

RBC SERVICES UPDATE

RBC Services
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MOST OF YOU THINK YOU'RE JUST LUCKY

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Throughout the world, there are approximately 1,500 plants operating over 9,000 RBCs. More than half of those plants operate fewer than 5 RBCs. Plant sizes range from 1 RBC to 150 RBCs.

Visiting about half the plants out there, I've spoken with many operators who thought they were just lucky not to have had any RBC failures. The fact is, the vast majority of shafts have operated without problems – some for as long as 30 years!

We have recorded, and maintain statistics of various types of shaft performance over the past 30 years. In the 1970s, there was a design of RBC which experienced a number of shaft failures. However, the failures were a result of outside fabrication problems and *not* design.

Once the fabrication problems were identified, test results proved that one specific shaft manufacturer was superior. That type shaft has been used in that RBC design since 1978 to the present day. And, it enjoys an operating success rate of over 99%.

Other manufacturers of RBCs experienced relatively few problems - only in cases where there was physical overloading of biomass for many years - which is understandable. Overloads of one sort or another are the major cause of problems to any unit process.

RBC Manufacturers explained the importance of biomass control and the ability to weigh equipment as a way to keep biomass weight down and help predict a possible problem. They said it was a critical aspect of successful RBC process and operations. The problem was, this stuff wasn't included with the original RBC equipment.

Sure, all this stuff was available, but it was extra. I never understood why something so important was not included with the package. It's like buying a nice, comfortable car and then being asked, "Oh, you want brakes and a way to steer the car? OK, but that's extra." Thanks a lot!

I must acknowledge those locations which have experienced problems with their RBCs. At those plants, inspections were performed and recommendations were made for corrections. As they say however, you can lead a horse to water...

We make it a point to contact every RBC operator in our base at least once a year to get an update on the status of their operations. The overwhelming opinion is that the RBC process does a great job handling and treating daily loads, peak loads and even slug loads of one sort or another.

So, if you've had no major problems, it's not that you're just lucky - it's actually a lot more normal than you think. The RBC process has done very well over the last 30 years and will continue to do so. In some cases, new RBCs are being offered with a 10 year warranty! Now that's confidence.

To get the longest life possible from your current equipment, proper RBC aeration and load cells are still the most practical and economical way to provide protection against premature problems. It's the best way to go long. And as always, if you ever have any questions regarding your RBC operations, give me a call. No other company can match our experience. We're here to serve you.