

DON'T BUY A CONVEYOR!

UNLESS YOU'VE TAKEN A LOOK AT THIS CHECKLIST

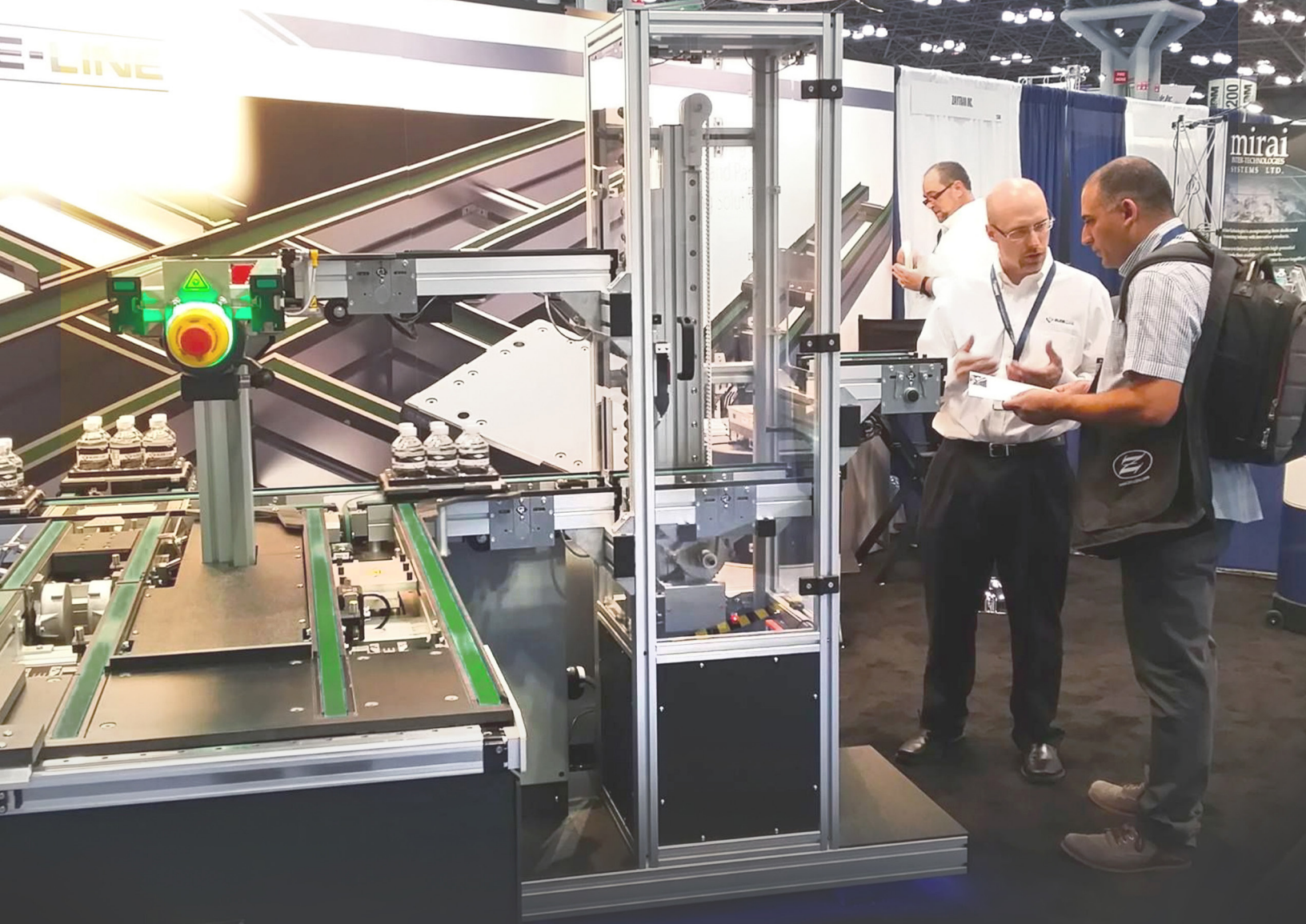


GLIDE-LINE™



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INTRODUCTION

Choosing a conveyor system manufacturer is no simple task, particularly when you're facing a deadline. When you have questions about which equipment might be best for your project, lead time, execution, cost, and support, you may need a resource, not a salesperson.

