

Use the "apples-to-apples" method when comparing system proposals



If you've never bought an air-conveyed scrap/recycling system before or it's been years since you've had to think about your system as a whole, how can you avoid making mistakes? The "apples-to-apples" approach is a great place to start.

Trim collection systems aren't the kind of thing most companies purchase very often as systems are often designed to run for decades. So when a company needs a new system, it's fairly common that the person responsible for requesting proposals has never purchased a system before.

The first mistake is to base the purchase decision solely on cost. The old adage "you get what you pay for" applies here. If you're comparing two bids and one system is a lot cheaper than the other, it's important to make an apples-to-apples comparison between system proposals. Ask each vendor the following questions:

1. What does your quote include? Explain in detail.

2. How do differences in filter media sq. ft, air-to-cloth ratios, horsepower, inlet CFM's and velocities affect system cost and performance?
3. Please submit an itemized list of costs associated with auxiliary items such as access platforms and ladders, lift equipment, freight, and electrical and building modifications.

Some proposals include auxiliary items; others don't. Low-priced vendors often quietly omit these items from their proposals in order to appear to be the low-cost bidder. Because the inclusion or omission of these items can make a significant difference in the total cost of the project, the apples-to-apples comparison is the most important way to avoid these unpleasant surprises.

It's also important to remember that a balanced system with airlocks on the dust hoppers will cost more--but it will outperform an unbalanced system.

Finally, don't over manage the project in the design stage. Make the air system vendor do their job. Don't forget that the typical air system engineer designs between two and five systems per week and the average printer is involved in the design of a system once every five to fifteen or more years. In order to overcome this disadvantage, the printer should use their knowledge to make the air system vendors provide all the details needed to make an informed decision. Once the design is proposed, the printer should review the proposal with the air system vendor in detail. This includes an in-depth discussion about operational issues. If you can't get answers to every question you have about how the air system will fit into your existing workflow, or if the vendor is unwilling or unable to answer those questions to your satisfaction, you've just received your first clue about what life will be like with that air system in your plant.

Questions? Just give us a call at 615.230.9500 or email us at sales@gfpuhl.com.