

NONCONVENTIONAL POWER TOOLS: REAL-TIME THERMAL EXPANSION MONITORING FOR BRUSHLESS MOTORS

Marian – Florentin Ghena¹, Liviu – Daniel Ghiculescu²

¹ University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest, Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Robotics, Doctoral School, Bucharest, Romania, marian.florentin.ghena@gmail.com

² University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest, Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Robotics, Doctoral School, Bucharest, Romania, daniel.ghiculescu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The power tools industry has been propelled into a new era of innovation through the widespread integration of brushless motors. These sophisticated powerhouses have revolutionized the industry by delivering heightened efficiency, prolonged operational lifespans, and elevated power output, fundamentally reshaping the standards of performance. Despite these remarkable advantages, the journey toward excellence is not without its challenges. A central predicament lies in the intensified heat generation intrinsic to brushless motors, culminating in a complex phenomenon known as thermal expansion. This article embarks on an intricate exploration, shedding light on the transformative potential of real-time thermal expansion monitoring as a pivotal solution within the realm of brushless motors.

KEYWORDS: brushless motors, power tools, thermal expansion, real-time monitoring, performance enhancement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The power tools industry has undergone a remarkable evolution in recent decades, driven by a steadfast commitment to elevating performance and efficiency standards. Within this dynamic landscape, a prominent trend has emerged, reshaping the industry's landscape - the widespread integration of brushless motors. These cutting-edge motors have garnered attention due to their distinct advantages over conventional counterparts. By eliminating the frictional limitations associated with brushes, brushless motors deliver a host of benefits that include amplified efficiency, extended operational lifespan, and enhanced power output. The transition to brushless motors represents a significant leap forward in engineering sophistication [1].

However, despite these undeniable advantages, brushless motors are not immune to challenges. Their heightened efficiency and superior power characteristics come at a cost—increased heat generation. This thermal dilemma assumes a complex dimension in the context of brushless motors, whose intricate electronic architectures and compact designs amplify the intricacy of the issue. As operational temperatures surge during sustained usage, the components within these motors undergo a natural process—thermal expansion. This phenomenon, while inherent to power tools, assumes a pronounced significance in the realm of brushless motors. The expansion of components can potentially compromise the motor's performance, hasten wear, and tear, or even precipitate severe malfunctions [2].

In response to this intricate challenge, the industry has endeavored to devise innovative solutions. Conventional temperature monitoring methodologies, while valuable, fall short of capturing the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the brushless motor operation. Enter the pioneering concept of real-time thermal expansion monitoring - a paradigm shift that promises to reshape the landscape. By integrating state-of-the-art sensors with advanced data processing capabilities, this approach aims to unravel the intricate thermal behaviors exhibited by these advanced motors during their operation [1], [2].

This article embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the nuances inherent in brushless motor technology, delving into the intricacies of thermal expansion and its implications. The focal point of investigation lies in the groundbreaking solution of real-time monitoring. The article aims to elucidate the pivotal role such monitoring systems play, dissect the intricacies of their design and implementation, and deliberate on the potentially transformative impact they may have on the power tools industry. Furthermore, to undertake an incisive analysis of the inherent advantages and constraints of this novel approach and engage in a forward-looking discussion on the avenues for future research and development.

2. TRANSITIONING TO EFFICIENCY AND PRECISION: THE EVOLUTION TO BRUSHLESS MOTORS

The evolution from conventional motors to brushless technology signifies a pivotal juncture in the

ongoing narrative of innovation within the power tools industry. In its early stages, conventional motors with brushes held a dominant role, serving as the driving force behind various tools and appliances. Nevertheless, as demands for heightened efficiency and reliability grew more pronounced, the limitations imposed by friction, wear, and maintenance requirements became increasingly conspicuous [3].

This pivotal moment arrived with the introduction of brushless motors - an epochal technological leap that would reshape the industry landscape. Brushless motors promised not just heightened operational efficiency and extended lifespan, but also the potential to circumvent challenges arising from heat generation and mechanical wear. These advanced motors harnessed the power of electronic control, enabling precise regulation of current flow and heralding a revolution in the mechanics of motion [4]. Figure 1 presents the difference between the brushless motors and the standard ones.

