



Whitepaper

Service Contractors: Results Come Down to Training

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High-volume belt conveyor systems are among the most hazardous pieces of equipment in any bulk handling operation. Maintaining the delicate balance between production demands and efficiency can be a challenge for any internal maintenance team. To control labor costs and improve safety, operators often enter servicing agreements with outside contractors to perform routine maintenance or to retrofit new equipment during a shutdown.



Some contractors only address the effects of conveyor inefficiency, while others offer solutions to remedy the root causes of inefficiency. (Pictures: © 2024 Martin Engineering)

Although outside contractors may be experienced, they often lack the proper training and specific knowledge needed to offer adequate servicing and installation of modern equipment designs. Moreover, this gap in expertise might limit what recommendations to common problems they offer, causing them to default to antiquated equipment or debunked solutions. This is why it is so crucial

for contractors to have ongoing training that ensures they use modern techniques, install the latest equipment and operate to workplace safety best practices.

Modern Equipment & Techniques Training

As the global leader in belt conveyor accessories and material flow technology, Martin Engineering technicians are often invited to offer solutions to serious conveyor issues. For example, a common complaint from customers is that the belt cleaners currently installed on the belts are ineffective. The perception of the operator is that the product is defective or just plain “garbage”. Upon inspection, the technicians often find the equipment was simply, (1) not installed properly, (2) not adequately maintained (improper intervals, over-tensioned, etc.) and/or, (3) inappropriately specified to match the application requirements. All these issues can be addressed through proper training.



MSTs gather near a heavy-duty conveyor specifically set up for training purposes, ready to properly install new equipment.

That’s why Martin Engineering ensures its team of Martin Service Technicians (MSTs) are up to date on the latest techniques and bulk handling technologies by conducting regular, intensive weeklong 28-hour training sessions like the most recent one in the spring of 2024. MSTs who have been with the company for a few months to a few decades regularly receive refreshers on their existing knowledge and to learn about new products and practices.

From deep mines to large cement plants, the goal of the training is to ensure Martin’s customers experience maximum efficiency and productivity in their bulk handling systems and are provided with the highest standard of service that complies with safe workplace best practices at every step.

“As factory-trained MSTs, it’s not just our experience but also our knowledge that allows us to provide a solution for our customers,” said Blayne Anderton, Martin Service Technician. “For an expert contractor to come in and do the job professionally and safely is one less stress the customer needs to worry about.”

Considerations When Entering a Service Contract



Confined space entry requires specific training since it is one of the most dangerous activities in bulk handling.

A service contract can reduce labor costs and ensure conveyor systems run efficiently. This has proven to reduce unscheduled downtime, improve system safety and lower the cost of operation. To improve project outcomes for every visit, service technicians should:

1. Walk the Belt™ to identify safety issues and obstacles to system efficiency.
2. Carry the correct certifications to provide the service safely.
3. Have the training required to properly complete maintenance and installation tasks.
4. Observe workplace safety best practices for every project including lockout/tagout/tryout and assistance-required procedures.
5. Possess the knowledge and experience to identify/offer economical solutions.
6. Provide a Walk the Belt™ report with photos tracking the project and any recommendations.



Innovative equipment like the CleanScrape have redefined what belt cleaner installation and tensioning looks like.

Martin Engineering's MST training hours are not just in the classroom but also hands on, working with operational life-sized equipment specifically designed to simulate real world environments. The most recent training week featured product training (install and maintenance), safety training (confined space entry, energy isolation, manlift, first aid and CPR), and skills training (welding). With a focus on the details, MSTs were taught the most efficient methods of installing

Martin's newest products from the innovative CleanScrape® Primary Cleaner to the labor-saving Modular Transfer Point Kit.

"Martin is uniquely positioned because while we're on the site we're walking the belts and creating detailed reports with pictures," Jesse Beasley, Martin Service Technician, pointed out. "We offer ongoing knowledgeable support, not just installing our equipment and leaving."

Training Resources

Martin Engineering has long been recognized as having the most comprehensive onsite and on-line conveyor training programs in the world. The training textbooks, Foundations, The Practical Resource for Cleaner, Safer, More Productive Dust & Material Control and Foundations for Conveyor Safety, written by established industry experts, have become standard in several vocational programs with 22,000 copies currently in circulation worldwide.

The company also has the largest free online archive of training resources in the Foundations Learning Center presented by knowledgeable and engaging trainers. The Learning Center uses a mix of text, graphics, videos, webinars, online events, and live experts available to answer questions. These free resources have democratized conveyor safety training globally, allowing for refreshers amongst both internal staff and contractors if questions about conveyor maintenance arise.



Retrofitted installation by a professional who is familiar with the new equipment has the fastest and best result.

Managing Risk for Better Production

Operation managers and safety managers alike are encouraged to go over reports created by MSTs and consider their recommendations. The internal Martin Engineering training program has ensured that suggestions offered in Walk the Belt reports are informed observations that can help improve production and safety, as well as forecast any issues that might result in unscheduled downtime

or equipment damage. This allows operators to plan future improvements and better control costs.

“Our service technicians are basically the face of Martin; they’re the front line,” concluded Mike Moody, Business Development Manager for Martin Engineering. “Our MSTs are factory-trained service professionals who are fully aware of everything that needs to be looked at to make sure systems are safe and working best for our customers.”