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## ***4 Questions to Ask Before Purchasing a Conveyor System***

There are probably an infinite number of questions any one user could ask before purchasing a big ticket item such as this. We've tried to boil it down for you and offer some good, solid advice that can assist your decision-making process.

### ***Which type of conveyor and controls will be the most productive for the materials I need conveyed?***

There just isn't a simple answer for this question, but the fact is that hundreds of types of conveyor exist in the Materials Handling Industry and each one typically serves a specific purpose. That is actually really good news! For example, if you have light corrugated loads that need to be transported from a picking area to a shipping area, then a zero pressure accumulation conveyor should be selected. Perhaps you need your conveyor equipment to be wash down resistant - you can find that option. All of this means that for your unique needs or whatever your special operations may require there is a very good chance the materials handling engineering community has already designed a product to save you time, money, and a big headache. To start your research on what's best for you, visit [ThomasNet](#)

### ***Should I worry about my conveyor system having the flexibility to change in the future?***

ABSOLUTELY! Making sure your conveyor has the flexibility to grow with your company is very important to remember when selecting your conveyor. Not only should you consider the importance of being able to change or reuse existing equipment to save material cost, but also consider that a modular conveyor system can possibly save you hundreds of engineering and installation hours during the commissioning phase! YES - HUNDREDS!

Controls and Mechanical engineers have already spent years researching and developing systems that will be cost effective at the proposal stages of a project, and will continue to save the end user money long after the project has been commissioned. Where do these savings come from? Good question - they come from the end user's ability to troubleshoot, add equipment, or take equipment away more effectively and efficiently. Engineers have designed building block type conveyor control systems to give you the flexibility of adding to or taking away from your system with minimal downtime. Make sure to keep flexibility at the top of your list when selecting a conveyor system.

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***What are standard maintenance and personnel requirements for my conveyor and controls to be most effective?***

Back to question 1 - the answer here depends on the type of system you choose. Never fear - there is some good advice we can give! With a simple system with no PLC, a good mechanical technician or engineer should be sufficient in keeping your system up and running. If you have a large controls system with supervisory control, routing, and an assortment of conveyors, then you will need either a more experienced candidate, a team of engineers, or a support contract. The downside here is that one expert may be really hard to find and a diverse team of engineers and technicians may be too costly. The most cost effective (yes - we're talking about your bottom line! ) method of maintaining a larger conveyor controls system is a support contract with a team that is well versed in the equipment installed in your plant. Purchasing annual support contracts from an integrator that knows your system will minimize downtime and lower your overhead to keep your production running efficiently. That's what we all want - right?

***What is the cost of a conveyor system and what is my return on investment?***

Again - all dependent on what you choose... what we can tell you is that if you select a conveyor system using Motorized Drive Roller technology, then your energy cost savings ALONE could be up to 70%! The cost of your system and return on investment will be directly affected by everything that goes before - so - PLANNING IS KEY! There are many qualified system integrators today that understand the end users concerns and operations and will do everything to ensure you choose the best system possible for your operations. Finding the right integrator for your needs will, without a doubt - save you money down the line!

The time may be right to save money and gain more control over your system. Most importantly, this kind of retrofit friendly product may just give your company the competitive edge it needs to grow in this tough economy.

***About the Author***

David Sellers has 10+ years experience in automated materials handling, most of which has been "on the factory floor" designing and implementing conveyor control systems. He is currently the Production Manager for Insight Automation; the proven leader in innovative control system solutions for materials handling applications. Dave can be reached by email at dsellers@insightautomation.cc or by phone at 1-800-764-6356  
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