

THE **True** Costs

of Spray Booth Installation

Unlike a frame machine or compressor, a booth purchase is a construction project, and your supplier should prepare you for this reality.

Are you thinking of putting in a new spray booth? Are you trying to put together a budget for it? Perhaps you are thinking of borrowing or financing, like you do with everything else. You put together some well thought out numbers, secure the financing, and purchase the booth.

Wait a minute. Is installation included in your budget numbers? The guy told you the price was for "installed," and there is a line in the estimate for "Installation." Sounds like you are good to go. Secure the financing, sign the contract, and buy the booth. This is great! Now all you

have to do is wait till it arrives and turn the key, right?

The booth arrives, and it's in huge, heavy crates. You don't have a loading dock, and you don't have a forklift. How are you going to get it off the truck? It looks like you will have to rent a forklift. It's no big deal, just a few

Costs

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Photo: Jim MacDonald

hundred dollars. No budget is perfect.

Now you've got it unloaded, and the installation crew arrives. Terrific! Just another week or two, and you can start painting cars, right? Wait a minute. Who is that guy who just pulled up in a city vehicle? Permits? What permits? The installation crew will know about that, right? The crew chief points out that the purchase agreement says, "Permits not included." Wish they had made that a little clearer. It means a trip down to city hall to pick up a permit, which is no big deal, really.

When you get to city hall, they tell you the permit is only a few hundred dollars. Again, no big deal. But as you review the application, you see it calls for drawings, third party listings, engineer's stamps, performance data, and fire suppression. Wait a minute! This is becoming a very big deal, and the "few hundred dollars" is now into the thousands!

When you get back to the site, the installation crew has got your booth up. Finally some good news! You go to talk to them and discover they are gone. They have left you an invoice

for "Installation." But what about the utilities? The roof openings? The duct work? You have already picked up the tab for the forklift and the permits. Now this. What the heck did you get when you paid for installation?

The Responsible Thing To Do

In the 25 years we have been involved with spray booths in Canada, what do you think has changed the most? Downdraft? Paint and cure? Waterborne paint? Not even close. The biggest change has been in the costs of legal booth installation.



Got a forklift? If not, you'll need to factor in a rental. There are literally dozens of cost-associated items and tasks to account for when preparing your budget.

Our industry has grown up, and along with that come responsibilities other businesses have accepted for years. Your new booth will have an impact on health and safety, the environment, fire hazards, etc., and all of these issues must be looked after.

How do you know what you are getting when you pay for installation? The answer is very simple—Ask!

The following is a checklist of cost-associated items that you may or may not be aware of when budgeting for a new booth. Many of you might look

after yourself, but do not sell yourself short—your time is worth money!

When we sell a paint booth, our company supplies a checklist covering all the steps that need to be taken. In most cases, we supply a dollar value for each task. In no way does this mean you have to purchase each item from us; we are simply trying to make you aware that each of these items must be taken care of and what it might cost you.

Things To Consider When Preparing Your Budget

- **Permits (provincial, municipal, and local)**—Remember that the permit application fee is not the full cost here. Is performance data readily available? Are stamped drawings available, and if so, at what additional cost? Is the piece of equipment third party listed? (ETLC is the most recognized third party certification in Canada. It must be labelled ETLC to be recognized by Canadian authorities; ETL without the "c" is not.)

- **Roof/Wall Openings**—Who is responsible for these? Who is supplying the curbs/flashings? Be wary of roof warranties—if you or your booth installer cuts the roof, are you compromising any existing warranty on the roof? We strongly recommend the original roofer (if he is still around) be contacted for this task.

- **Sprinkler/Fire Suppression**—National Fire Protection Association standards (NFPA 33) clearly state that "automatic

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fire suppression" is required in a spray booth; however, each local jurisdiction has final authority in this area.

• **Unloading**—Who is going to take the heavy crates off the truck? Is a forklift handy? Who is going to pick up these costs?

• **Rental Equipment for the Job Site**—A variety of special tools may be required, including forklifts, skyjacks (for high ceilings and for hanging prep station decks), and cranes (for rooftop air makeups and rooftop ductwork).

• **Pit Excavation**—Who is going to cut the floor, form the pit, and pour the cement? Do the pit plans need to be included with your permit applications? Who will supply and who will stamp the pit drawings?

• **Floor Finish**—Are you using epoxy, tile, or simple sealing? Who is looking after this?

• **Building Engineering**—Does the installation of the booth compromise any part of your building? Are you moving walls or cutting holes in structural supports?

• **Roof Reinforcement**—When cutting holes for roof openings, you may be weakening the integrity of the roof. Is support required? Who will engineer the support?

• **Mechanical Erection of Booth**—This is what is typically included under "Installation" on your booth quote. This is simply putting up the cabin and

running the ductwork to roof openings.

• **Mechanical Erection of Ducts**—Is ductwork included in the installation? What about possible offsets? We have run into some cases where the customer has purchased a booth and the quote did not include ducts (intake or exhaust).

• **Fuel Source**—Most spray booth burners are 1 million BTU or more. Is your gas supply adequate? How far away is the source? If it is a long run, you may have to have a welder in to weld joints. This is often a very unpleasant surprise when you have already passed the point of no return. Check the equipment specs carefully!

• **Power Source**—Do you have adequate power? Do you have three-phase or single-phase power? Check the specs!

• **Air Source**—Air is required for the dampers and for the spray gun. Is your booth installer running air into your booth? Is he including a regulator?

• **Fuel Hookup**—All booths have 500,000-BTU burners. To hook these up requires Gas Fitter I certification. Does your booth installer or gasman carry this certification? Is the booth installer connecting the gas, or is that your responsibility?

• **Power Hookup**—Is the booth installer doing this, or is it your responsibility?

• **Electrical & Pneumatic Controls**—We have found customers who have

purchased booths for which the controls were not included. Thankfully this is not the norm, but you *must* check.

• **Supply Air Line Solenoid**—This is required by all authorities. Who is supplying it? Who is installing it?

• **Burner/Booth Connecting Duct**—Who is supplying it? Who is installing it?


• **Tubes for Light Fixtures**—Who is supplying them? Who is installing them?

• **System Start-up**—Third party-approved booths require a "factory start-up." Is this included in your purchase price? If the supplier claims third party certification, the supplier should be including this service in the installation or selling this service to you, in order to satisfy the listing authority.

• **Disposal of Waste & Leftovers**—Is the supplier going to clean up the crates and leftovers? Is the booth supplier going to look after waste removal?

• **Out of Town Expenses**—Are these required, and if so, are they included in your purchase price?

Our experience has been that *every* job adds another "bullet" to our list! For instance, be wary of third party certifications. (CSA recently put out a bulletin warning that booths and prep stations sold and installed by a certain Canadian company were bearing invalid CSA marks.) Look for the "c" on the ETL listings, and ensure you have the certification you require to use your new booth!

The purpose of this article is not to scare you, just to properly prepare you. Unlike a frame machine or compressor, a booth purchase is a construction project, and your supplier should prepare you for this reality. Anything less is dangerous and leaves you with all kinds of potential liabilities. I hope this information saves you money and helps you avoid getting stuck with substantial additional costs you had absolutely no idea were coming. 

By Jim Macdonald

Jim became North American Service Manager for DeVilbiss when they created separate Spray Booth Divisions in the late 1980s. He went on to become Canadian Sales Manager for DeVilbiss Spray Booth Products, which became Team Blowtherm in 1997. He spent four years with Team Blowtherm and joined Ontario Spray Booth as partner/sales manager in 2002, where he has been ever since.



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