

'Remanufacturing is a Superior Choice'

Save Money, Save the Environment with Remanufactured Cartridges

What is remanufacturing? It's reusing and refilling ink and toner printer cartridges so they can be used again. Used cartridges are collected from consumers and businesses, and sorted by remanufacturers. The cartridges are disassembled and cleaned, and any necessary replacement parts are added. High-quality toner or ink is added, and the cartridges are tested and packaged for distribution.

Remanufactured cartridges contain high-quality components, and give excellent printing results. More than 3 million companies around the world already rely on these quality products for their printing needs. They trust the quality and reliability of remanufactured cartridges for their day-to-day printing needs as well as for their most important projects.

Remanufacturing and the Environment

Every year, more than 300 million plastic printer cartridges end up dumped in landfills in the United States and around the world — almost eight cartridges are thrown away in the United States every second, industry sources say. While we can never completely stop the cycle of cartridges entering the waste stream, we can at least stem the flow.

According to Lyra Research, in 2002 almost one billion toner and inkjet cartridges will be shipped worldwide, and only 13 percent of those will be third-party cartridges, many of which are remanufactured.

Remanufacturing matters. Every cartridge that we remanufacture is one fewer going directly to the landfill. For every remanufactured cartridge purchased, it's one less new cartridge that needs to be produced, saving it from entering the waste stream and from draining the planet's natural resources.

In fact, many printer cartridges end up dumped in places you'd never expect — in rural areas of Asia, where they often



end up dumped in rivers or stacked along roads, according to a recent report by environmental groups.

Save Money and Get Quality

Of course, many companies want to be environmentally sensitive, but the main reason companies use remanufactured cartridges is to save money. Most remanufactured cartridges are 40 to 60 percent cheaper than the original equipment manufacturers' (OEM) cartridges, with comparable quality and reliability. In fact, many remanufactured car-


tridges last longer, as they often have up to 20 percent more toner than OEM cartridges.

In short, printer cartridges don't need to be so expensive. In order to protect their profit margins, the OEMs often claim that non-OEM cartridges might damage your printer. No manufacturer (or remanufacturer) can guarantee that a cartridge will never fail, but there is little chance that a toner or ink cartridge could ever affect the functionality of a printer or fax machine. Plus, many remanufacturers offer guarantees, promising to repair any possible related damage; due to the excellent quality of remanufactured products, this is an offer they almost never have to make good on.

Customers Deserve a Choice

The way many OEMs design their cartridges discourages reuse and remanufacturing. It would benefit both the environment and consumers for the cartridges to be designed so that they can be reused more easily. No car manufacturer would be allowed to require consumers to buy its own brand of gasoline. Consumers deserve a choice, and third-party suppliers and remanufacturers provide that option.

Plus, many remanufacturers are small businesses, employing workers from the local communities. There are more than 500,000 people employed by remanufacturers in the United States.



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Environmentally Friendly

The reason that many remanufacturers got into the business is to help the environment. Reducing the number of cartridges that take up the limited landfill spaces is good, and remanufacturing saves natural resources, as well. The plastic in each toner cartridge takes three and a half quarts of oil to produce, and each new inkjet cartridge requires two and a half ounces of oil. Last year approximately two million cartridges were remanufactured, saving more than three million gallons of oil. Half a gallon of oil is conserved for each laser cartridge that is returned for remanufacturing, industry sources say.

Saves Energy

Also, reusing cartridges saves energy. It uses significantly less energy to remanufacture a cartridge than to produce a new one, saving energy and the natural resources used to produce power. Remanufacturing industries (of all types of products) save as much energy each year as is produced by five nuclear plants. Plus, remanufacturing reduces greenhouse gases, which contribute to climate change, the U.S. Department of Energy said.

It even takes less energy to remanufacture products than it would to recycle them. Why? Recycling converts the material back into raw material, which is used to manufacture an original product, while remanufacturing captures a large percentage of the resources from the original product, including the added value of the labor, energy and capital.

The average toner cartridge weighs 3-1/2 to 4 pounds, which means that the total weight of cartridges thrown away each year is equivalent to 67,612 Ford Explorers or 112,463 Volkswagon Beetles.

Reduces Waste

Plus, that's more than 3 pounds of plastics, the main material in most cartridges. Unfortunately, it's plastic that's not very recyclable, and in the landfill will take more than 100 years to biodegrade.

Many consumers are familiar with the number system used to indicate recyclability of plastics. These numbers range from one, the most recyclable, to seven, the most difficult to recycle. On many products, including shampoo and water bottles, the number is stamped into the plastic on the bottom of the bottle.

PET plastic bottles, such as two-liter soda bottles, are fairly easy to recycle, and are given a rating of one. Most laser cartridges are rated a seven because they contain mixed resin plastics; estimates indicate that only 5 to 10 percent of the plastics in this category are recycled. In addition, the toner residue can seldom be completely separated from the cartridge's plastic, contaminating the plastic and making the cartridges even less likely to be recycled.

A Better Choice

That's where remanufacturing comes in. Remanufacturing is the best way to save products from the landfill.

“Although recycling of toner cartridges does have a number of benefits, remanufacturing is a superior choice, both environmentally and economically. In most cases, recycling of plastics has not proven to be economically viable,” said a report facilitated by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Industrial Technologies.

“Toner cartridges are particularly difficult to recycle because they are composed of several different types of plastics and must be completely dismantled and sorted. In addition, the cartridges are dirty, dusted with toner and contain non-plastic parts, which require disposal,” the report said.

“Remanufacturing, on the other hand, calls for cartridges to be cleaned, inspected and refilled, reusing the majority of the original plastic parts. For every cartridge that is remanufactured, over a pound of plastics is withheld from the waste stream.”

‘Think About Environmental Impacts’

The Sierra Club, a well-known environmental group, advocates “Sustainable Consumption,” maintaining a level of natural resource use and consumerism that can be maintained by the resources available. In an October 2000 report, the Sierra Club's Consumption task force encourages people to “think about the environmental impacts of their consumption choices” and to “make thoughtful choices as consumers.”

Choosing remanufactured products is one way to reduce the environmental impact of printer cartridges, while getting a high-quality product and saving you and your business money.