

Rebuilt vs. New Machinery

How to choose the best path for your plant

Brian Bouvier, V.P., Lloyd & Bouvier, Inc.

I am often asked to explain the difference between rebuilt machinery and new machinery. In a professionally rebuilt machine all the wear parts are replaced with new. One of the major benefits of rebuilt machinery is the price, approximately 25% less than new. Typically a rebuilt machine will have a much shorter lead time than a new machine; in most instances a 3-month lead-time is normal. When you consider that the pay back for capital equipment begins after installation, delivery becomes a key factor in the decision making process.

Before deciding on a rebuilt machine, I suggest you consider the following

- Does the supplier have the technical expertise to handle the job?
- Does the supplier have the machining capability to handle the job?
- Can the supplier redesign the machine to the specifications required?
- Does the supplier offer start-up?
- Does the supplier offer the latest technology & software?
- Does the supplier provide electrical and mechanical drawings?
- Does the supplier provide a warranty?
- Are replacement parts readily available for this machine?
- How does the overall cost compare to a new machine?
- How does the delivery compare to a new machine?

If your supplier answered favorably to the above questions, a rebuilt machine may be right for you.



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Rebuilt machinery comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and conditions. A truly rebuilt machine should have the following:

- All new bearings,
- New belts, and
- Wear items replaced with new
- A new motor and drive package sized properly to your specifications.

Example: If a used machine had a 5HP motor and control, and the rebuilt machine is designed for a faster run speed or heavier product range, the horsepower must be upgraded accordingly.

Another advantage of a rebuilt machine is customization. While most standard machinery is available through catalogs, rebuilt machinery can be customized without a high price tag. The difference is that each machine is rebuilt as a single unit and, as such, can easily be modified. Pintle shafts, line direction, sheave diameters, type of braking, etc. are all key factors in the overall redesign of the machinery.

Modifications include such changes as:

- Widening the frame for larger reels
- Installing a four speed transmission to cover a large product range
- Relocation of the operator control station
- Special software programming for acceleration, deceleration, stopping, integrating testing and monitoring equipment, loading and unloading devices, automation systems for operator ease and process repeatability
- Safety interlocks
- Guarding
- Machine color,
- Voltage, and so on

Finally, if you decide to purchase a rebuilt machine, ask your supplier to test run your product on the equipment prior to shipment. In this way you can insure the performance of the machinery before you receive it. Any changes or fine tuning to the machine can then be accomplished at the point of manufacture, thus minimizing your installation and start-up time.

In summary, if a used machine is properly rebuilt, it is a good value and will have the same life expectancy as a new machine, but without the wait and new price tag.