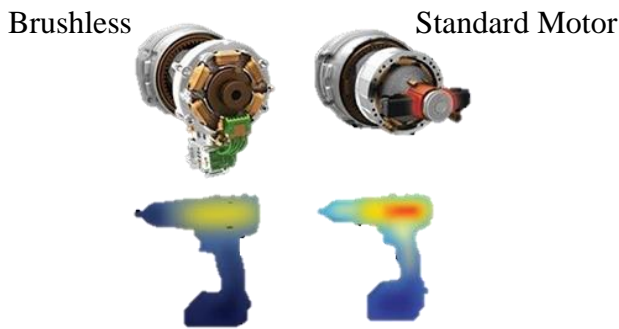


Figure 1. Brushless vs. Brushed Motor [5].

2.1 The Necessity and Advantages of Brushless Motors

The shift to brushless motors transcended mere technological progression; it was a response to the mounting demands of diverse industries. The benefits presented by brushless technology were both extensive and compelling. Enhanced efficiency, prolonged lifespan, amplified power output, and diminished maintenance demands were immediate advantages that caught industry attention. However, the crux of this transition lay in its transformative potential to reshape the operational dynamics of power tools, ushering in an era defined by precision, reliability, and adaptability [6].

As industries and consumers alike embraced the possibilities of brushless technology, a cascade of innovations ensued. The convergence of electronic control, sensor integration, and computational prowess gave birth to a new generation of tools capable not only of unparalleled task performance but also seamless adaptation to diverse conditions. The integration of brushless motors heralded more

than a technological metamorphosis; it signaled a paradigm shift that permeated the very core of industrial practices and user experiences [7].

The subsequent chapters embark on a comprehensive exploration, delving deeply into the intricacies of brushless motor technology, the challenges posed by heat generation, and the ingenious solution of real-time thermal expansion monitoring. Through meticulous investigation, we aspire to unveil the transformative potential that brushless motors and their monitoring hold for the power tools industry and beyond [8].

2.2 Disadvantages of Brushless Motors

Below are described some disadvantages of brushless motors.

a. **Higher Initial Cost:** Brushless motors involve advanced technology and more sophisticated components, which can lead to higher initial production and acquisition costs.

b. **Technical Complexity:** Brushless motors are more technically complex, requiring precise electronic control and sophisticated algorithms to function properly. This can lead to greater challenges in the development, testing, and maintenance of these motors.

c. **Electromagnetic Interference:** As brushless motors use electronic signals to control their windings, they can generate electromagnetic interference that may affect nearby electronic equipment [1], [2], [6]–[8].

2.3 The solution to the Need: Implementing Thermal Expansion Monitoring Sensor

In order to address the challenges posed by heat generation in brushless motors, an innovative and practical solution is the implementation of a thermal expansion monitoring sensor. This sensor is capable of tracking subtle changes in the dimensions of motor components as they heat up during operation. Monitoring thermal expansion, overheating, premature deterioration, and other negative consequences on motor performance and lifespan can be prevented.

2.4 Advantages of Implementing the Monitoring Sensor

Below are described some advantages gained through the implementation of the monitoring sensor into the power tools.

a. **Preventing Overheating:** The monitoring sensor detects real-time changes in the dimensions of motor components, alerting to possible overheating and enabling the control system to take corrective

measures to maintain the temperature within safe limits.

b. Performance Optimization: By automatically adjusting motor parameters based on the sensor's data, more consistent and efficient performance can be achieved.

c. Extended Lifespan: Thermal expansion monitoring can prevent premature wear and component damage, contributing to a longer motor lifespan.

In conclusion, the disadvantages associated with brushless motors can be successfully addressed through the implementation of a thermal expansion monitoring sensor. This unconventional and innovative technology adds significant value, enhancing the performance, efficiency, and durability of brushless motors across various applications.

3. MONITORING THERMAL EXPANSION WITH OPTICAL SENSORS: A FUNCTIONAL BREAKDOWN

As the transition to brushless motors has revolutionized the power tools industry, the integration of innovative solutions becomes paramount to maximize their benefits. This chapter delves into the intricate workings of the optical sensor designed to monitor thermal expansion. This sensor not only addresses the challenges posed by heat generation but also provides real-time insights into the motor's behavior, offering a proactive approach to enhancing performance and longevity [7].

3.1 Functional Principle of the Optical Sensor

Fiber optic sensors have been designed for various applications, including bonding to diverse materials, welding, or direct embedding into wet mixtures. Their compact dimensions and lightweight nature enable their utilization in challenging or hard-to-reach locations. These sensors are particularly valuable for monitoring the condition of large structures, whether indoors or outdoors, contributing to the field of structural health monitoring [9].