We've provided a checklist of 26 of our recommended questions. We think these questions will give you the best answers with which to evaluate a best-fit conveyor manufacturer. In our experience, these are the most frequently-asked questions when evaluating a conveyor manufacturing partner - and additionally, we've included the most frequently-missed questions as well.

Following the checklist, we've included a guide with those common questions to help you in your decision-making process as you select a partner. We included answers from Glide-Line for a perspective from an industry expert so you can start the comparison process.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to our team of experts. Visit us online at glide-line.com or call 215.721.1900.

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BEST-FIT EQUIPMENT QUESTIONS

Does this company offer the options I know I need?

- 1 Can your conveyors be customized, and how much do customizations cost? Related: Are your conveyor designs flexible? Can I change the conveyor dimensions?
NOTES:
- 2 What increments can conveyors and devices be configured to?
NOTES:
- 3 What tools do you offer for configuring conveyors in a line?
NOTES:
- 4 Will your conveyors match our specifications?
NOTES:
- 5 What are your standard conveyor options?
NOTES:
- 6 Which type of conveyor and controls will be the most productive for the materials I need conveyed?
NOTES:
- 7 Can your conveyors be used to convey pallets other than the ones you make?
NOTES:

LEAD TIME QUESTIONS

How to determine the lead time for your conveyor

- 8 Many of our customers ask very specifically: can you build this particular conveyor in this specific timeframe?
NOTES:
- 9 What is the typical lead time for customized or altered conveyor elements?
NOTES:
- 10 Is there something different in the company's manufacturing process enabling them to produce engineered designs quicker than most?
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Can the company expedite materials if needed?

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How does the conveyor-building process work?

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How easy is it to maintain the conveyor belt (or chain)?

NOTES:

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Is the manufacturer responsive to inquiries, requests, and service requirements?

NOTES:

BONUS: QUESTIONS THE CONVEYOR MANUFACTURER SHOULD ASK YOU

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How do you want the system to operate?

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What are the specifications are you designing for?

NOTES:

BEST-FIT EQUIPMENT QUESTIONS

DOES THIS COMPANY OFFER THE OPTIONS
I KNOW I NEED?

1. CAN YOUR CONVEYORS BE CUSTOMIZED, AND HOW MUCH DO CUSTOMIZATIONS COST?

RELATED:

ARE YOUR CONVEYOR DESIGNS FLEXIBLE?

CAN I CHANGE THE CONVEYOR DIMENSIONS?

Choose a long-term conveyor manufacturing partner whose processes and general design/engineering philosophies support the unique needs your clients have. If you're consistently asking for customizations, flexibility in design, new capabilities, and innovations, a traditional manufacturer may not cut it (at least, not without making you pay an outrageous price for it!). Choose a manufacturer, like Glide-Line, who not only accommodates these requests, but plans their entire manufacturing process around them and does so at little to no added cost.

2. WHAT INCREMENTS CAN CONVEYORS AND DEVICES BE CONFIGURED TO?

When looking for configurability, be sure that your manufacturer's definition of "configurable" meets yours. Glide-Line's conveyors, pallets, and other devices are configurable in 1-millimeter increments, making them extremely versatile to any spacing or product needs.

For example, a problematic-sized pallet or tray can easily be accommodated in this situation since both the pallet and the conveyor can be adjusted in length and width to move the product. Check out a [RECENT CASE STUDY](#) we produced about just such a product.

3. WHAT TOOLS DO YOU OFFER FOR CONFIGURING CONVEYORS IN A LINE?

Look for a manufacturer that makes it easy to get pricing, lead time estimates, and device configurations. Instead of wasting time going back and forth with a sales engineer, look for a partner who alleviates that pain point.

Glide-Line offers an online, in-context configurator that saves your work, provides estimates as you make adjustments, and works with Solidworks. It's called **IMPACT!**, and it's completely free to download and use.

