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Serving Eastern New Mexico With Two Locations

### **Saving Money on Ink Cartridge Refills?**

There is a huge explosion of 3rd party vendors offering to refill ink or toner cartridges for much less than OEM manufacturers sell their products for. But are you really saving money? And at what price? It is important to educate yourself about your equipment and what you are about to purchase or otherwise you are about to be categorized as a "victim".

### **Are we Biased?**

First understand our viewpoint and bias. For example if you have an HP printer we actually make more profit selling you a cartridge made by someone "other" than HP. Even though it may cost less the profit margins are higher. OEM cartridges cost YOU more money but they also cost US more money. So our purpose here is to get you the lowest cost of printing while keeping your equipment safe and your print quality high.

### **Industry Terms**

Become familiar with some industry terms first, so you'll know what you are getting. OEM = Original Equipment Manufacturer. In other words you have an HP Printer you buy an HP cartridge. Refill = Taking an already used up cartridge and injecting 3rd party ink or toner back into it. No internal components are replaced. Remanufactured = Taking a spent OEM cartridge and installing new internal components THEN refilling it with ink or toner. Compatible = A third party has designed and manufactured a cartridge that they say will work in your printer.

### **How Much are Those Crooks Making?**

Generally speaking the OEM cartridges are the most expensive, followed by the remanufactured or compatibles, followed by the refills. Using a logic tree it's pretty easy to see why. The OEM folks had to design the cartridge then manufacture it. They have incurred the most expense and are offering a 100% brand new product. The Remanufacture crew are not having to design or create the cartridge, just replace a few parts and refill it. The Compatible company is not having to design the cartridge as they are just copying a working model thereby saving all research and development money (and mistakes). The Re-fillers are just poking a hole in an old cartridge and dumping new ink or toner into it.

### **Our Conclusions**

If you trust our experiences and advice then we will give you a sneak peak at our verdict. If you are a "show me" type then the factors causing us to reach this opinion are outlined below. We can tell you that in the majority of cases you will save money, both long term and short term, get the best print quality and have the lowest risk of ruining your equipment by using OEM cartridges. It may help you to accept this opinion, over the temptations of seemingly lower prices, by understanding the following two facts. 1. We make less money by telling you this. 2. Notice that people in the industry (your office supply stores) are not the ones refilling cartridges. For good reasons.

### **Then Why is Everyone Offering Re-fills?**

To put it bluntly the refill business is fueled by lack of knowledge. On everyone's part. The customer does not have the technical knowledge of their equipment processes or requirements and are focusing on one thing. Money! The refillers do not have the technical expertise of operations and nuances of every model and every brand of equipment. Their focus is on one thing. Money! But let's be fair. Office Supply Dealers like money too! Office Supply Dealers were the ones that conceived the refill idea in the first place. It started over 20 years ago and you can be sure that these dealers knew this could be an enormously profitable venture. After all a



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\$100.00 cartridge holding \$5.00 worth of toner. Look out we're gonna' get rich if we could just pour more toner into that empty cartridge and reuse it. But something was wrong.

### **What?**

No one had better access to toner supplies or more knowledge about the product than Office Machine Dealers. It was this knowledge that led to this ideas quick demise. Toner leaks, poor drum performance on 2nd time use, \$5000.00 copiers being ruined in order to save a few bucks. For 2 decades this concept was sidelined until computer printers became a household item. Customers were being lost and equipment was being ruined.

### **When Ink is Not Just Ink?**

Example 1: An HP56 cartridge is used in many printers. HP did an amazing thing. In the good old days you bought ink or ribbons for your printer and then a couple of times a year had to have the print head cleaned and every few years have it replaced. HP designed their ink cartridge with the print head built in. A short life print head that is thrown away and replaced by installing a new ink cartridge. Saving money on service calls, cost of repairs and part replacements. If you refill that ink cartridge you have new ink and a worn out old print head.

### **Color Calibration**

Example 2: In the professional world if you have a Royal Blue logo you want your equipment to produce this Royal Blue logo correctly on your documents and prints. In the commercial world this is even more critical as large companies such as Lowe's, Wal-Mart, Home Depot and others utilize color identification in their advertising and marketing. Quality equipment deploys color calibrations based on a specific OEM ink that was designed for your machine. Colonel Sanders had a secret, Bush Beans have a secret and so do the OEM Printer manufacturers. The chances of anyone else being able to reproduce this exact formula are very slim. This becomes critical, as well, when producing photo prints where color accuracy is important.

### **Independent Test Results**

Example 3: QualityLogic, a Moorpark, California test laboratory, found the failure rate on new OEM cartridges to be less than their remanufactured counterparts. Additionally they found that 70% of remanufactured cartridges did not last as long as promised. Testers also found that in almost all cases, the refilled cartridges cost as much or more when evaluated on their per-page output. These findings were the same results Consumer Reports concluded last May.

### **So What Do I Do?**

In our opinion there is really only one valid reason or situation that a remanufactured or refilled cartridge fits the bill. If your OEM cartridge has been discontinued and is no longer available. You really don't have a choice. Other than that OEM is the safest and highest quality solution. And when you really get to honest cost analysis it's the cheapest course both long and short term in a majority of cases. 2nd choice is the compatible cartridge because you are at least getting all new components, including the shell casing. 3rd Choice is the remanufactured cartridge process whereas the housing is old but the internal components are new. The last and least desirable choice would be the refills whereas inks or toners are injected into your old cassette. This is the Russian Roulette of the printer world.