



JASPER Engines & Transmissions— There When You Need Them

by Steve Bodofsky

Want to cause a real ruckus? Try wandering into a Mac convention and say: "Why don't we all switch to Windows? It's just as good as the Mac operating system, and a lot cheaper." You'll be lucky to get out the door with your life.

Or even better, you could walk into a room full of transmission rebuilders and shop owners and say, "Remans are one of the best things to happen to this industry; I think we should all start selling them." Your chances of getting out in one piece are even worse: Those guys know how to use tools!

But the fact remains that remanufactured transmissions are an integral part of our industry. And a lot of transmission shops have begun to recognize that they can be a valuable asset, if they take proper advantage of them.

"About 20% of today's transmission shops use remans as a regular part of their business," says Zach Bawel, vice president of sales for Jasper Engines and Transmissions. "Another 60% use them occasionally, such as when they're dealing with a unit that's completely destroyed, or one they can't get parts for." And those percentages are on the rise.

Not much wonder: There are dozens of reason why a transmission shop might want to rely on an outside source for rebuilt transmissions. Just the sheer number of different units out there makes remans a viable solution for certain transmissions. "No one can be an expert on every transmission these days," says Zach. "Jasper remans are a great way to handle a transmission you don't see very often, and aren't as

familiar with."

In fact, there are several other reasons why a transmission repair shop might want to consider using a reman. For example:

- Your rebuilder is away on vacation, and you have to get a job out the door.
- Your rebuilder just quit, and you haven't had time to replace him yet.



Transmissions are remanufactured in a "POD" or cellular environment where Jasper builders specialize in a transmission family.



The bell housing of a rear wheel drive Ford is align-bored on a CNC machine to be sure they are in perfect alignment with the crankshaft.



Every automatic transmission is live-run dynamometer tested to simulate in-the-vehicle operation in order to assure trouble free performance.

- You suddenly had a burst of transmission jobs come in, and you can't get them all rebuilt yourself in a timely manner.
- You're faced with a unit that you never seem to be able to rebuild without having problems.
- You can't get the parts you need to be able to deliver the car on schedule.
- The transmission is completely burned up inside, taking the rebuild costs above where it becomes cost effective to repair.
- The customer is from out of the area, and would like the additional security of having his transmission covered by the Jasper warranty.

All great reasons to call for a reman transmission. And with Jasper's easy ordering system, exceptional quality, competitive pricing, rapid delivery, and unmatched warranty coverage, it's no wonder so many transmission shops choose Jasper when it's time to call for a reman.

"Shops need to stop thinking of themselves as rebuilders, and start thinking of themselves as businesses," says Zach. "They need to find better ways to become more profitable within the constraints of their current facilities. This is where Jasper can be a terrific resource."

"It's unrealistic to think that a single rebuilder can handle every type of

transmission on the road today; there are just too many different transmissions in service. Our rebuilders only work on one family of transmissions. This enables them to specialize, which we believe allows us to provide a better product."

A Bit About Jasper

Jasper's home office is located in Jasper, IN (they're named after the town; not the other way around). They're the largest aftermarket supplier of remanufactured automatic transmissions in the world.

Jasper has 40 regional sales and distribution centers around the country. Those regional centers are serviced by two main distribution centers in Crawford County, IN, in the east, and Kingman, AZ, for the western region. 60% of Jasper's transmission inventory is kept at these main distribution centers; the rest, consisting of the hottest numbers, is scattered throughout the regional locations.

Jasper's main facility is also in Jasper, IN; a second transmission remanufacturing center is in Crawford County, IN, and a third in Willow Springs, MO.

In addition to remanufactured automatic and standard transmissions, Jasper offers remanufactured gas and



New bushings in the sun gear shaft of 4L80E units are align bored to ensure the main shaft spins freely with the centerline of the transmission.

diesel engines, transfer cases, rear and fwd axle assemblies and differentials. And while the bulk of Jasper's business involves remanufactured units for replacement, they also offer custom reman services for transmissions, such as the older Powerglides and Jetaways. This service is especially used in various restoration projects.

Because of their many distribution centers and inventory placement, most common transmissions are available for delivery within 48 hours. Most will even be delivered the next day.

Jasper's Manufacturing System

One of the questions that always comes up when discussing Jasper's business practices is where they find qualified help, and how they can create such consistent quality remanufactured products. What many people don't realize is that Jasper doesn't hire



The soda blasters used in Jasper's cleaning process have been fitted with air bag systems from Air Ride Technologies so that they can be raised or lowered to be more ergonomically suited to various operators. This improves efficiency and reduces fatigue.

Power Mate wheelers and delivery trucks with lift gates improve and simplify product delivery for both driver and installer.

qualified rebuilders; it creates them, through specialized training and detailed manufacturing procedures.