4. WILL YOUR CONVEYORS MATCH OUR SPECIFICATIONS?

The most important question when evaluating a conveyor manufacturer is, of course, whether or not they have a conveyor or system that can accomplish what you need. If it's specific spatial challenges, you'll need a solution with a small footprint that can still handle the capacity necessary. If you need a system to handle tight corners or work around other equipment, you need a solution that can make the turns and curves in the manner you need. And if it's gentle handling, you need a conveyor that won't damage your products.

We can't speak for all of the specs you may need, but chances are, no matter what challenge you're facing or what you're trying to accomplish with a conveyor, Glide-Line has a solution. We love to be challenged by unique product needs. Here are just a few examples of conveyors we offer as standard, which started as solutions to unique customer needs:

- **90°/180° transfers:** achieved using our Lift and Rotate Unit or our Glide-Line 360 Conveyor (among others)
- **Rotating conveyor for transfers:** achieved with our Conveyor Rotate Unit
- **Access / Manipulate product from the bottom side:** achieved with our Open Center Design
- **Accumulation solutions in small footprints:** achieved using our servo or stepper driven VTU solutions (multiple options)

We can answer any questions you have about our conveyor systems, or you can get started yourself by using our in-context configurator, IMPACT!. It helps set a baseline for your needs so we can have a starting point, while also giving you an accurate estimate of capabilities and costs. IMPACT! is where we recommend everyone start.

5. WHAT ARE YOUR STANDARD CONVEYOR OPTIONS?

Lead time will be greatly impacted by the number of standard versus custom conveyor parts you need in an applications system. If you require both short lead time and variations from the standard norms, look for a manufacturer with the greatest variety and [FLEXIBILITY IN THEIR STANDARD CONVEYOR SYSTEM](#) options.

6. WHICH TYPE OF CONVEYOR AND CONTROLS WILL BE THE MOST PRODUCTIVE FOR THE MATERIALS I NEED CONVEYED?

This will depend on your specific situation. Your goal should be to find a collaborative conveyor manufacturer capable of delivering thought-provoking and unique solutions when necessary. Our blog post, "[UNIQUE ASSEMBLY CONVEYOR LAYOUTS AND THE BEST APPLICATIONS](#)," gives examples of the most flexible and productive conveyor layouts we've designed for some of our clients' most challenging applications.

7. CAN YOUR CONVEYORS BE USED TO CONVEY PALLETS OTHER THAN THE ONES YOU MAKE?

If a truly flexible system is what you're looking for, the answer to this question should be yes, as it is with Glide-Line. Being realistic about the pallets you may already have in-house is an important marker of a good manufacturing partner, and your partner should be able to accommodate that requirement.



LEAD TIME QUESTIONS

HOW TO DETERMINE THE LEAD TIME FOR YOUR CONVEYOR

Lead time and speed of the build are frequent questions because you need a solid, dependable timeline to present to your client. These questions can help you determine how reliable a manufacturer's timeline is, and how accustomed they are to meeting fast deadlines. Aim to work with a manufacturer experienced with and prepared for the lead times you need most often.

8. HOW FAST CAN YOU BUILD/SHIP A STANDARD CONVEYOR SYSTEM?

Many of our customers ask very specifically: can you build this particular conveyor in this specific timeframe? Our answer is almost always a resounding yes. Most conveyor systems manufacturers' lead times from order to delivery are six to 12 weeks. Sometimes this can be expedited for a hefty fee.

You may consider asking instead: **Is your manufacturing process built with short lead times in mind, or are lead times immovable in your build process due to external factors?**

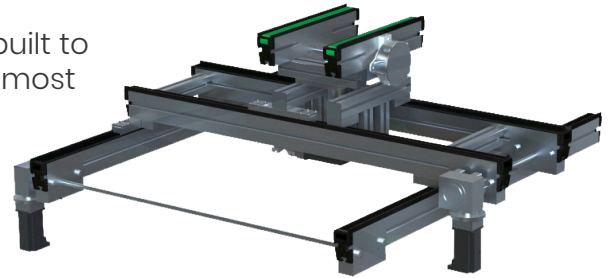
Partnering with a versatile conveyor systems manufacturer like Glide-Line will do the most to shorten your lead time. Glide-Line's manufacturing process is built for quick lead times; we can ship conveyors in two to three weeks, and devices such as lifts, lift and transfers, lift and locate stations, and more in four to six weeks. This conveyor lead time is cut in half compared to other manufacturers and saves your client significant time and money.

