Rental Opportunities with Concrete Contractors

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When ride-on trowels were introduced to the industry in 1988, a 23 horsepower engine was considered awesome. Today, a 3000 pound, 12 foot wide, ride-on trowel can be outfitted with an 87 horsepower turbo diesel. The evolution of the concrete working industry started with contractors doing everything manually to the growth of machinery that do all of the work. New products continue to become available that make the job easier and improve the quality of concrete floors, parking lots, bridges and roads.

This evolution comes with an opportunity for rental companies to profit by offering equipment solutions for their customers. Labour saving machines There are several different products to work with concrete on the market. The first thing that happens when concrete comes out of a ready-mix truck is the establishment of finished grade and the concrete is then screeded or struck off. A wide variety of screeding machines are available for striking off concrete surfaces. They include vibrating truss screeds, laser screeds, roller screeds, hand-held floating screeds and concrete paving machines for roads and bridges. Some contractors still screed by hand, using a magnesium straight-edge or a wooden 2 x 4. This presents an opportunity for the rental operator to rent or sell these labour saving machines. Floating screeds are very appropriate for rental fleets.

A Magic Screed, for example, is very light and has enough blade surface area that actually allows it to float in wet concrete. It eliminates the need for workers to bend over and screed concrete by hand. Contractors who do large industrial and commercial work, as well as residential contractors, use this inexpensive tool. The machine vibrates as it strikes off the concrete and it brings cement paste to the surface, making the subsequent finishing operations much easier. Blade lengths are available from four to 16 feet. The most popular sizes come in 10 and 12 foot lengths. The rental rates on a Magic Screed will usually allow the rental house to recoup its investment in less than 10 daily rentals. Innovations continue. Walk-behind power trowels have been around for almost 50 years and are usually found in any rental house that caters to the construction industry. They really have not changed much in that time. An air-cooled gasoline engine drives a rotor system with attached blades that float and finish the concrete. Add an operating handle and a safety guard ring, and you have a walk-behind trowel.A recent innovation that uses a rotating guard ring allows the operator to roll the machine along a wall. This eliminates the need for a finisher to get down on his

knees to float and finish the area close to the wall. One of these machines can accomplish in five minutes what it usually takes a finisher 30 minutes to do by hand. This concept is also available in a ride-on version. If you are buying power trowels for your rental fleet, you might consider adding machines that have this feature. They are available in 30 inch and 36 inch diameters. The ride-on model is a double 36 inch. When ride-on trowels were introduced to the industry in 1988, a 23 horsepower engine was considered awesome. Allen Engineering, for example, is now putting an 87 horsepower turbo diesel on a 3000 pound ride-on trowel that is 12 feet wide.

Left Photo: Floating screeds are very appropriate for rental fleets. A Magic Screed, for example, is very light and has enough blade surface area that actually allows it to float in wet concrete.

Right Photo: When ride-on trowels were introduced to the industry in 1988, a 23 horsepower engine was considered awesome. Today, a 3000 pound, 12 foot wide, ride-on trowel can be outfitted with an 87 horsepower turbo diesel.

CONCRETE WORKING EQUIPMENT

Consumables go with the rental

Every major flooring contractor is using ride-on trowels and occasionally they are going to need to rent machines. This opens a door of opportunity for rental operators who want to focus on a specialty market. The sale of consumable products such as trowel blades and float pans go along with the rental of these machines, further adding to its profit potential. Machines or tools that are used in or near wet concrete should be coated with oil or a special release agent that will prevent concrete from sticking to metallic and plastic surfaces. It also makes cleaning the machines easier after the concrete has hardened. The contractors who rent these machines should be told about your policy with regards to proper cleaning. Concrete screeding and finishing machines are lucrative rental items and usually have a high return on investment (ROI). If your rental company is acquiring a line of concrete working equipment, asking for feedback from your customers who do concrete work will give you an idea of what products you should have available for rent.

- Tom Leyes

Tom Leyes is the regional sales manager in eastern Canada for Floating screeds are very appropriate for rental fleets. A Magic Screed, for example, Allen Engineering Corporation.

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