One notable type of fiber optic sensor is the Fiber Bragg Grating (FBG). FBGs are created through a process involving UV radiation exposure to the core of a single-fiber strand using ultraviolet light intensity. This exposure induces a permanent increase in the refractive index of the fiber core. As light encounters changes in refractive index, it undergoes slight modifications. The resultant reflected light signals are skilfully merged, showcasing high reflection at a specific wavelength

where the period of activation is approximately half of the input length's wavelength. This distinctive state is known as the Bragg state, and the corresponding wavelength is termed the Bragg wavelength [9].

Signals of light at wavelengths other than the Bragg wavelength, which do not align with the phase changes, essentially pass through transparently. The underlying operational principle is graphically depicted in Figure 2, illustrating the mechanism through which these sensors function [9].

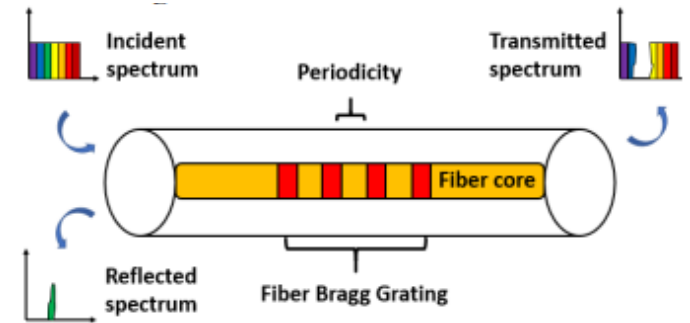


Figure 2. Fiber Bragg Gratings working principle [9].

3.2 Functional Role of the Optical Sensor

The optical sensor's role transcends mere data collection; it serves as the vigilant guardian of the motor's health. By continuously monitoring the motor's structural changes caused by thermal expansion, the sensor provides early warnings of potential overheating or excessive stress. These real-time alerts empower the control system to make immediate adjustments to mitigate adverse effects, ensuring optimal performance and preventing long-term damage. Figure 3 shows an example of data that can be transmitted to the user [10].

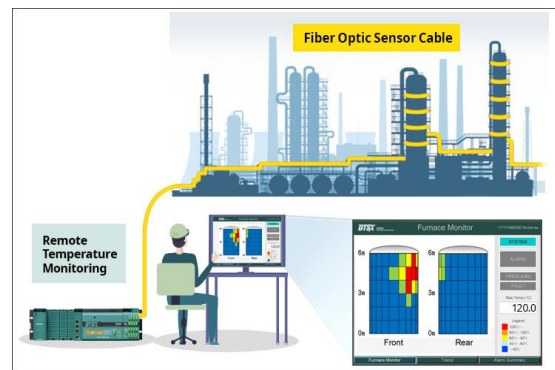


Figure 3. Temperature is monitored with optical fiber [10].

3.3 Transmission of Data to Smart Devices via Bluetooth

In the era of interconnected technology, the sensor's role extends beyond the motor itself. Utilizing Bluetooth connectivity, the optical sensor establishes a seamless connection with smartphones, laptops, or other smart devices. The data collected regarding thermal expansion and motor behavior is transformed into digital information and transmitted wirelessly to these devices [11], [12].

Users can access a dedicated mobile application that receives and interprets the data. Visual representations and graphical displays provide insights into the motor's thermal behavior, enabling users to make informed decisions about the tool's operation. Moreover, the application can be programmed to issue alerts if the motor's temperature approaches unsafe levels, ensuring proactive intervention and preventing potential damage [11], [12].

3.4 Empowering Users and Elevating Performance

The integration of an optical sensor for thermal expansion monitoring exemplifies how innovation can revolutionize industry practices. By offering real-time insights and direct interaction with smart devices, this technology empowers users to optimize motor performance, prevent overheating, and extend the tool's lifespan. As continue to explore the realm of advanced motor technology, this chapter highlights the transformative potential of intelligent solutions that bridge the gap between traditional tools and the digital age.

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE MONITORING SYSTEM

The journey from concept to reality involves seamlessly integrating the thermal expansion monitoring system into the functional landscape of brushless motors. The success of this integration hinges on meticulous planning, precise execution, and a thorough understanding of the system's capabilities and requirements. This section delves into the practical aspects of implementing the monitoring system, providing a comprehensive guide to achieving optimal results.

