixed air conditioners. Conversely, with the Met Office predicting spring 2008 temperatures to be above average, the coming months may follow this trend, and summer temperatures may exceed the UK norm. As the air-conditioning market continues to expand and temperatures continue to rise, consumers are increasingly becoming aware of the alternatives to costly fixed air-conditioning, with portable units fast becoming a staple unit for the home and smaller commercial premises.

The British Climate

The British are generally ill-equipped for high temperatures as Britain's erratic climate makes fixed air-conditioning systems neither economic nor practical. People are also hesitant when it comes to buying air-conditioning units due to energy efficiency concerns. However the British population is becoming more interested in products to improve their lifestyle and working environment, and the market for portable air-conditioners is expanding. This gives a new, growth opportunity for the H&V industry.

Evaporative Coolers and Spot Cooling

Evaporative coolers are less common than refrigerated air conditioners, but offer a practical, clean, safe alternative. Portable units offer flexible solutions, as they can be easily moved. Portable air conditioners can be used in a wide range of situations and are useful for a wide range of applications. Portable air conditioners provide flexibility to meet business' needs, presenting a viable alternative solution to installing a permanent fixed solution on the roof or wall of a building.

Within larger areas, spot cooling can be used to cool a specific overheated area, as opposed to providing general cooling from a remote, centrally controlled air-conditioning system. In operation, spot cooling is an extremely efficient way of cooling people, processes, and equipment because it directs a localised stream of cool air exactly where it is needed. The concept of spot cooling is not a new concept, but the use of portable evaporative air conditioning units for localised cooling within work environments is growing as an effective solution to cooling problems.

Portable evaporative units can be positioned strategically to cool "hot spots" in offices and buildings and in areas that may require consistent temperatures. Portable

evaporative coolers have little or no installation costs, require minimal maintenance and are inexpensive to operate. As a result, small offices can benefit greatly from spot cooling systems. Businesses can also consider the possibility of hiring portable units during specific heat waves, as and when required.

Energy Efficiency

With increases in energy expenses, and inevitable future price rises over the next few years, one of the major benefits of choosing evaporative coolers as opposed to conventional air conditioners, is that they use significantly less energy. (The Convair Magicool Bio-Climatic Air-conditioner from Scott Brothers uses less energy than a 60W light bulb). Traditional air conditioning systems are expensive, may not be environmentally friendly, and also dry out the air, which may cause discomfort. Not only are Bioclimatic evaporative systems more comfortable because they maintain humidity, but they are much more cost effective, saving significantly on energy costs during the summer months.

Conclusion

Evaporative coolers deliver superior air quality because they draw fresh air into a building, and can help to reduce CO₂, CFC and other greenhouse gas emissions. With the UK market for portable air-conditioning units in the domestic and commercial segments rapidly growing, portable evaporative coolers offer a profitable investment for hardware, garden, electrical and conservatory equipment retailers. Market and Business Development predict that in 2011 demand for air conditioning equipment will increase by 2% to £731.8 million (at 2006 prices), representing overall growth of 8% in real terms compared with 2006 (1). As the air conditioning industry is expanding, there is a demand for energy efficient units to meet legislation, and suppliers and retailers need to offer a full range of sustainable solutions. The Convair bioclimatic evaporative range of air conditioners, offers the most powerful, efficient and cost effective choices in the portable sector.

The main benefit of evaporative air coolers is that they produce a high volume of cooled, fresh air with low energy use and no harmful gases. The key features of an efficient evaporative cooler are a powerful and quiet fan, forcing a high volume of air through a large volume of water, in an effective absorbent pad. These crucial features deliver cooled air over a significant distance. (Some cheaper units use ice, which is totally ineffective as more energy and power is needed to produce and then melt the ice to allow evaporation.) Purchasers should be very careful to assess the manufacturer's assurances on the volume of air and the degree of cooling delivered.

Side Bar

About Convair Coolers

Scott Brothers Ltd is the exclusive distributor for the Convair Portable range in the UK and Ireland. There are two sizes of Convair Bioclimatic Evaporative Cooler - the Convair Magicool, which is designed for a room 10-12 m². There is also a larger unit, the Convair Mastercool for larger rooms measuring 17-20 m². In rooms larger than these Convair units work well as personal coolers. The Convair portable evaporative air coolers are available in two colours, white and a new look, high-fashion titanium colourway and are packaged in full colour boxes (ideal for merchandising). All units are guaranteed for 2 years. All Convair products are supplied with full instructions and informative packaging and with a DVD showing how to use.

For more information regarding Convair Bioclimatic evaporative air coolers please contact Scott Brothers Ltd on +44 (0)1477 539 500, alternatively e-mail sales@scottmail.co.uk or visit www.scottmail.co.uk

References

- (1) www.mbdLtd.co.uk

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