9. WHAT IS THE TYPICAL LEAD TIME FOR CUSTOMIZED OR ALTERED CONVEYOR ELEMENTS?

If you can't avoid customizations in your conveyor application, the next step is to seek a manufacturing partner able to deliver customized elements as quickly as possible.

Better yet, seek a partner with configurable or alterable options; they're faster than customizations.

For example, **GLIDE-LINE'S 360 SERIES CONVEYOR** is built to be as flexible and configurable as possible – the most flexible conveyor on the market today. So, instead of customizing a conveyor from scratch to meet your client's goal, you're configuring a standard, which significantly cuts down on lead time.



Even if your unique application requires true customization, an experienced flexible conveyor manufacturer will have built their manufacturing process to be incredibly efficient, making for quick conveyor lead times even for truly customized conveyor solutions.

10. IS THERE SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN THE COMPANY'S MANUFACTURING PROCESS ENABLING THEM TO PRODUCE ENGINEERED DESIGNS QUICKER THAN MOST?

This relates to the first question in this section. Based on this answer, you'll be able to gauge a manufacturer's ability to innovate with new solutions, new processes, and new customer-focused initiatives. A traditional company will simply speed up their current process to accommodate a shorter lead time request, often on your client's dime (and possibly at the expense of attention to detail). However, an innovative company will employ a more **EFFICIENT CONVEYOR MANUFACTURING PROCESS** to address this frequent concern of applications engineers.

Glide-Line, for example, has designed their manufacturing process for conveyor systems around customers' desires for a shorter lead time, effectively cutting lead times in half for all standard and configured orders. It's not a unique request, and our process doesn't need to be tailored to meet it; our process is already very efficient.

11. CAN THE COMPANY EXPEDITE MATERIALS IF NEEDED?

For some manufacturers, this answer will be 'yes'. But, your follow-up question should be, "At what cost?" Paying twice as much for expedited delivery may not be worth it to your customer. Instead, look for a conveyor manufacturer with limited cost increases for shortened lead times to minimize the impact to your customer's bottom line and increase overall ROI of the conveyor system. Better yet, use a manufacturer like Glide-Line, whose modular designs mean we don't often have to wait for manufactured pieces or parts – we have 95% of what we need on-site and ready for your project build.

EXECUTION QUESTIONS

HOW THE CONVEYOR-BUILDING PROCESS WORKS

12. HOW DOES THE CONVEYOR-BUILDING PROCESS WORK?

This answer gives insight to how the manufacturer prioritizes their engineering and assembly. Typically, a manufacturer will describe a more outdated method that takes a long lead time, or they prioritize quick lead times to give customers the best experience possible.

With Glide-Line's modular design and simple construction, conveyors and systems can be built and **SHIPPED IN DAYS, NOT WEEKS**. We have streamlined our entire assembly process with smart design and digital fabrication, making it possible to rapidly deploy without compromising quality or construction integrity. And with our ability to make these components in house, Glide-Line supports highly configured or customized solutions quickly and just-in-time for assembly.

13. HOW DOES THE BUYING PROCESS WORK?

Knowing how a conveyor manufacturer's process works can give you insight into how the company is organized, how willing they are to help with any issues or questions that arise, and how dedicated the team is to helping your project be successful. Without a dedicated team, your project could be lost or delayed or you could have to be more hands-on with managing the order.

