

For the Trenches

TIPS & NEWS FOR EQUIPMENT OWNERS AND OPERATORS

How to get the most from your Product Support Consultant (PSC)

Now what?

You know it only too well – real life starts when the rubber hits the road, or, in our case, when the bucket hits the dirt. It's then that you get to see what that machine can and will do for you.



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There are several ways for you to maintain your equipment at an optimum level of performance. What's one of the most important? Understanding the full extent of your dealer's commitment to the equipment they sell. Make sure that you take full advantage of the resources they have dedicated to supporting you, and you will be able to control and manage your cost of operation.

A key member of your team.

You already know your machine salesperson; he has worked with you before, he understands your challenges and is committed to helping you meet them. If you don't already, you also want to know your product support consultant (PSC). His official title may change from company to company, but his job doesn't – it's helping you, or the person in your company who's in charge of maintenance, to make your equipment run as profitably for you as possible.

The range of responsibilities that a PSC can handle for you can be just focused on a specific task such as measuring an undercarriage or helping to select the most appropriate replacement parts for a machine, or, it can expand to him taking the role of a virtual fleet co-manager, advising you in matters of machine performance enhancement. You choose. But before you do, read on. Because it takes a good PSC and a good customer to take full advantage of this key resource your equipment dealer has made available to you.

What's a "good" product support consultant?

- He's well prepared. He gets thorough, professional and ongoing training on all the machines and work tools his customers are operating, and he understands their wide range of applications, also.
- He's proactive. He doesn't wait to get a call; he visits his customers regularly to see their equipment in operation and to meet the maintenance people in action.
- He's dedicated. Being a product support consultant is his full time job, and he doesn't have to worry about

anything other than making sure his customers receive his full attention.

- He's well supported. At any time, he has a full team behind him, ready to help him answer questions and solve problems and he's connected with them with the latest wireless communication devices.
- He's well armed. He has at his disposal the tools and resources he needs to do his job for you.
- He's unbiased. He comes in with a fresh eye and is not hindered by an operator's attachment to "his" machine or by a personal opinion about it; his only concern is making sure that each machine is working at top performance.
- He brings to the table a lot of valuable experience regarding best practices. Your PSC works with customers big and small, across a wide range of applications, and can use his background to your advantage.

What's a "good" customer?

One who's ready to put his product support consultant to work lowering his equipment owning and operating costs!

It can be a busy contractor, taking on all challenges with a couple of machines, or the largest road-building company in the entire region, with its own in-house service and maintenance team. Fleet size is not important; what matters is understanding the long-term value brought by a parts and service rep, and the willingness to partner.

It's to your benefit.

Protecting your investment has always mattered and nowadays, it has become absolutely mandatory to do it



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as cost-effectively as possible. But when it comes to managing owning and operating costs, do you have the time to learn about all the available options, and to make sure you make the right maintenance and service decisions, for the right reasons – for your entire fleet?

You have many other jobs to do, and you or your people cannot always be on top of the latest advances in maintenance technology. Some examples are:

Rebuilds; including component, bucket, hydraulic pump and engine rebuilds. This is an outstanding and proven method for getting a second life from your equipment, and your product support consultant can explain to you how to take advantage of it.

Machine evaluations. A very cost-effective tool that can help you be prepared, and save you time and money.

Parts options. When it's time to order parts, trust your PSC to guide you across the many available options, choosing the one that makes the most sense based on your equipment's condition and age, your applications and your goals. For example, he can tell you how sometimes, as an alternative to getting new parts, it may be a good idea to get remanufactured parts from your dealer; they are backed by an as-new guarantee and they often cost up to 60% less than new parts. He can recommend classic parts for machines 15 years old and over or he can suggest used parts, backed by the dealer. And of course, he'll make sure that you know that the dealer can get parts for any machine in your fleet, no matter what brand, model or year.

Choices in work tools. The product support consultant can put his solid experience to work advising you on the best option; one that matches your application, and will result in much higher efficiency.

All that, and much more, is the responsibility of your product support consultant. And yes, they still measure your undercarriage, and that is definitely an area where a knowledgeable parts and services rep can save your company considerable money. How and why?

The undercarriage is the greatest area of ongoing cost during the life of an excavator or track-type tractor, and undercarriage management is complicated and can result in costly mistakes. A typical error is to overspend by replacing the entire undercarriage instead of focusing on the worn parts such as the rollers. A good product support consultant can perform the measurements and communicate with his shop, right then and there, getting you an estimate to do the job, or a quote to get you the right parts if you are going to do it in-house.

REDUCING WEAR AND TEAR WHILE INCREASING EFFICIENCY

A parts and service sales rep stopped in for a visit and found his customer ready to replace the base edge of a bucket from existing parts numbers. Yes, the bucket needed work, but a well-trained parts and service sales rep knows that before making a decision concerning a bucket, there are questions to be asked based on application, material being moved, and wear patterns. Was ordering exact replacement parts the best option?

A bucket basically moves material, and knowing exactly what material is being handled makes a big difference. This particular customer was using short, abrasion-resistant teeth to move soft clay. Not a good match, and what's worse, the machine had to work extra hard to compensate. The recommendation from the product support consultant? Switch to longer, penetration-type teeth. Because they dig better, the teeth allowed the excavator to load one more bucket every hour, with a lot less stress on the equipment. A real WIN/WIN.

What's that guy doing checking on my machine?

Now you know...that guy gets paid by your equipment dealer, but he works for you. Get to know your PSC, allow him to get to know your operation, your machines and your people, and get ready to see some savings. ■

Milton



This article is part of a series of articles designed to help equipment owners and operators lower owning and operating costs. Other article topics include:

Scheduled Oil Sampling • Parts Options • Financing • Certified Rebuilds • Inside Sales • CSAs (Customer Service Agreements) • Machine Automation • Safety • Machine Evaluations • Technology in the Field

All articles are available on our web site at www.miltoncat.com/articles

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