Buying reconditioned mixing equipment

Reconditioned equipment vs. used equipment

Limitations in capital spending, especially in today’s competitive environment, should not have to result in a development freeze. From a processing point of view, companies have a number of creative options for improving quality or boosting productivity. One strategy is to buy reconditioned mixing equipment.

A “reconditioned” piece of equipment has been inspected and rebuilt back into perfect working order and offered with the same guarantee as new equipment. Beware of buying pre-owned equipment simply labeled as “used” as this could cost you extra in repairs and parts replacement even before it can actually be used. When properly restored to perfect working condition and therefore comparable, if not equal, in efficiency to new equipment, a reconditioned machine will get you to the profitable stage sooner.

OEM warranty

It is always recommended to purchase reconditioned equipment from the OEM (original equipment manufacturer). The OEM is your best source for technical support, parts availability and equipment modifications. The manufacturer also offers the best warranty on reconditioned equipment; in most cases, it’s the same exact guarantee you would get when purchasing a newly built machine at full price.
Buying from a used equipment vendor or previous owner is less ideal but if you must, do check if the OEM has gone out of business as parts will be difficult to get and later the trade-in value will be much less. Do your research on the vendor – any warranty is only as good as the company that issues it.

**Get it fast**

One obvious advantage of buying reconditioned equipment is that it’s in stock. Turnaround time from order to installation is much shorter compared to new equipment that can require weeks, if not months, to build. When there is a right-now sales opportunity or a critical machine that must be replaced immediately, purchasing reconditioned equipment will meet the demand in a timely fashion.

**Go for a test drive**

For most specialty mixing and blending processes, no techniques or calculations presently exist which can predict mix quality, cycle time or scale-up criteria without empirical basis. There is no substitute for a thorough test drive, so try a machine prior to making a purchase commitment. You can either arrange a trial run at the manufacturer’s facility or better yet, take the mixer to your plant and play with it. Most trial/rental programs come with a minimal fee which anyway may be credited partially or in full towards the purchase price once you make the decision. Without the risk of upfront capital expenditure, you can confirm your mixing strategy and make sure that the reconditioned equipment is a right fit for your process.

**Case History**

**Application: Clay gels (intermediates for cosmetics and personal care products)**

A bulk manufacturer of health and beauty products was using a rotor/stator mixer and counter-rotating agitators to disperse fine clay powders into several viscous liquids such as silicone oils and polymer solutions. Operators had to increase batch temperature in an effort to lower viscosity and improve product turnover within the mixer. Nonetheless, dispersion quality was often inadequate leading to frequent reworks.

The company finally decided to evaluate a different mixer design that could handle their full range of clay gels. Ross recommended a Double Planetary Mixer with High Viscosity Blades. After a successful demonstration at the Ross Test & Development Center, the company immediately rented a reconditioned 40-gallon mixer as well as a platen-style discharge system to assist in a large order.

The new mixing procedure produced more consistent results within shorter batch times. It also required less intensive clean-up and simpler maintenance. Based on these proven benefits, the company subsequently purchased both pieces of equipment.