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# The Future of Truckmounts

*Everyone wants to know the future. For truckmounts, it's looking good.*

By Jon Ondo

It can be very difficult to predict product and product line trends.

For instance, once the main-frame computer was developed, Thomas Watson, then chairman of IBM, predicted there would only be a "world market of maybe five computers."

Possibly even more startling, once the wireless music box was introduced, known today as the radio, David Sarnoff, head of RCA, said they had "no imaginable market value."

Little did these top business leaders know the tremendous future these products would have and how they would evolve.

When it comes to the future of truckmounts, there is less confusion.

For one thing, truckmount systems are not an unknown; they have already proven their value to the carpet cleaning industry. However, they are changing and evolving.

## The meaning of 'cost effective'

The term "cost effective" is tossed around so much in our industry that it has almost lost its meaning.

However, carpet cleaning business owners can expect more cost-effective machines in the years to come.

The term refers to more than the sticker price. Instead, it means truckmounts that have a reduced overall cost of ownership, are more powerful for their size and are more efficient than equipment introduced just a few years ago. In other words, these machines will offer more "bang for the buck."

How will this be accomplished?

Instead of building and designing each new truckmount system from scratch, truckmount manufacturers will likely follow the lead of auto manufacturers and design two or more machines based on the same basic frame that can

use similar or compatible components. This will help reduce design, engineering and production costs, which is a savings that can be passed on to the buyer. Further, commonality in parts and mechanicals means reduced costs for service and parts.

Future truckmounts are also likely to be much simpler to operate than the systems available today. Simpler machines minimize operating errors and training requirements, which also reduce the overall cost of ownership.

## Environmentally responsible

Along with being more cost effective, we can expect truckmounts to become more environmentally responsible.

First, they will probably become quieter, with the goal being to reduce sound levels considerably.

For more conventional "slide-in," self-powered

truckmounts, new noise-deadening technologies can make their operation quieter. This may open up opportunities for those cleaning professionals who have had to turn away off-hour carpet cleaning jobs due to the disruptive noise levels of their machinery.

More water-conservation measures are also in the works for future truckmounts. For instance, most machines currently dump hot water at some point to control water temperature. Some models use innovative ways of controlling water temperature, such as diverting hot exhaust gases around the heat exchangers, so that water is used more responsibly. This is a trend we can expect to grow in years to come.

Innovations like these not only save water, but they also save the owner time and money. This is because if fresh water is carried, it will last longer while the recovery tank fills more slowly, allowing more time on the job and more jobs per day.

“A hybrid truckmount system is likely to hit the market.”

### KEYWORD restoration

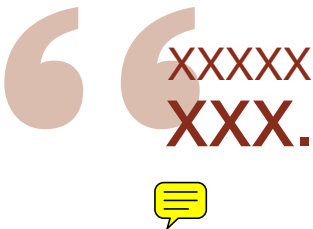
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Another environmental change already in progress relates to the exhaust emissions put out by truckmounts. Historically, truckmounts did not have to comply with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and California Air Resources Board (CARB) standards.

However, many truckmount systems have recently been designed or modified to meet the terms of current environmental regulations and this will impact more truckmount systems in the future.



For example, some current truckmounts use catalytic converters to help control emissions, which is likely to become a widespread requirement in the future.

In addition, we can expect truckmount manufacturers to develop machines that are more fuel efficient. Already, some newer slide-in systems use approximately one gallon of fuel per hour — down from 1.5 gallons or more in the past.

There is also a trend toward the use of electronic fuel-injection systems and electronic throttle controls in truckmount systems. The benefits of these features are that fuel is used more efficiently and the engine is precisely run at the optimal revolutions per minute (RPM).

Similarly, a hybrid truckmount system is likely to hit the market in years to come.

### The chemistry

When discussing more environmentally responsible truckmounts, we must also mention the chemicals used with these machines of the future.

Although the chemicals may not directly affect the design of future truckmounts, they will have a major impact on how technicians will clean carpet, upholstery and just about anything else.

Spotters, solvents, deodorizers, rinses and many other chemicals used in carpet and upholstery cleaning will increasingly become “green.”

In some commercial settings, using environmentally preferable chemicals may become a job requirement. Most truckmount manufacturers are aware of this and are designing their future machines with green cleaning in mind.

### Other changes

The future may bring some other changes for truckmounts as well,

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although these may not apply to all manufacturers.

For example, “instant heat” functions, which use advanced, multistage heat exchangers, will make use of diverter controls, allowing technicians to fine-tune the equipment’s heat settings. Such systems allow temperatures to be lowered for delicate fabrics, such as found often with upholstery, and increased for heavily soiled carpet.

More multi-purpose, multi-surface machines are also likely to appear on the market. As a result of the recession, many technicians have begun looking for ways to expand their service offerings and develop new revenue streams.

Hard-surface floor care and pressure washing are proving to be two lucrative possibilities. Although both truckmount and portable extractors are already available for hard-surface floor care, this segment of the business is expected to grow and become more commonplace in years to come.



*The future of truckmounts means more productivity with more savings, without compromising performance, such as with heat. Courtesy Richard Baldwin of Expert Carpet Care.*

Finally, more truckmount manufacturers are likely to begin to take an overall “systems” approach to designing the tools and attachments they develop for their equipment. This means that each part of the system — the truck-

mount, the wand, hand tools and so forth — will be designed to deliver the extractor’s maximum heat and vacuum capabilities while still being light and comfortable to handle.

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