4.1 Pre-Installation Assessments: Setting the Foundation

Before embarking on the installation process, a series of pre-installation assessments are paramount. These assessments involve evaluating the motor's design, its intended application, and the specific thermal challenges it may encounter. Understanding these factors helps in determining the suitability of the monitoring system and tailoring its implementation to the motor's unique characteristics. Additionally, an assessment of the control system's compatibility with the sensor's data and any necessary software modifications is vital.

4.2 Sensor Placement Considerations: Maximizing Precision

Selecting the optimal placement for the thermal expansion sensor is a critical decision that directly

impacts the accuracy of the collected data. This section navigates through the considerations involved in sensor placement. It explores factors such as the proximity to components prone to thermal expansion, potential sources of heat generation within the motor, and the accessibility for sensor maintenance and calibration. By strategically positioning the sensor, motor engineers can ensure that it captures precise and representative data, enabling effective real-time monitoring [13].

4.3 Calibration Processes: Ensuring Accuracy and Reliability

Calibration lies at the heart of accurate thermal expansion monitoring. This segment elucidates the calibration processes required to establish a baseline measurement and ensure consistent accuracy throughout the system's operation. Detailed steps for calibrating the sensor's optical readings against known thermal expansion measurements are outlined. These calibration procedures not only validate the sensor's performance but also enable the system to provide actionable insights by accurately interpreting the collected data [14].

5. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THERMAL EXPANSION MONITORING SENSOR

An innovative design was carried out for a brushless motor, in which an optical fiber was integrated to monitor the thermal expansion during operation (figure 4). This technological solution represents a significant step forward in the field of electric motors, providing the ability to precisely track the temperature in real-time.

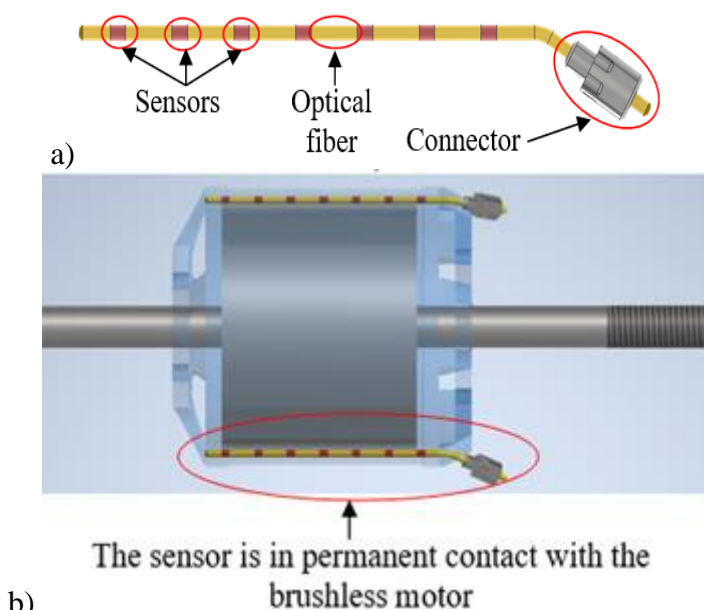


Figure 4. Brushless motor with built-in fiber optic.

The optical fiber is embedded in the engine structure and is connected to a specialized transmitter (figure 5).

