Central Surplus - Product Discovery

The MRO Part Detective: Identifying Your Component

Have the MPN? Lets Make sure.

When a part fails, it's natural to look for the part number. It's the first thing we do so a replacement can be ordered. But what if the number you see is hiding something?

ie; You see ‘MM9118WI’ on the outer race. You're right in thinking it's a Fafnir / Timken MPN, but Fafnir made multiple bearings with ‘MM9118WI’ in the MPN.

Example: 3MM9118WICRDUL - Much different than what the part tells us.

Often the number on the part is different from the MPN.

Tips on securing your exact MPN:

Using the application to look up the OEM or Internal number.

Match specifications exactly.

Send photos and as many details as you can to us.

We speak fluent ‘Mystery Part’

Don't have any numbers? Let's take it a step further.

Categorize the Movement

How does the part move? This is the first question our sourcing team will ask.

- Rotational (Power Transmission): Does it sit on a shaft? Look for Bearings, Sprockets, V-Belts, Couplings, or Bushings.
- Linear: Does it move back and forth? Look for Pneumatic Cylinders, Linear Rails, or Actuators.
- Fluid/Air Control: Does it hold pressure? Look for Valves, Fittings, or Gauges.
- Electrical: Does it have wires or a data plate? Look for Motors, Sensors, or Contactors.

Locate the "Hidden" Markings

Industrial parts often have identifiers in non-obvious places, check these spots:

- **The End-Caps:** On cylinders or motors, check the flat metal faces.
- **The Inner Race:** On bearings, look at the very edge of the center ring.
- **Rubber Side-Walls:** On belts and seals, part numbers are often embossed directly into the rubber.
- **Under the Grease:** Use a wire brush or degreaser. A "ghost" etching often appears once the grime is gone.

Define the "Interface" (Connections)

If there is no part number, we identify it by how it connects to the rest of the machine.

- **The Bore:** Is the center hole smooth, threaded, or "keyed" (a square notch for a metal key)?
- **The Teeth:** If it's a sprocket or gear, count the teeth. This is the only way to determine the "Ratio."
- **The Port Size:** For valves or fittings, is it NPT (tapered) or BSPP (parallel)?

If you can't find any info, take sourcing photos

If you are sending a photo to us, these 3 angles help us identify the part in seconds:

1. **The Profile Shot:** A side view showing the overall shape.
2. **The Front End:** A shot looking directly at the part.
3. **The Comparison:** Place a common object (like a coin or a pen) next to the part so we can judge the scale immediately.

Then capture any other details to make sure you are ordering the correct replacement

Feature	Your Observation
Material	(Steel, Plastic, Brass, Aluminum?)
Weight	(Heavy/Cast Iron vs. Lightweight?)
Environment	(Is it oily, high-heat, or wash-down?)
Markings	(Any partial letters or logos?)