Our process starts with IMPACT! It can be downloaded online to get you rolling. It gives you tools to get you an initial design and budget, and it works with Solidworks to get you some initial designs in 3D. Once you decide to move forward with us, our design engineers get involved to validate your design and make recommendations. We go through the design with you to help develop a complete solution to fit your needs, including recommending new options you may not yet know. After you issue a purchase order our Customer Service Representative ensures that everything looks correct, that the lead time is accurate, and that we're building and shipping the product out on time. **CHECK OUT A VIDEO HERE.**

14. TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE CONVEYOR SYSTEM ASSEMBLED PRIOR TO SHIPMENT?

A good manufacturing partner should have their customers and clients in mind when developing their process. Additionally, estimating assembly time on your floor becomes a much easier task if conveyors are shipped primarily assembled.

That's why we ship all Glide-Line conveyors with the majority of the assembly done, not as a box of parts. This is our standard and we take great pride offering this to our customers. To further protect the shipment from damage, we will remove the leg sets and motors and package those items along with the devices on the shipping pallet.

15. HOW FLEXIBLE IS THE SCOPE OF MY PROJECT ONCE WE GET STARTED?

The answer to this question likely depends on how much lead time we had from the beginning. If it was a quick lead time, everything up to the order being placed is etched in stone. Once we start fabrication, cutting metal, programming for the CNC machine, any changes to orders would delay deliverables.

The good news is, our process aims to alleviate changes after the order. Before moving to the manufacturing stage, we collaborate with you to comb over every detail of the design. We try to avoid delays for you and your client, so we push to ensure the order itself is an engineering masterpiece.



COST QUESTIONS

HOW TO DETERMINE THE COST OF YOUR CONVEYOR SYSTEM

16. HOW SHOULD I CALCULATE THE ROI OF MY CONVEYOR?

The return on investment of your conveyor or **CONVEYOR SYSTEM CAN BE MEASURED VIA ITS THROUGHPUT**, energy costs/savings, quality improvement, and time cost/savings for manufacturing, operation, and maintenance. There is obviously a lot to this, and depends upon your company's specific determination for ROI. At Glide-Line, we'd be happy to walk you through the key factors to help determine this.

17. HOW QUICKLY CAN WE GET A QUOTE?

Ideally, you can get a quote instantly using an **IN-CONTEXT CONFIGURATOR, IMPACT! FROM GLIDE-LINE**. With a traditional configurator, calculating the cost of your multi-strand conveyor system frequently necessitates a discussion with the manufacturer's sales representative. It could take hours or even days to receive pricing, and every time there's a change to the system, there's a change to the price. With an in-context configurator as your conveyor design software, all the system calculations are instant, available to you the moment you make the change. You're able to find and quote pricing on your own, without waiting for a salesperson. **IMPACT!** is Excel-based, so it's easy to learn, and it can even drive models in **SOLIDWORKS** automatically.



BEST-FIT COMPANY FOR YOU

HOW TO DETERMINE IF A MANUFACTURER IS A GOOD FIT FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR COMPANY AND YOUR CLIENTS

To determine if a manufacturer is a good fit, it's important to ask a number of questions about the manufacturer, its process, and previous customer testimonials. This will allow you to evaluate the manufacturer in more detail using its “soft” qualities, and lets you know if you can count on the manufacturer to support you throughout the process.

