

Advantages of Contracting Out Your Lubrication Program

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Across industry there has been a move toward predictive and proactive maintenance, but unfortunately a large number of organizations are still operating in the reactive maintenance mode. This can be a difficult cycle to break due to the efforts required just to keep equipment running. Frequently, repairs only involve getting machines back up and not actually fixing them.

PROGRAM FEATURE/NEED	PERFORMED BY IN-HOUSE TECHNICIANS	PERFORMED BY CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL
Lubricant Optimization		X
Lubrication PM Optimization		X
Lubrication Program Survey		X
Equipment Modification Recommendations		X
Equipment Modification Installation	X	X
Lubrication Program Management	X	X
Lubrication Inspections	X	X
Lubrication Activities	X	X
Lubrication Certifications	X	X
Lubrication Training		X

Many maintenance departments are also woefully understaffed. Even teams with sufficient personnel often spend so much time “fighting fires” to keep the plant operating that little time is left for predictive or proactive maintenance. There simply are not enough hours in the day and not enough maintenance mechanics to repair the equipment properly in many organizations.

This creates considerable demand on resources in the form of parts, labor and time. In addition, the cost of a breakdown can be significant,

with the repair of the breakdown only a small portion of the breakdown’s total cost.

Studies have shown that most organizations spend only 5 percent of their maintenance budget on lubricants and lubrication, yet approximately 70 percent of equipment failures are lubrication related. This would include applying the wrong

lubricant, relubricating too often or not often enough, using too much or too little lubricant, and not controlling contamination adequately.

In the end, your maintenance dollars will be spent one way or another. It is just a matter of when and how much. If you skimp on lubricants, breathers, filters, etc., you will continue to spend vast amounts of money on equipment downtime and repairs.



Now consider the cost savings an effective lubrication program can provide in the form of increased equipment reliability, reduced lubricant consumption and fewer repair parts. Lower overtime costs could also pay for the program's implementation and management.

Doesn't this sound like something that

would be of interest to your plant manager?

Lubrication: A Skilled Trade

It is important to realize that proper lubrication is a skilled trade. Lube technicians must be trained how to determine which lubricant is best for each application. They should also know how to calculate the correct relubrication quantity and frequency. In order to learn these skills, technicians must be trained and certified. Just like every other skilled trade, lubrication requires a training and certification component.

With the average age of skilled workers approaching 60, more and more of these individuals will be retiring in the next several years. Sadly, few younger workers are entering into the skilled trades, which will leave a huge deficit of trained workers.

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visitors say their plant

44% outsources lubrication or
maintenance tasks to contract-
based laborers

If you do not have immediate access to skilled, trained and certified lubrication technicians, it may be time to look into contracting out this function. A good contractor not only can provide trained and certified lube techs but can also help you develop procedures for your lubrication-related tasks as well as implement, maintain and manage your lubrication program.

Granted, you will spend more than 5 percent of your maintenance budget, but in return you will lower your equipment's breakdown frequency and the costs associated with repair parts, overtime, downtime, etc.

Contractors should have the training and requisite skills to survey your facility and make immediate recommendations for equipment modifications, lubricant selections and other necessary changes. They should also be able to properly install the modifications, implement the procedures and lube routes, and monitor their completion.

In short, a contractor is equipped to walk into your facility and, in a very brief period of time, make significant improvements to your lubrication program that will be reflected on the bottom line.