

Buyer Beware



No one likes paying too much for anything. Everyone wants to get a better deal. That's why you shop around before buying a new car. That's why you look at sale advertisements before buying a new refrigerator or big screen tv. The bigger the purchase, the more you want to compare prices.

Fortunately, the Internet makes such comparison shopping fast and easy.

And the same is true for businesses operating in the industrial space. If anything, the pressure to find new suppliers is more intense for business purchasers than for individual shoppers. It's not always just about price, either. Often, it's about timing. Who can get me what I need and meet my deadline?

But there's danger out there, because nowadays anybody can sell anything, and even small-time players can appear to be big-shots online. And while you probably know enough not to buy a computer from *NefariousDude76@darkweb.net*, you may not even think twice about buying from his professional and convincing online storefront.

Industrial purchasers need to be even more vigilant. It's not just your credit card information you're protecting, but in some cases, people's lives. Much of the machinery we build could be quite dangerous if the components inside were substituted with inferior alternatives. Think automobiles, airplanes, wind turbines, or any type of equipment that requires an operator.

But even if you don't build equipment where there is a danger to people's lives, there's still a lot of money to be lost by selling equipment that doesn't meet its design specifications. Think recalls, lawsuits and angry customers.

Unfortunately, those components are out there, and you can find them online. In this issue's cover story, Senior Editor Jack McGuinn delves into the topic of counterfeit bearings to explore how big the problem is and what industrial purchasers can do to prevent fakes from ending up in their own products (page 20).

Just remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is, and you might want to have it checked out by an expert.

In addition to that important topic, we also have a great lineup of articles this issue, covering a wide variety of subjects and industries. Senior Editor Matt Jaster looks at the latest technologies in clutches and brakes, allowing machinery builders to increase reliability, decrease cost and improve their designs (page 28).

Associate Editor Alex Cannella's article about the electrification of vehicles (page 42) offers insight into the manufacturing end of the business, which is well into its plans for the shift to electric that's only just beginning to occur in the marketplace. Despite their small market share, electric vehicles are more than just hype and buzz. This is happening. Those who are interested in electric vehicles should also take a look at Matt Jaster's preview (page 46) of the upcoming CTI Symposium USA, which focuses on innovations in automotive transmissions, including electric and hybrid alternatives.

Also, this issue brings to a close our 12-part series, *Baldor Motor Basics*. I'd like to express our thanks to ABB for allowing us to reprint this material, which, over the past year and a half, has been a significant part of our educational effort, providing basic information on motors to our audience. Of course, all 12 parts of the series are available on our website. All you have to do to brush up is type "motor basics" in the search box.

As always, thanks for reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Stott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.