18. WHERE DO YOU RECOMMEND WE START IN THE PROCESS?

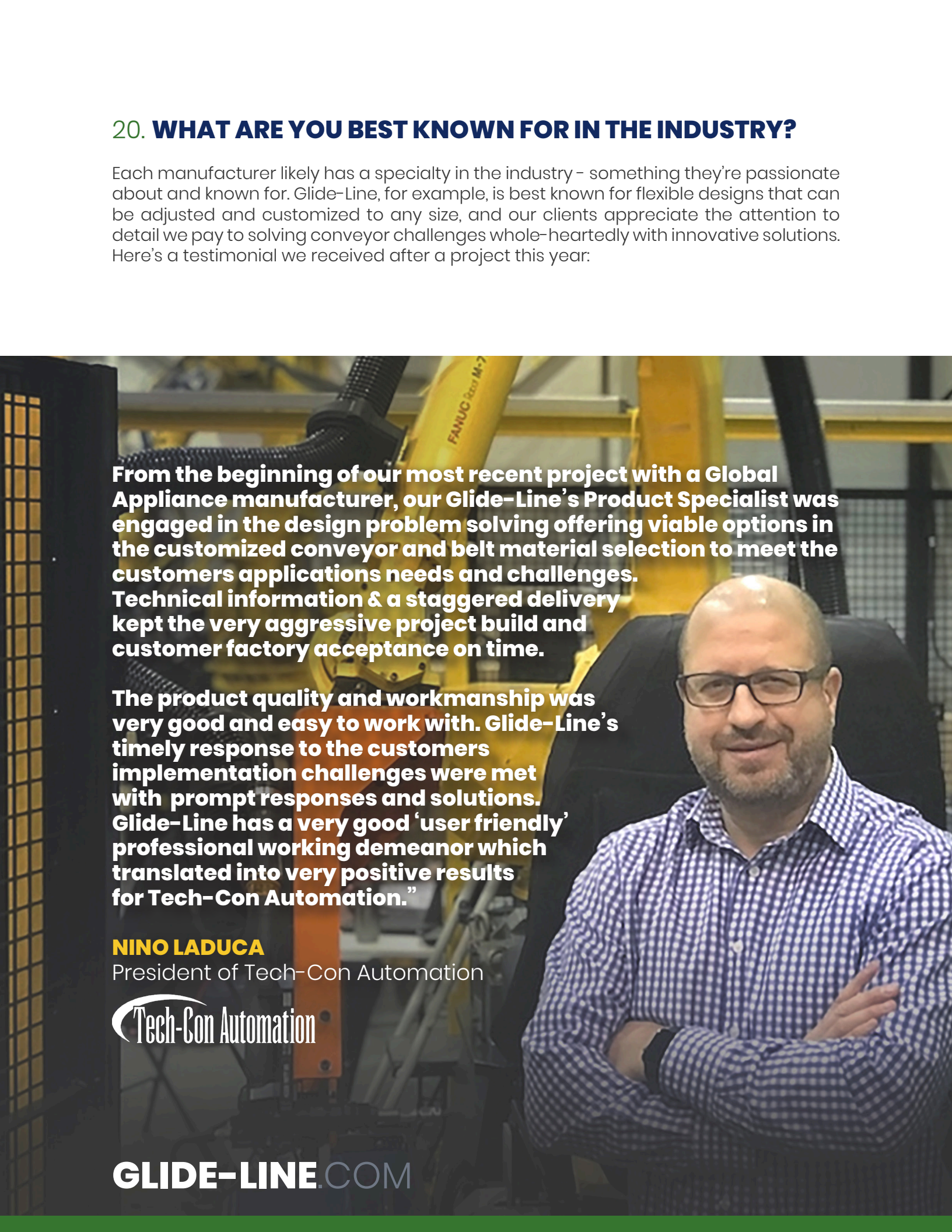
We always recommend you start with our in-context configurator, IMPACT!. This will give you the ability to easily modify your layout, dimensions, and scope while instantly getting a quote to start with. From there we can help modify where needed to best fit your needs. If you aren't comfortable starting on your own, we are happy to either do the work for you, with you, or provide IMPACT! training.

19. WHAT DO OTHER CUSTOMERS SAY ABOUT WORKING WITH YOU?

Testimonials and case studies are an important part of understanding whether or not a manufacturer is a good fit for you and your clients. Ask for stories from current and past clients. Ideally, you'll even be able to interview some clients to hear how the manufacturer worked with them.

20. WHAT ARE YOU BEST KNOWN FOR IN THE INDUSTRY?

Each manufacturer likely has a specialty in the industry - something they're passionate about and known for. Glide-Line, for example, is best known for flexible designs that can be adjusted and customized to any size, and our clients appreciate the attention to detail we pay to solving conveyor challenges whole-heartedly with innovative solutions. Here's a testimonial we received after a project this year:



From the beginning of our most recent project with a Global Appliance manufacturer, our Glide-Line's Product Specialist was engaged in the design problem solving offering viable options in the customized conveyor and belt material selection to meet the customers applications needs and challenges. Technical information & a staggered delivery kept the very aggressive project build and customer factory acceptance on time.

