

SUPPLIER'S TIPS

What do people often forget to consider when buying bagging and packaging equipment?

Buyers tend to look at unit price without taking into consideration their entire system and how a package or equipment purchase can impact filling, discharging, warehousing, and shipping costs. Many times, you can save substantially more money on these issues, as opposed to just looking at the packager.

Mary Ellen Henry, national sales manager, FLEXCON, 318-234-3212

People don't pay enough attention to long-term costs such as maintenance and the strength of design and manufacturing for the long haul. Generally, the American customer is only looking at up-front capital expenditure and payback in 1 to 3 years with no regard for minimizing long-term maintenance. Customers are too intent on instant gratification, which really penalizes those who make higher quality but more expensive machinery. People don't pay enough attention to the real differences between machinery makers. They just focus on price.

Gary L. Wells, vice president and general manager, American Newlong, 317-787-9421

Each month, we ask suppliers a question of concern to our readers. Answers will rely on the suppliers' general expertise and won't promote the suppliers' equipment. If you have a question you'd like to have suppliers answer, send it to Jamie Nashban, associate editor, Powder and Bulk Engineering, 1300 East 66th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55423; fax 612-866-1939, jnashban@cscpub.com.

When buying bagging and packaging equipment, people need to keep requirements and specs for bag material in mind.

Jon Donovan, marketing manager, Pearson Packaging, 509-838-6226

People need to look at the whole process and ask themselves: Why are they doing it this way? Is there a better way of doing it? Is this the way we will be doing it in the future? To get those answers, the process needs to be analyzed and evaluated. Things to consider include: requirements and preferences, product properties and protection needs, alternative packages, alternative packaging systems, effects of upstream and downstream process and handling, practical level of complexity, total costs, servicing, spare parts, and training availability. Once these factors are understood, the buying decision is simple.

Robert F. Kendall, consultant for Smurfit Stone, 630-260-3582

I think cost and how many bags per hour the machinery can produce are the most important things to remember.

Scott R. Culshaw, president, Ingredient Masters, 513-231-7432

Know the reliability of your supplier.

John A. King, president, King Bag & Manufacturing, 513-541-5440

Requirements for your end users — is there a headroom restric-

tion, and are there atmospheric conditions that would make static a problem — these are things you need to be concerned with when purchasing bagging and packaging equipment.

*Cindy Finley, vice president, sales,
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The most important thing that people forget when calculating the payback for a palletizer is the “potential injury factor.” Generally when companies are buying a palletizer, they are looking to replace labor — their justification for buying a machine is based on the reduction in labor costs. But in the bulk powder industry, manual workers are often handling 50-plus-pound bags of product. There’s a much higher potential for injury every time a worker picks up a bag than, for example, in the food industry where workers routinely hand-pack and palletize much lighter cases every day. So, a company should really factor in the cost of potential worker compensation claims when evaluating the justification of a bag palletizer. One long-term claim could easily exceed the capital expenditure for an automatic bag palletizer.

Another factor that companies shouldn’t ignore is the new OSHA mandate for worker protection that was released in November 2000. Companies who don’t effectively protect their workers from risk may face severe consequences if this mandate is enforced, beginning in October 2001. Even if it isn’t enforced in its present form, there’s a good possibility that stricter OSHA regulations are on the horizon.

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and national account sales, A-B-C
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Most people are buying bagging and packaging equipment to reduce their production cost. They often change manual operation for automatic machinery. By making such a switch, customers often forget to consider important aspects. For one thing, automatic equipment requires more preventive maintenance than

manual operation, it’s usually more complex, and it requires trained technicians for proper maintenance. People need to prepare their staffing and skill level.

The second aspect that is often forgotten is that automatic bagging equipment is less forgiving of bag quality and poly film composition. The quality of the premade bags or poly film needs to be a lot more consistent with fully automatic bagging machinery than for manual operations.

*Eric Viel, product engineering
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