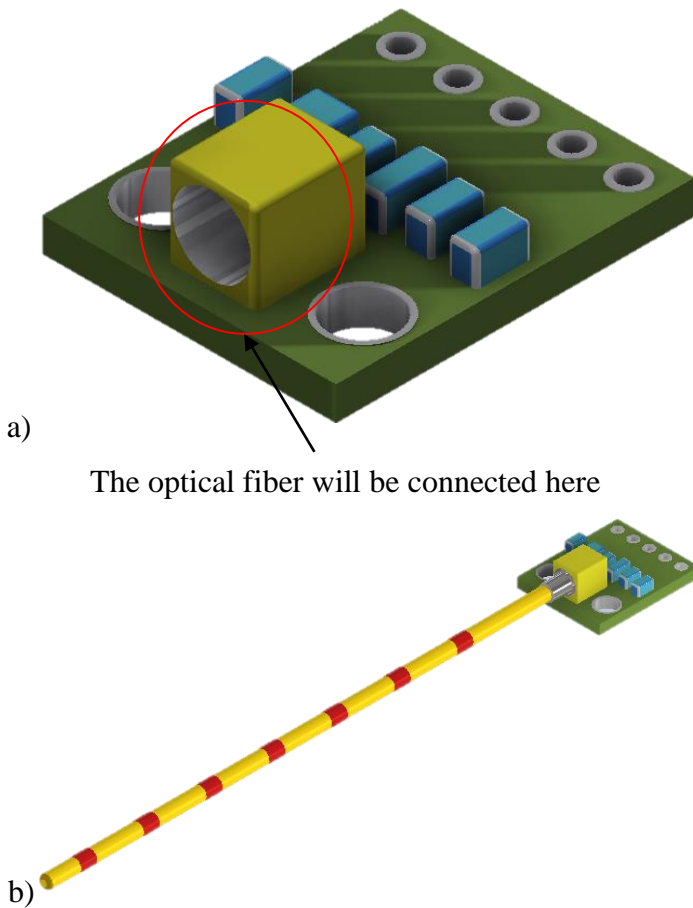


Figure 5. Specialized transmitter.

The temperature data measured by the optical fiber is transmitted to the transmitter, which uses Bluetooth technology to send the information directly to the user's device (figure 6).

The wireless connection facilitates quick and convenient access to monitoring data, allowing the user to assess the engine's thermal condition during operation.



Figure 6. Interface example [15].

The use of fiber optic technology and Bluetooth connectivity in this brushless motor brings numerous advantages.

By monitoring thermal expansion, the user can gain a more accurate insight into engine performance and identify potential anomalies or thermal overloads. This makes it easier to prevent potential faults and optimizes engine life and efficiency.

In conclusion, the design of this brushless motor, in which an optical fiber and Bluetooth connection are integrated, represents a significant innovation in the field of electric motors. Real-time thermal expansion monitoring provides the user with a more detailed understanding of engine behavior and contributes to improved performance and reliability. This advanced technological solution underlines the manufacturer's commitment to innovation and improving the user experience.

6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND INNOVATIONS

The path of innovation is ever-evolving, with each advancement paving the way for new possibilities. This chapter embarks on a journey into the horizon of prospects, exploring the exciting innovations that hold the potential to redefine the landscape of real-time thermal expansion monitoring and its implications for the power tools industry.

6.1 Advancements in Sensor Technology

Sensor technology is at the heart of real-time thermal expansion monitoring, and the future promises even more refined and sophisticated sensor designs. Researchers are exploring the integration of nanotechnology, microsensors, and advanced materials to create sensors that are not only more sensitive but also more robust and versatile. These next-generation sensors could offer enhanced accuracy and resilience, further enhancing the reliability of the monitoring system.

6.2 Harnessing the Power of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is poised to revolutionize the field of monitoring and maintenance. By leveraging AI algorithms, it may be possible to analyze the complex data generated by the monitoring system in real-time. AI-driven insights could enable predictive maintenance, where anomalies related to thermal expansion are detected at their nascent stage, allowing for proactive intervention before they escalate into critical issues. This would not only prevent unplanned downtimes but also optimize operational efficiency.

6.3 Shaping the Future of Power Tools

The innovations outlined in this chapter have the potential to reshape the power tools industry. Imagine a future where tools equipped with advanced monitoring systems not only operate at peak efficiency but also adapt in real-time to changing conditions. This level of responsiveness, combined with predictive maintenance capabilities, could redefine the standards of tool performance, reliability, and user experience.

7. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The integration of real-time thermal expansion monitoring introduces a host of practical considerations and challenges that must be navigated for successful deployment.

7.1 Power Consumption Optimization

The seamless operation of the monitoring system relies on efficient power management. While the sensor's power requirements are generally minimal, optimizing power consumption is crucial to prevent unnecessary drain on the motor's energy source. Techniques such as duty cycling, where the sensor periodically activates to collect data, can strike a balance between data accuracy and power efficiency [16].

7.2 Compatibility with Motor Designs

Brushless motors come in a variety of designs tailored to different applications. Ensuring sensor compatibility across these diverse designs requires meticulous consideration. The sensor's physical size, placement, and integration strategy must align with the specific motor architecture to avoid interference with motor performance or operation [4], [17].

7.3 Environmental Resilience

Many applications involve challenging environmental conditions, such as extreme temperatures, humidity, dust, or vibrations. The monitoring system's components must be designed to withstand these conditions without compromising accuracy or functionality. Enclosures, protective coatings, and sealing mechanisms can be employed to shield the sensor from adverse external factors.