The product quality and workmanship was very good and easy to work with. Glide-Line's timely response to the customers implementation challenges were met with prompt responses and solutions. Glide-Line has a very good 'user friendly' professional working demeanor which translated into very positive results for Tech-Con Automation."

NINO LADUCA

President of Tech-Con Automation



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SUPPORT QUESTIONS

HOW TO EVALUATE THE SUPPORT YOU'LL RECEIVE FROM THE MANUFACTURER

21. WHAT AIDS, GUIDES, OR OTHER COLLATERAL DOES YOUR COMPANY PROVIDE WITH THE CONVEYOR?

Installation manuals, spare parts, best practices for the conveyor and trouble-shooting guides should be expected when a conveyor manufacturer partners with you and your client. If the manufacturer isn't providing these documents or assets after the installation, it could be a red flag that they're not a supportive partner when it comes to their equipment. Evaluate how important this aspect is as part of your decision-making process.

22. WHERE CAN WE LOOK FOR SUPPORT FROM YOUR COMPANY AFTER THE INSTALLATION?

Manufacturers should have a defined service or support process readily available to meet any post-installation service or support requirements easily. If they don't have this process set up, it's a sign they haven't focused on customer satisfaction after the installation. Evaluate the manufacturer according to how frequently you traditionally need assistance from the manufacturer.

23. WHAT SUPPORT OR TROUBLESHOOTING OPTIONS DOES YOUR COMPANY OFFER AFTER INSTALLATION?

Service on your client's conveyors can be provided by both internal and external sources, depending on their current set-up. However, it's important for your conveyor manufacturer to also provide service and support when the need arises. More important still is the speed at which that service is provided, and in what format. The goal is to minimize downtime.

Glide-Line provides the trouble-shooting and support needed, as much as we're able, if questions arise about our equipment. We want to see you succeed while using our conveyor.

24. HOW EASY IS IT TO MAINTAIN THE CONVEYOR BELT (OR CHAIN)?

Your client's maintenance team will appreciate attention paid to the work they do, and how easy it will be to accomplish any maintenance on the conveyor. Easy maintenance impacts your client's throughput and RO and improves positive employee relationships because their priorities were considered in the process.

Glide-Line's belts can be removed from the top of the conveyor, meaning they're generally easier to access than most other conveyor belts. Plus, we ship our belts endless, so they don't have to be spliced on site by the customer. Since splicing requires special training, a special tool, and a lot more time, changing a Glide Line belt is significantly quicker and easier.

25. IS THE MANUFACTURER RESPONSIVE TO INQUIRIES, REQUESTS, AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS?

A responsive manufacturer shows collaboration. Plus, it's obvious a highly responsive manufacturer will be more responsive throughout the terms of the business transaction, making for an overall smoother experience. You can't afford to wait around for responses from a manufacturer who may not have the answers you're looking for.



BONUS: **QUESTIONS THE CONVEYOR MANUFACTURER SHOULD ASK YOU**

We see it as a red flag if a manufacturer isn't asking you some specific questions about your project and your process. A good partner will want to know how to best work with you and meet your needs, and to do so, they should be asking these project-related questions.

26. HOW DO YOU WANT THE SYSTEM TO OPERATE?

The conveyor manufacturer might have a customized standard solution you might not have thought of. The manufacturer should be asking this question to get an idea of the ultimate goal, not just the small piece of equipment you're looking for at the moment. We have to know the ultimate goal – not just where we fit in. If we know the overall we can be much more creative and suggest better-fit solutions for you and your project.

27. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFICATIONS ARE YOU DESIGNING FOR?

These specs include asking for product weight, cycle times/goals (beginning of the cycle to the end including rate time), product dimensions, speed times/goals (how fast can it load/unload so we know how long something would be in a given station), machine mount, equipment and other immovable components in the space, and number of workstations needed.



