

Demand Increasing For Used Equipment

By Liz Fedorowicz

As the economic downturn continues, more business owners are turning to used equipment and reconditioned machines in order to keep their printing firms running smoothly. While new equipment may be preferable to some, a good piece of used equipment can often get the same job done, and run for years with the right maintenance and cleaning.

“This is the worst I’ve seen the industry in 30 years,” noted Brian Marder of Marder Machinery, a used equipment broker based in Marlboro, N.J. “There’s a lot of used machinery out there because of company closings. There are good deals out there if you’re in the market for used equipment. New machinery is cost prohibitive for a lot of small printers.”

He suggests that printers make sure they know what they want the equipment to do before they buy it, and what the long-term use of the machine will be, as well as the short term. “The machine should help the company grow over the long term.”

According to David Spiel, owner of Spiel Associates in Long Island City, N.Y., when a printer is in the market for used equipment he should be aware of the many types of pre-owned machines out there. They are:

✦ **As Is**—usually equipment from an auction. Buyer beware, but if you are mechanically inclined this may be a good bet;

✦ **Good Running**—No work has been done to it and it runs well;

✦ **Reconditioned**—the equipment has been partially disassembled, parts have been replaced, and it has been painted if necessary;

✦ **Rebuilt**—equipment has been stripped and disassembled and all the moving parts have been replaced.

“We’ve always sold a lot of used postpress equipment. That’s our business. In particular, punching machines and collators are our big sellers,” Spiel explained. Spiel Associates offers both new and used bindery equipment, and specializes in perfect binders, collators, punches, wire binding machinery, as well as the only patented in-line plastic coil former and binder in the United States. The company’s complement of sales department, service department, and machine shop, coupled with its stock of 400 new and used machines, make it a complete, full-service dealer.

Andy Siska, owner of Siska Inc. in Saddle Brook, N.J., also sees strong demand for used equipment. “The past six months in particular, there has been an extremely high demand for used equipment. I’ve been here since the 1960s, and I’ve never seen demand this high.”

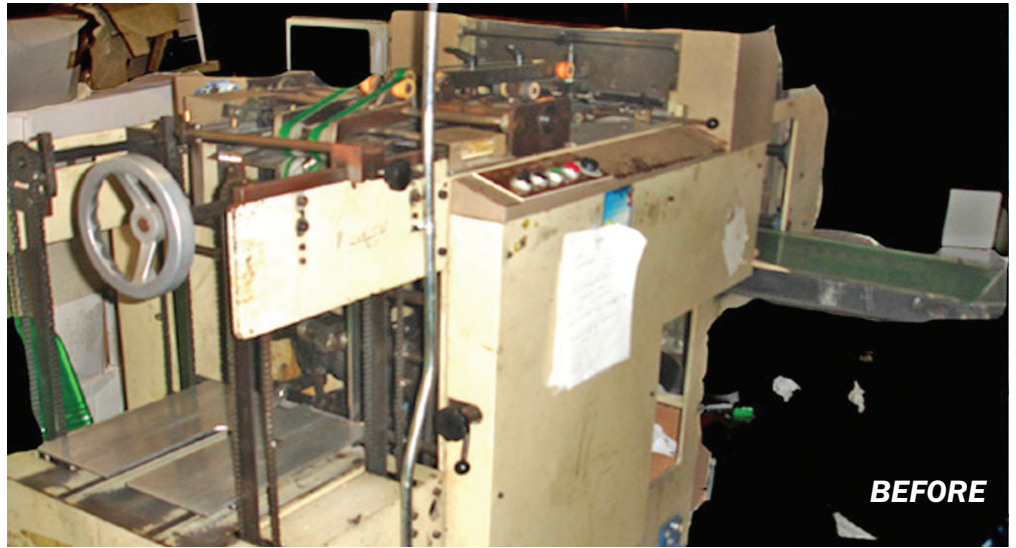
Siska Inc. is a distributor and manufacturer of eyelets, grommets, rivets, hole plugs, eyeletting machines, and eyelet setting tools since 1938.

He added that remanufactured equipment, which he likened to a restored car, used to be the strongest seller because it’s half the price of new. “Now there is demand for all types of used equipment, especially automatic equipment. Printers want to become more competitive and lower their labor costs. They can do this with automated equipment.”

Spiel agreed that labor costs are a large issue for printers today. “Any way you can reduce labor costs and invest in more efficient machines, that will save your company money.”

In regards to the maintenance and service of used equipment both Spiel and Siska agreed that training and support from the dealer is needed for this type of equipment. “Printing companies don’t have maintenance people anymore so the operators need to be trained to fix the machine,” noted Siska.

“An ounce a day of maintenance makes a big difference over time,” noted Nissim Shenova, Graytor Printing Co.’s executive vice president and chief operating officer. “Preventive clean and lube. Not just wash up, but clearly spend another 15 minutes and clean the bearings and edges of the rollers and dust off sensors.”



“Also, do not allow everyone who thinks they can use tools to do that on the equipment, but qualify those that will be allowed. Not all are mechanically inclined. They could do more damage than help,” he added.

According to Marder, “A preventative maintenance program should be in place at every printing company. It should be one person’s job to do preventative maintenance on equipment, keep an inventory of reusable parts, and to know what tools are needed for this maintenance. Manufacturers can help with this information.”

Marder, who has been in the industry for more than 30 years and used to work for Mueller Martini, sells saddle stitchers, folders, cutters, perfect binders, and other machinery to companies nationwide.

Spiel said a few tips to keep in mind when buying used equipment, and the service and support needed for it to run smoothly over the years are:

1. Know the right machine for your job. Find a knowledgeable dealer so you buy the correct piece of equipment for your needs.
2. Work with a dealer who has after service support, such as phone support or training.
3. Buy from a reputable dealer who will come and help you and who will be in business five or 10 years from now. Don’t just shop for the cheapest price on the Internet.
4. Be leery of a company where you have to pay 100 percent of the price prior to shipment.
5. Research your equipment. Call around to other dealers and see what is done to the machine prior to shipment.

One last thing Marder suggests, “Keep in mind the resale value of equipment before you buy it. I liken it to buying a car without air conditioning and then trying to resell it. No one wants it.”