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Get in the Mix!

By Jennie Farnsworth

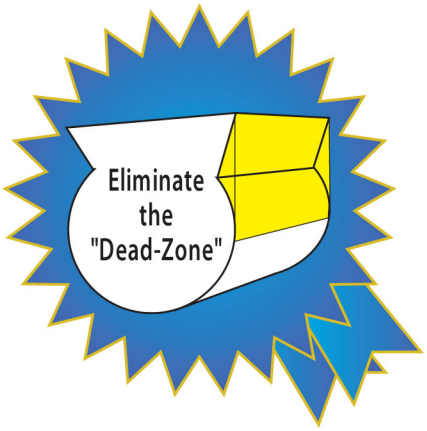
It doesn't matter how fast you build the wall if your crews are waiting on mortar or grout. If your mixer takes twice as long to mix a batch or it doesn't have the proper dump height, you're wasting precious time and money. However, many mixer manufacturers are doing their part to make sure that their products offer the best mix, most efficient capabilities and options, and the fastest delivery of materials on the job site.

"A cubic foot of mortar weighs 150 pounds, so if you're mixing a six-cubic-foot batch, you're mixing 900 pounds of material," said Jim Swisher, owner of Buddy Equipment in Jacksonville, Fla. "People don't realize how heavy this stuff is. Anything you can do to make it easier, whether you're making the mixer faster or giving the mason more control over it when he or she is discharging the mortar into a wheelbarrow or mortar pan, all of these things add up to more efficient work on the job site."

…While mortar mixers haven't been a world wind of change, there have been several advancements over the years…

Another recent option that companies such as … Buddy Equipment are utilizing is the ability to remove one of the wheels on a towable mixer to increase stability and decrease the potential for theft [**Locking Leg**].

Buddy Equipment's Swisher said that consistent mixing by the paddles within the drum is also an important aspect. "Most of the mortar mixer drum shapes that are available in our country are what I'd refer to as 'flat-backed,'" Swisher said. "Inside the drum, where the paddles rotate, is an area along the back of the drum where the rotating paddles cannot make contact with the mortar. I refer to it as the 'Dead Zone.'



"In my patented design, the 'Dead Zone' is eliminated by having a symmetrically shaped drum, where the curve along the front side of the drum matches the curve along the drum's backside, therefore reducing the required mixing time by as much as 30 percent."