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TO: BILL WOLPIN
Editorial Director
Waste Age

FROM: RICK TALBOT
Marketing & Sales
Vulcan On-Board Scales

SUBJECT: SCALE QUESTIONS

What should a buyer know about his operation/needs before purchasing your type of product?

For on-board scales, one needs to know their objectives for the system. What weights are required? (GVW, payload, axle or pick-up weights?) What accuracy is required to be effective? How capable are your drivers and maintenance personnel? (In other words, how simple or complex a product can the organization handle?) Finally, it is important to determine if the organization is committed to take advantage and utilize the system.

What are some of the factors to take into consideration when purchasing your type of product?

Buying an on-board scale is a financial decision that needs to be evaluated from a ROI basis. The least expensive is not always the best decision. Evaluate the cost/benefit of scales versus no scales for your particular application. Always check the customer references, the manufacturer, the reliability of the product and the local support provided. For those making a significant investment in on-board scales, I highly recommend a visit to your potential supplier to determine their capability to provide quality product and support on a long-term basis.

Describe some of the simple things that are overlooked when planning the use of your type of product in a solid waste operation?

Most on-board scales are relatively simple, but require the support of drivers, maintenance, operations and management. Everyone must understand and support what is required of them. Some more complex scales, like those measuring pick-up weights, may require some type of data collection and management system to be most effective.

How are your types of products being used to better manage solid waste operations?

There are on-board scales for every aspect of the solid waste industry that require weight information. There are low cost on-board air suspension and axle scales to monitor GVW and axle weights. There are body scales that will also measure payload and pick-up weights. And there are front fork scales for front end loader pick-up weights. All vehicles can be scaled including residential packers, commercial packers, roll-offs, hooklifts, container carriers, and transfer vehicles.

What is driving the use of your product (regulations/enforcement, competition, demand for increased profitability, newer factors in the solid waste industry)?

Historically, the two primary factors for installing on-board scales have been to maintain legal weights and the need to increase profitability. The benefits of maintaining legal weights are to reduce or eliminate overweight fines and liability exposure. Ways to increase profitability are more varied, but can have tremendous benefits. Some include measuring commercial pick-up weights to establish more effective pricing; measuring roll-off containers to select the most cost-effective transfer station and to immediately order another container if overweight; and the maximization of transfer vehicle weights to minimize the number of loads transported.

How is your type of product primarily used today in the solid waste industry?
(Answered by the previous question)

What are the newer applications for your type of product in the solid waste industry?

Although overweight enforcement was the first application in the waste industry, the newer applications have been more involved with the measurement of individual pick-up weights and the optimization of payload weights. I foresee significant growth in demand for measuring commercial pick-up weights and container weights for roll-off's and hooklifts. I also think with longer distances to landfills, that the need to optimize transfer vehicle weights by using on-board scales will grow.

Are GPS or GIS systems increasingly being used in the solid waste industry, and if so, how?

We see more and more waste companies interested in integrating GPS technology into their fleets, especially the mid to larger sized fleets. In addition to vehicle location, these systems provide users of on-board scales an easy method to match customers to bin weights and to transfer customer information, like pick-up weights, to the office.

How have your product(s) been integrated into the newer, more sophisticated trucks and/or waste handling facilities?

Historically, on-board scales have been standalone products. However, we are now integrating with on-board computer/GPS systems and the leading providers of routing and billing software products. This allows weight information to be included with other customer or truck information and available to operations personnel on the system.

How will your type of product continue to develop technologically and/or in their use in the solid waste industry?

Integration of on-board scales and on-board information systems will continue to evolve to the point where a scale will be simply another sensor on the network that can be displayed on a single monitor in the cab of the truck. It is difficult to say when this complete integration will occur, but Vulcan is developing the capabilities of working with these information technology companies. This will also reduce the ownership cost of on-board scales to the point that almost all vehicles will incorporate weighing technology.