Written by Ken Bannister, Contributing Editor
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Over the holidays, I had chance to visit with some old friends. They were thrilled to inform me of their teenage son's recent work promotion to the position of plant lubrication technician, in charge of his facility's lubrication program.

Intrigued that a world-leading robotic manufacturing organization would trust its entire program to a high-school-prepared, teenaged veteran of its organization—*a three-month veteran, that is*—I couldn't wait to hear how the company had prepared him for this important position.

When I congratulated the young man on his new job, I was saddened, but not surprised to find out that he and his employer believed that his organizational skills are what gave him the ability to step into his new role. The fact is that he had "shadowed" the position for three days to see if he thought himself suitable, after which he felt confident he knew enough to organize the lubrication program better than his predecessor. In the shadowing process, he had picked up some real pearls of wisdom from the previous "lubricator," who successfully instilled in him that "oil is oil, and grease is grease; you just got to get plenty in there!"

Ironically, when I offered him a seat in a lubrication fundamentals course to help him gain an understanding of lubricants and their application, he politely refused, stating that after several weeks on the job, he already knew enough about lubrication. Besides, he thought he would likely be moving on to another position once his reorganization of the lubrication program was completed!

I am dismayed at the pervasiveness of this one-dimensional view of the lubrication management process. Countless management, engineering and maintenance professionals—*and non-professionals*—share it. It's one of the greatest paradoxes in today's maintenance business: Lubrication management continues to be a victim of misunderstanding and ignorance, wherein the act of lubrication is considered an elementary task requiring only the most basic knowledge, simplistic thinking and rudimentary skill sets.

With virtually no formal lubrication training offered in yesterday's or today's apprenticeship and engineering programs, few individuals entering the lubrication management arena have in-depth knowledge and problem-solving experience in the field to fall back on. Many, though, are rich in opinion based on myths and old wives' tales perpetuated on a daily basis—*lubrication myths and tales that too often go unchallenged.*

Fortunately, this situation need not continue! The fact that you are reading this magazine today tells me you are a perfect advocate to help raise the profile of lubrication management in your company and your profession. Thus, I challenge all ***Lubrication Management & Technology*** readers to assist me in making 2010 the year in which we change the perception of lubrication. Let's put in place lubrication management programs that deliver increased equipment reliability, increased equipment availability, increased environmental compliance, reduced maintenance and reduced energy consumption—
all for minimal corporate cost.

Our publication will do its part by continuing to bring to you innovative articles and value-added technology news to help you inform, sell, implement and monitor your lubrication management initiatives. Good Luck! **LMT**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Meet and learn from Ken in person at MARTS 2010, where he again will be presenting his highly acclaimed all-day workshop "Lubrication for Industrial Facilities," on Tuesday, April 27. To register for this invaluable professional-development opportunity, visit www.MARTSconference.com

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