



## The safe way to import used equipment

In his book “The World Is Flat” the American author Thomas L. Friedman describes the big changes caused by globalization and the visibility of things through the Internet. The world is flat means to him: Everyone can see everything and everywhere. The new technologies make it possible to access all information at any place in the world at any time.

Becomes the world really flat and is all information accessible for everyone at any time? The answer is Yes and No. Buyers and users of used machinery or trucks may have already experienced it. One can find various databases where used equipment is listed for sale. The age, the working hours, the mileage and the features of a truck or crane are available. The supplier gives a description of the goods and has in often listed a sales price. That is the flat part of our new world.

At the point when going deeper in a specific equipment offer it will sooner or later come to the bumpy part of the world. On one hand all information is available through the Internet. On the other hand, there is very limited control what content is added to the World Wide Web.

Of course there is a good chance to find quality equipment for reasonable price. A few machinery websites such as Machinerytrader or Machineryzone check the suppliers before they can list any machine or truck. But apart from these there is big gray area. Many listings in machinery websites are far away from being true. Many listed equipment does not exist, many machines are not in the location that is listed and others have a very optimistic description of condition.

However, if one intends to purchase secondhand machines and the local suppliers have not the right piece? Buying new is certainly too expensive. Traveling thousands of miles to see a single machine or two is not reasonable. How can you are on the safe side when importing goods?

First of all it is recommended to have a clear idea what machine or truck is needed. What is the correct size and weight; what features are essentially? Second important point is: Where is the next available store for spare parts and service? Many standard parts are available aftermarket, the so-called non-OEM parts. But for specific spare parts it will be required to go to OEM supplier (Original Equipment Manufacturer). When the machine has problems with the hydraulic system adjustments or with an electronic component it will be necessary to call a service provider that knows the machine very well and is equipped with the necessary tools for checking and adjusting these components.

Once there is a clear idea about the kind and size of equipment for the work purpose the budget needs to be determined. Probably it is required to talk to a bank for financing the item. If that point is solved searching for machines or trucks can be started. But where looking for them? The author has listed a selection of websites for used equipment at [www.used-equipment.de](http://www.used-equipment.de). There are other sources, but from our experience the listed sites have a higher probability to have added only existing equipment.

Now it is time to get in direct contact with the supplier. Ask him for all equipment details, related components such as shovels or excavator buckets. Ask for necessary repairs and when the last service was done. The seller should be asked to send you a legible picture of the serial number plate. For a machine that he owns he will not hesitate to send it straight away.

Be carefully if a deal appears to be very good. The world is flat means: everyone can compare prices. If a machine is offered 20% below the usual market price or even cheaper there is probably something wrong. Avoid getting involved in trading with stolen equipment.

What would be the best way to verify the quality of machinery? How can you gain information about the reliability and reputation of a supplier? It would be maybe a high effort to send your own technician to Europe, to China or to the Emirates for checking a machine. Apart from the fact that you would need a visa in many cases it would be time-consuming and flying is even with budget-flights not even cheap.

It would be more reasonable hiring a mechanic of a local workshop from a dealer of your preferred brand. And, a Putzmeister or Sanny technician should be able to check any concrete pump. A Komatsu or Hitachi technician should be able to check any excavator or wheel loader.

But the better way is probably using a service provider that is specialized in used machinery inspections. Some companies around the world provide such service. In our experience the cost for a single machine inspection is somewhere between 600-1.000 USD. If the machine is in a remote area the cost might be higher. With an inspection report in your hand you will be able to discuss with the machine supplier a price discount or repairs. Often the negotiated amount will extend the cost of the inspection. In the worst case, if machine is in bad condition you will probably not buy it. But the amount you paid to the inspectors will protect you in that case from importing equipment with extended follow-up cost.

My answer to Thomas L. Friedman is: Yes, the world is flat. But it is not flat enough to trust all information you can find at the internet. You still should be carefully and vigilant.

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