7.4 Recalibration and Maintenance

Over time, factors like wear and environmental changes can impact the sensor's performance. Regular recalibration is essential to maintain accurate measurements and ensure the system's continued effectiveness. Establishing a maintenance schedule that includes recalibration and sensor health checks is crucial to long-term success [14].

7.5 Economic Considerations

Implementing real-time thermal expansion monitoring involves initial investment costs, including sensor acquisition, integration, and potential system adjustments. A comprehensive cost-benefit analysis, considering the potential gains in operational efficiency, reduced downtime, and extended component lifespans, can guide decision-making and showcase long-term economic advantages.

Navigating these practical considerations and challenges requires a multidisciplinary approach that combines engineering expertise, data analysis proficiency, and industry-specific insights.

By addressing these factors with foresight and precision, industry professionals can optimize the deployment of real-time thermal expansion monitoring systems, maximizing their benefits, and contributing to the advancement of the power tools industry.

8. INDUSTRY ADOPTION AND REGULATION

The integration of real-time thermal expansion monitoring systems into the power tools industry signifies a pivotal step toward enhancing operational efficiency and reliability. However, as with any transformative technology, its adoption comes with a suite of industry considerations and regulatory implications.

This chapter explores the intricate interplay between the technology's adoption and the regulatory landscape, shedding light on its broader implications.

8.1 Industry Response to Monitoring Systems

As the benefits of real-time thermal expansion monitoring become evident, industries are progressively embracing this innovation. Manufacturers, across sectors such as manufacturing, construction, automotive, and more, are recognizing its potential to optimize tool performance and mitigate risks associated with overheating and premature component wear.

The implementation of monitoring systems has driven shifts in industry practices. From design and manufacturing to maintenance and customer support, the integration of real-time data has led to more data-driven decision-making processes. This integration not only enhances product performance but also contributes to elevated operational standards and user experiences.

8.2 Emerging Regulatory Standards

The adoption of novel technology often coincides with the development of regulatory standards to ensure safe and effective utilization. Regulatory bodies and industry associations recognize the potential impact of real-time thermal expansion monitoring systems on user safety, product reliability, and overall industry practices.

Manufacturers are tasked with aligning their implementations with emerging regulatory guidelines to uphold quality and safety standards.

These standards encompass aspects such as accuracy requirements, data integrity, wireless communication security, and environmental resilience. Adhering to these standards not only ensures the robustness of the technology but also fosters consumer trust and confidence in the products.

In conclusion, the integration of real-time thermal expansion monitoring systems into the power tools industry is met with a dual responsibility - industry adoption and regulatory compliance. By embracing technology and aligning practices with emerging standards, manufacturers contribute to the elevation of industry standards, product quality, and user experiences. As these systems become more prevalent, their synergy with regulatory guidelines catalyzes innovation, safety, and progress in the power tools sector.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The journey through the realms of real-time thermal expansion monitoring has illuminated a path of innovation, transformation, and progress within the power tools industry. As reaches the culmination of this exploration, it is essential to reflect upon the significance of this technology and the profound implications it holds for the industry's future.

9.1 Key Takeaways and Insights

Throughout this comprehensive journey, the paper unraveled the intricate complexities of brushless motor technology, witnessed the challenges of heat generation, and explored the groundbreaking solution of real-time thermal expansion monitoring. Was delved into the nuances of sensor design, implementation processes, and the tangible benefits brought about by its integration.

The pivotal transition from conventional brushed motors to brushless technology has paved the way for enhanced efficiency, extended lifespans, and superior performance. While these advancements have marked a paradigm shift, they have also introduced a new set of challenges. The integration of real-time thermal expansion monitoring addresses these challenges with precision, enabling the optimization of motor performance, prevention of overheating, and elevation of overall reliability.

9.2 Shaping the Future of Power Tools

The journey through real-time thermal expansion monitoring has demonstrated that the power tools industry is on the brink of transformation. As innovation propels the industry forward, the integration of intelligent sensors and data-driven solutions becomes the cornerstone of progress.

9.3 Propelling Precision, Reliability, and Continual Improvement

In conclusion, the significance of real-time thermal expansion monitoring lies not merely in its capacity to mitigate thermal challenges but in its power to reshape the landscape of power tools. This innovation stands as a testament to the industry's commitment to precision, reliability, and continual improvement. As manufacturers, researchers, and users collectively embrace the potential of this technology, it steps into a future where power tools are not just instruments of utility but embodiments of efficiency, longevity, and innovation.

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