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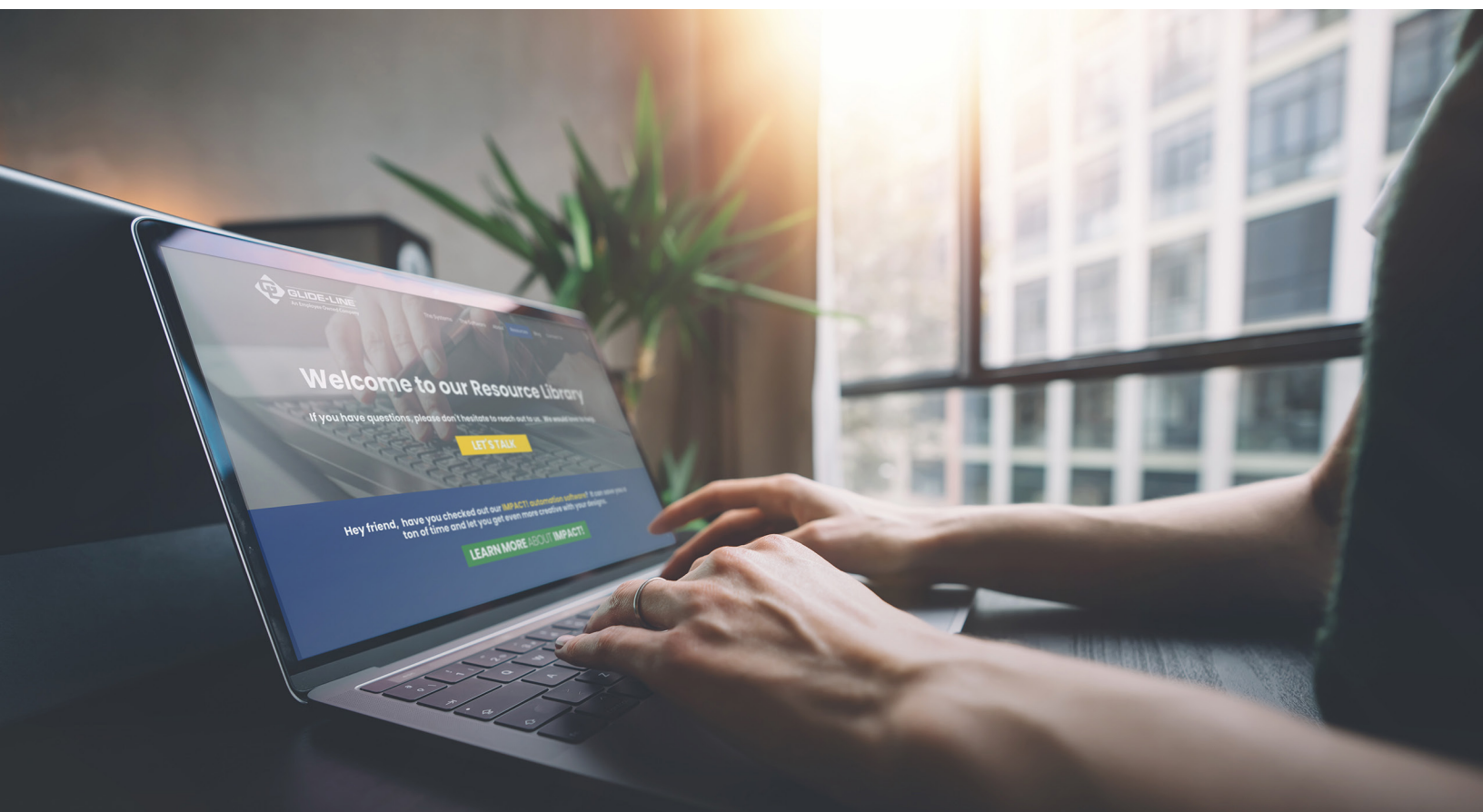
Glide-Line isn't a typical manufacturer. But at the end of the day, we just want to make sure you have the perfect, best-fit solution for your client. That's the reason we do what we do. We broke

the mold of traditional conveyor manufacturers to serve applications engineers and design engineers who just weren't finding what they needed in the traditional market. We hope this guide helps you get the answers you need when evaluating a conveyor system manufacturer.

Visit us online at GLIDE-LINE.COM or call 215.721.1900 for more information about our conveyor options.



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