

## What can I learn from conveyor tests at the supplier's test facility?

Conveyor tests at the supplier's test facility will show how your material will convey via a specific or various conveying methods. You'll also learn what other technologies can be applied to your material while conveying, such as ways to separate, elevate, heat, cool, and coat your material and how to make other process improvements.

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Two key factors you should learn during conveying tests at the supplier's facility is the speed of travel and any way the conveyor may affect the material's physical characteristics. Material damage is a major consideration in choosing the correct conveyor for your application. Keep your specific application in mind — requirements may be different for a conveyor intended to distribute product to multiple discharges rather than a simple transfer.

During the test, make sure you look for any indication of material buildup on the conveyor's contact surfaces. The conveying tests are usually short, so even small indications of buildup could translate into a significant problem in production.

*Jay Sullivan,  
president,  
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Aside from the obvious benefits of verifying equipment compatibility, attending the conveying tests in the supplier's facility will give you insight into the supplier's corporate philosophy. If the facility itself is neat, organized, and well-run, it's a good indication that projects will also be properly organized, minimizing the possibility of problems during equipment production. A supplier's test facility can also be an indicator of its resources — for example, a supplier that has invested significantly in its facility has also likely invested properly in personnel and equipment relating to the engineering and production of the conveying equipment. Finally, you should get a good idea of the supplier's actual manufacturing capabilities. An equipment supplier that relies heavily on outside contractors can introduce additional variables, increasing the potential for delays or other problems during the overall manufacturing process.

*David Boger,  
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Conveyor tests at the supplier's test facility can provide important safety information. They can determine if the material being handled is explosive in a suspended dust cloud or combustible in a layer. The supplier should be able to offer exact explosability and combustion parameters so that you can choose equipment that ensures worker safety in your own facility.

*Bruce McLelland,  
sales manager—industrial fire and  
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Conveyor tests at the supplier's facility will help you determine the following:

- Conveyability — Which conveyor will best handle my material?
- Rate — What rate can I achieve with the conveyor?
- Degradation — Will the conveyor damage my material?
- Separation — Will conveying separate my blended material?
- Flowability — Will there be any feed or discharging issues?
- Component selection — Are there certain components or options that'll help my conveying efficiency?

Thorough testing will ensure that the conveyor you purchase will perform to your application's standards.

*Greg Patterson,  
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*Equipment suppliers are a valuable source of information about equipment and processes. In light of this, each month we ask suppliers a question of concern to our readers. Answers reflect the suppliers' general expertise and don't promote the suppliers' equipment. If you have a question you'd like suppliers to answer, send it to Alicia Tyznik, Associate Editor, Powder and Bulk Engineering, 1155 Northland Drive, St. Paul, MN 55120; fax 651-287-5650 (atyznik@cscpub.com).*