

Apples to Apples?

A guide on how to compare induction cap sealer systems, options and pricing by Pillar Technologies

1. **Kilowatts:** Your application will dictate the power necessary to achieve the production output (bottles/minute) you require. Make sure all systems are quoted at the same kW output power. If you're not sure, ask.

System owners can take the test: Bunch your products, cap touching cap, under the full length of the sealing coil. A power drop when caps are stacked under the coil may signify the need for a higher kilowatt power supply. It is not common to have the aforementioned – cap to cap - in a practical packaging environment but this assumption must be made to provide general sizing guidelines. In most cases the bottle will be larger than the cap and will allow space between caps. Space between caps may allow for higher conveyor speed on some caps.

2. **Basic System Components:** Make sure your system price includes:
 - a) Equal sized power supply
 - b) Appropriate coil
 - c) Coil mounting system – either stationary or portable

Note: If your quote does not include all of these basic elements in the system price, you are not being quoted a complete system. Find the elements necessary to complete the system (usually found in options or additional equipment on some quotes), add them into the base cost and then compare.

3. **Price:** If the cheapest possible system is what you're after, you may sacrifice:
 - a) Production output (may not achieve the sealing speeds or results you require)
 - b) Versatility in components
 - c) Room for growth
 - d) Quality
 - e) Reliability
 - f) Ease of repair
 - g) and possibly Service.
4. **Water-cooled vs. Waterless (Air-Cooled):** Waterless systems are the newest technology and they cost less. They're one-half the size of water-cooled systems because there are no filters, no hoses, no radiators, no pumps, no flow switches and relatively no maintenance.
5. **Used vs. New (and internet shopping):** Used equipment will probably be water-cooled so your maintenance costs will be much higher than purchasing the waterless technology as mentioned above. Used machines may be obsolete or unsupported. Always consult the manufacturing company to find out the age, type of system and history behind a used induction sealer. Used equipment may not have a warranty.
6. **Options:** The two most popular options are the sealing verification detection systems and reject mechanisms. Always compare functionality as well as price.