"In a repair shop, the shop hires a technician who brings certain skills to the table," explains Zach. "From that point, the quality of the shop's repair work depends on the level of skills that technician brings with him. If the technician is skillful, the cars he works on will be repaired correctly."

"But in a manufacturing system, it doesn't really matter what skills the person comes in with. [The new applicant] is going to have to go through Jasper's evaluation and training program, where he can demonstrate his ability to follow predefined procedures on a consistent basis before we'll assign him to one of the remanufacturing 'pods' or cells."

Called the Jasper Production System (JPS), these procedures often include detailed directions and graphi-



Red lights at the individual PODs indicate that a transmission problem has been discovered at the dyno and cannot be corrected at the test stand, but must be retrieved by builders at the POD for diagnosis and repair.



A transmission is red tagged for return to a POD to have an issue corrected.

cal instructions, all designed to provide consistent procedures throughout the company, and maintain consistent quality in the finished product.

But consistency is just part of Jasper's benefit picture: "One of the biggest benefits we can offer our customers involves the economy of scale," says Zach. "There are a number of remanufacturing procedures we can provide that are simply beyond the reach of smaller, independent facilities."

This economy of scale allows Jasper to assure better alignment

throughout the rebuild. For example, most independent repair shops can only install new bushings in the transmission; Jasper's technicians go a step further, align-boring those bushings to assure parallelism and perpendicularity throughout the rebuild.

"We automatically align-bore the bellhousing bushing on small Ford RWD units with detachable bell housings such as the A4LD and 5R55E, to assure they're in perfect alignment with the crankshaft," says Zach. "This reduces bushing wear and front seal leaks. We also align-bore bushings on



Skilled builders remanufacture valve bodies within the POD.



Torque converters are dynamically balanced to eliminate vibration that can damage the transmission.

4L80E units, to keep all of the components aligned with the centerline of the transmission."

Of course, every transmission Jasper remanufactures goes through rigorous testing, including valve body testing, circuit leak checking, and finally a complete dynamometer test procedure. This allows Jasper's technicians to identify and correct most problems long before they reach your shop. And it allows them to track and address remanufacturing problems, to make sure the transmissions they sell meet their exacting levels of quality.

"If a problem shows up in a transmission that can't be corrected with an adjustment while it's on the dyno, the transmission is returned to the pod that built the unit, to give them the opportunity to examine the unit, and determine what went wrong during the remanufacturing process. We consider these problems to be an ongoing training process, to allow us to continue to improve our procedures and products," says Zach.

Lean Initiatives Keep Costs Down

No matter where you go, prices are constantly rising. But Jasper has managed to keep their prices consistent on their most common units for the last four years; in fact, on some units they've actually been able to cut their pricing. How have they been able to buck the trends of rising prices? By embracing a policy of lean initiatives, through "continuous improvement and

the elimination of waste."

"Waste can be something as simple as extra motion within a procedure," explains Zach. "So we encourage our people to constantly evaluate the work they're doing, and offer ideas on how they can do that work more efficiently. Today we're 30% more productive than we were just three years ago.

"For example, our technicians converted a standard set of parts bins into a rotating carousel, which allows them to rotate the bins instead of walking back and forth to get the parts they need. It may not seem like much, but a savings of just a few minutes per unit can cut costs dramatically over the course of a single day."

Another instance of thinking outside the box to improve efficiency took the form of equipment height adjustment: They worked with Air Ride Technologies to create adjustable soda blasters, allowing them to adjust the equipment to provide the most comfortable working height for each individual technician.

The result is more efficient use of their time, which translates into cost savings for Jasper... and you.

Unmatched Warranty Protection

Every Jasper remanufactured transmission comes with a 3-year, 100,000-mile warranty. That's virtually unheard of within the transmission repair industry. But what really impresses most people is the ease of working through Jasper's warranty process.

"The first step in our warranty process takes place on the phone. We find that a large number of warranty issues can be corrected through proper in-car diagnosis and testing."

If Jasper's phone diagnostic technicians determine the problem to be internal, they'll work with the shop to provide a replacement as quickly as possible. From there, the transmission is returned to the remanufacturing facility to determine the root cause of the failure. If that failure was caused by a manufacturing defect, Jasper will cover the labor costs for diagnosis and replacement.

Jasper also offers a program that provides premium service coverage, including increased labor rates, towing, and rental car reimbursement. For more details on Jasper's warranty program, stop by their web site at www.jasperengines.com.

To learn more about Jasper's remanufacturing programs, stop by their web site at www.jasperengines.com. To become a Jasper installer, give them a call, toll free, at 1-800-827-7455.

As many transmission shops are discovering, remains are no longer the enemy; in fact, they can be a valuable resource and a terrific way to enhance a transmission shop's revenue. And there's no better source for remanufactured transmissions than Jasper Engines and Transmissions.

