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We've long believed that reliability is an excellent and still under-tapped source of increased profitability. In good times and bad, that hasn't changed. When capital expense budgets are cut, maintenance professionals are charged with stretching the life of equipment.

When budget constraints ease, as they have in recent months, those professionals are charged with the continued protection of these very important investments.

In either case, these professionals are looking at root causes of contamination—*one of the prime culprits in short-lived assets*
. As they begin to understand these root causes, they employ solutions for exclusion and control. In our space, we focus on contamination control to extend the life of lubricants, and, as a result, the life of the equipment that uses them.

As the economy entered recession, numerous companies took capacity off-line. As their assets became dormant, it was critical to protect them. That way, when the equipment was re-employed, there would be a smooth startup. Many of our clients called on us to provide filtration systems and desiccant breathers to ensure that the headspace of the equipment would remain free of moisture and particulate ingress and the lubricants would remain at specified cleanliness levels.

During the recession, many companies took the opportunity to further train their staff on reliability best practices. We, too, added additional technical support and educational tools to help our distribution partners and end-users learn more about how reliability practices can improve their businesses. We added several new products to our portfolio as well—*solutions to help end-users protect and monitor equipment in new ways.*

Now, as we've begun to emerge from recession and capacity has been brought back on-line, proactive protection in dormancy has helped smooth the transition. With capacity being brought

back very deliberately, uptime is as critical as ever. As a result, use of proactive maintenance tools like desiccant breathers and filtration systems is more prevalent than ever.

Reliability also makes perfect sense from a sustainability perspective. Extending the life of lubricants decreases consumption and disposition. If you can implement solutions to extend the life of a lubricant by five times, and extrapolate that across all equipment using it, there are tremendous environmental "savings"—*a powerful "sustainability" message*. At the same time, if you improve equipment performance and efficiency, you exploit the under-tapped profit potential of reliability: a clear example of how the goals of corporate sustainability and profitability can run on parallel tracks.

From a safety perspective, we make a similar argument. Many of the solutions we recommend start with understanding how systems become contaminated, and how they can contaminate the workplace. Simple solutions like controlling leaks, controlling contaminant ingress and controlling oil mist keep equipment and workplace contamination minimized, keeping oil where it needs to be—*in the machine*. These solutions are designed to align the goals of sustainability with those of safety and profitability. If you control contamination, in many cases, with simple equipment modifications and good housekeeping, you do just that.
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