

THE TOP 3 THINGS TO KNOW WHEN PURCHASING USED EQUIPMENT

The industry moves so rapidly with an onslaught of new gear that tempts us every year, and there will always be items that are worth the big-ticket expense, so seek out savings where they can be found.

We've all heard the saying, "you get what you pay for." Sometimes, though, you just don't have the money to get what you really want. Then what?

There are several options to consider. For me, I choose to purchase previously used gear. Navigating the used gear market, though, can be tricky.

Knowing what brand-new items are selling for, so you can shop around, is just the first step. You must understand where to splurge and where you can purchase used. Of course, ensuring that you're getting a fair price includes knowing how the previous owner cared for the equipment, and whether it is competitively priced.

If you've always been the one to purchase the latest model from the showroom floor, here is a quick guide if you find yourself needing (or wanting) to buy used gear.

1. IS THE TYPE OF EQUIPMENT WORTH THE INVESTMENT?

All gear falls into two categories: high and low maintenance. In my opinion, new purchases should be reserved for moving lights and lamped fixtures. The more moving parts, the more time and energy you'll have to spend maintaining it, and the more money you'll spend on replacements.

Purchasing used lighting equipment is an excellent option for things like static LED fixtures, cable, dimmers, truss, power distribution units—basically anything that doesn't move. (Encourage your audio counterparts to do the same, for the equipment they are looking to purchase). Each of these items have a 10-year shelf life and will save you money as the years go by.

There are some items that I only purchase used. For example, power and data cable are two things that I will never buy new, and doing this saves me 10-20 percent.

Another piece of equipment that is worth comparing used versus new when looking what to buy is a console. With brand new models coming with their typically high price tags, it's easy to save yourself \$10,000, just by picking up one that has been previously used.

FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES EMAIL FULLERLIGHTS@GMAIL.COM





2. SHOP AROUND

Just because you've decided to purchase previously-owned equipment, doesn't mean that you have to settle. Do your homework to find the best option for your budget.



When writing this article, I did a quick search to provide some examples of how purchasing used can be a great option. One of the best deals I found online was a Chroma-Q Color Force 72-inch RGBA LED Batten. Hands down, this is one of the best RGBA (Red, Green, Blue, Amber) LED batten wall washing lights. These fixtures are great for lighting walls or backdrops, curtains, or lighting linear set pieces. They make fun eye candy, if you focus them straight at the audience. They are a perfect example of when buying used is the best option, because nothing moves inside of them except for the fan. Online, I found that Chroma-Q model selling new for \$4,300. On a website selling used gear, the same model was selling for \$1,700. That is a savings of \$2,600 per fixture! A few years ago, I purchased several of the Chroma-Q Color Force battens from a used gear site, usedlighting.com, and they continue to perform well.

We've all heard the saying, "You get what you pay for," so make sure you are spending wisely.

3. CHOOSE YOUR VENDOR CAREFULLY.

Part of ensuring that you get what you pay for (see above), is knowing as much as you can about the equipment before proceeding to buy. This is not only true for the physical piece of gear, but also the vendor that you're purchasing from.

Have the items been well cared for (maintained regularly and stored wisely), or has it been used and abused? You cannot determine this without knowing the vendor. Making inquiries will only get you so far—you have to foster good relationships.

One of my favorite used gear vendors is usedlighting.com, because I've witnessed the pride of ownership that they have. For example, the equipment on their site is used for two years by the parent company, 4Wall, and then resold on usedlighting.com. Everything for sale on the site is barcoded, and you can request the history of the equipment, before making a purchase. Clearly, this has become the model as now other large vendors (PRG Proshop, on the web at prg-proshop.com) are now doing similar things with their inventory.

Among the many used gear vendors that exist online, the following are used lighting vendors that I am comfortable recommending:

Used Lighting (www.usedlighting.com)

GearSource (www.gearsource.com)

Solaris Network (www.solarisnetwork.com)

PRG Proshop (<https://prg-proshop.com>)

The industry moves so rapidly with an onslaught of new gear that tempts us every year, and there will always be items that are worth the big-ticket expense. If you know what those pieces are, you will be surprised at how much money you can save by purchasing used equipment for everything else.

The key to stretching your budget is being willing to do some research and spend the time shopping around; it requires work on your part. Establishing relationships with vendors helps to ensure that what you're buying has been well cared for, but it isn't a guarantee that you won't have problems. Sometimes you get what you pay for, but often you'll get far more.

Good luck hunting for used equipment!