



Know the Facts and Lower Risk When Buying a Used Tamper Band/Shrink Sleeve Label Applicator

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Buying a used tamper band/shrink sleeve label applicator offers risks and rewards. Knowing what to look for in a used machine can significantly lower risk and heighten the reward.



AXON'S HZ100H


EZ-130 SHRINK SLEEVE APPLICATOR &
EZ-48-SRB CONVECTIVE HEAT SHRINK TUNNEL

APPLICATORS ARE NOT INTERCHANGEABLE

The first thing to know when buying a used applicator is that while models are based on standard platforms, each individual unit is custom designed for a particular application and plant environment.

For example, the Axon model EZ-100 applicator has a rated speed as posted on the Internet of 150 units per minute. This should be read as up to 150 units per minute. Units-per-minute throughput depends on the size of the container or application. Tamper bands offer the highest throughput because of their small size, while large containers with full shrink sleeve labels will be going through at a slower rate. Anyone seeing a model EZ-100 on an equipment broker's sale sheet should not assume 150 units per minute.

Customization goes deeper than bands, labels, and container sizes and shapes. If a customer wants a new machine to perform print registration, for example, Axon incorporates a photo eye. For a perforation

on a tamper band, a small motorized system must be added to the standard platform. It is impossible to know what application or plant environment an applicator was designed for or what unique capabilities it has or does not have simply based on its model number. This means the would-be buyer cannot know for sure whether the machine will do what is needed.

LOCATE THE UNIT'S SERIAL NUMBER BEFORE BUYING AN APPLICATOR

Customers should feel free to call Axon and provide a serial number. A tech support person can research the facts about the unit's original design intent and age. These specifications will help answer a few basic questions about whether the original design and the intended work for the used machine match. This background information is not a guarantee of success, but a basic reality check. Buyers purchase a used machine at their own risk.

Identifying the unit through a serial number may also provide background on past maintenance, replacement parts supplied, the age of the machine, and whether the machine was subjected to any extraordinary circumstances. For example, a search on one pre-owned machine found that it had suffered a catastrophic electrical overcharge possibly from a nearby lightning strike.

WEAR PARTS - WEAR OUT

Wear can cause package and machine to not quite match up. And applicator parts such as suction cups, electronics, motors, drive rollers, and a host of other components do wear out. A cursory inspection may show that wear parts seem to be in good shape. It takes a knowledgeable support technician to zero in on a difficult to diagnose wear issue. When buying a used machine, wear-parts issues are important to keep in mind. A sensitivity analysis should ideally be performed by the buyer to see what may happen to the business if the machine's run rates do not measure up, the overall quality of the placement of the brand or label is poor, or cost of bringing the machine up to specification is high.

10 YEARS AND OUT

As a rule of thumb, if the pre-owned machine is 10 years or older don't buy it. The electronics will likely no longer be supported. That's not to say that if a company bought the machine as new it's going to self-destruct or need to be replaced when it turns 10. But consider the applicator's total burden of wear

parts, the fact that the machine was originally custom designed for a particular application and plant environment, and that the brains of the machine are two, three, or more generations old. It simply does not make any economic sense to buy such outdated equipment. After all, who wants maintenance personnel troubleshooting and potentially reprogramming a decade or older PLC?

Also beware of overpriced older machines.

Axon has been contacted by potential buyers who are evaluating older units that are priced at 60 percent of new ones.

SEE IT RUN

A positive situation would be to find a used machine still in operation at a plant. In that scenario, the buyer could size up the application and environment and compare it to his or her situation. Or, if possible, test drive the unit in sort of a mini factory acceptance test.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW UNIT WARRANTY PUTS EVERYTHING INTO PERSPECTIVE

Axon warrants its machines for one year, including parts and labor. Components that are purchased from outside Axon such as PLCs, motors, and sensors, carry the component manufacturer's warranty. The Axon warranty goes deeper than parts and labor. The company warrants the product to perform to its design criteria. If the unit was designed for 125 units per minute for a shrink label, then it's warranted to that customer for 125 units per minute for one year. The point is that each machine is aimed specifically at a

unique customer, time, place, and application.

As stated earlier, these units are not readily interchangeable and were never intended to be. Some people don't want to call Axon for information on a used machine because they believe the company representative will try to talk them into a new model. Yes, of course, Axon wants to sell new machines. Equally true, Axon does not want a poor experience with a used machine to poison the well for future sales of new machines to that customer.

Before purchasing a used machine, call Axon and have the serial number available. Talk to the Axon support person. Be aware of the pitfalls of buying a used machine. Use the tips expressed in this white paper to make an informed decision. All of these steps do not guarantee success, but they may provide a few basic and crucial facts about the original intent of the machine under consideration.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND AXON

George Albrecht has more than 35 years experience in the packaging industry.

Axon gives our customers the power to produce the most attractive sleeve labeled products in the market. Engineered for reliability, flexibility, and value, Axon labeling equipment includes shrink sleeve applicators, stretch sleeve applicators, and continuous-motion heat shrink tunnels for pharmaceuticals, beverages, processed foods, dairy, health and beauty, and household products. Axon is a product brand of ProMach, a global leader in packaging line solutions. As part of the ProMach Decorative Labeling business line, Axon helps our packaging customers protect and grow the reputation and trust of their consumers. ProMach is performance, and the proof is in every package. Learn more about Axon at www.Axoncorp.com and more about ProMach at ProMachBuilt.com.