

Conveyors – Who Needs Them

Task	Examples
Assembling	Vehicles, pre-prepared food, orders, engines
Feeding operators	Textiles, laundry, robots, kitchens, food processing
Feeding processes	Steel making, cutting machinery, bottling lines
Pick and packing	Retail warehouses, mail order, distribution operations
Loading	Process machinery, quarrying, bagging, vehicles
Processing	Mail, central distribution, luggage, plating, painting
Storing	Bulk picking, work in progress, battery charging
Accumulating	Palletising, robots, end of line, process queuing
Packing	Robots, wrapping, boxing and sealing, labelling.
Building & Quarrying	Spoil, soil and materials removal.

There is only one purpose for using conveyors: **Saving Time.**

Conceptual Thinking

At the beginning of any business transaction or task from the conveyorised check out system at your local supermarket to the deepest mine providing the materials from which the supermarket is constructed or the land where your food is grown or reared, a conveyor is a means of allowing goods to be transported unsupervised whilst you do something else. How many tasks in your work place are there where you or a colleague would rather be doing something else?

Of course there are many other ways to define conveying and the role it performs but time is the best one.

The conveyor concept has many forms, a train is a form of conveyor in as much as the track and delivery system is always fixed. There are aerial conveyors like the ski lift system or for emptying spoil buckets, as overhead gantries and track used for paint lines and finishing processes as well as underfloor, belt, roller and flexible systems. All of them allow the unsupervised movement of materials or human cargoes.

Just like the railway line has points to allow directional changes so the conveyor can use junctions and directional changers to sort cargoes and consignments and with the advent of electronic processors and readers, each consignment can have its journey and destination carefully tracked, monitored and ordered, all with little or no intervention. It is even possible to process cargo en-route or change its condition.

Why? Well the main reason is that the more often you touch a product, the more you add to its cost and with the market controlling its value at the other end the bit in the middle is where your business has to exist. The longer you hold onto your products

the less they contribute to your existence. Its the “are we nearly there yet” principal at work again!

So conveyors save you time and get the job done more quickly. Just like the railways there will always be the old cost arguments relating to supervision and manning levels. Just like the checkout, the more frequently you repeat the same action in the same way with the same frequency the more automated you can make it. Conveyors are generally the first sign that you may be in a business which can be processed with minimal skills, supervision or human intervention. The more you can invest the less the operating cost is likely to be.

In the context of a warehouse or factory environment the use of conveyors and their application in moving goods between processes, handling storage or distribution points is self evident. The big question is where to start and stop and the inclusion of the many other facilitations that the conveyor suggests like for example palletising, labelling, sorting, inspecting, assembling and processing your goods so that once on the track they stay there with as much automation and processing as possible before being handled again.

In materials handling efficiency terms, efficiency is the minimum distance and maximum processing in the shortest possible time span. “Job done”. The conveyor comes the closest to this concept of all the equipment available – if you can take it from process to lorry trailer and out the door in one...you save yourself a warehouse!

10 Good Mind Sets for Materials Handling Efficiency

Rather than fill your head with complicated products and engineering here are ten simple but very effective thought processes for you to carry round your business. Then think materials handling, then think conveyors. How they can help you achieve your goals should become self apparent

- 1) There are always improvements if you look for them
- 2) Don't touch it unless you have to, it will only cost you more and be worth less
- 3) Getting ahead is always priority
- 4) Freeing up resource to do other tasks reduces costs
- 5) Waiting time is the destruction of all profit
- 6) Progress is king
- 7) Bottle necks require engineering
- 8) Space is 3 dimensional - look up!
- 9) The fastest route between two points is to make one of them redundant
- 10) If you think your company is at the top of its game – read rule 1 again.

If you think we can help you with any of the above please contact us, these are the main reasons people buy conveyors we hope they inspire you.