

Lubrication Checkup: Lubricant Consolidation

Written by Dr. Lube, aka Ken Bannister
Tuesday, 20 October 2009 20:29



Symptom:

"Dear Dr. Lube: In a recent maintenance audit, our lubrication program scored very low. One recommendation was to implement a lubricant-consolidation program. Is this type of program worth the effort?"

Diagnosis:

In facilities with outdated lubrication management programs—or *no program*—it's not uncommon to find dozens of different lubricants in use, often supplied by numerous vendors. This results in duplicate purchases of similarly classified products.

Achieving value from your lubrication program starts with choosing and purchasing the right product for the job. Unfortunately, many purchases are based on price alone, rather than on an engineered process that considers the working environment, performance requirements, life-cycle expectations and economic conditions. Because every manufactured lubricant is a unique blend of base oil and additive packages, choosing the right one is a specialized task.

Prescription:

With lubricant consolidation, the lubricant manufacturer will audit your operations to determine the least number of products needed to provide the highest degree of protection for all moving elements within the plant or facility. The consolidation audit team groups and classifies currently used lubricants and examines their suitability for the working environment. With redundancy and duplication out of the equation, the remaining list becomes a starting point for cross matching to the new vendor's suite of products. Further consolidation is often possible through an understanding of the composition and design attributes of the new lubricants. This lets the lubrication engineer effectively group and match products to the client's needs. The process usually drives the number of required products into the single digits and results in benefits that include:

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- Reduced on-site inventories
- Reduced purchasing demand/cost
- Improved handling and storage
- Improved health and safety
- Improved maintenance control
- Improved troubleshooting and problem solving

As a bonus, the cost of providing the consolidation service is most often waived in return for an exclusive purchase contract for a mutually agreed time period (usually one to two years). The effort is minimal compared to the deliverables. And, yes, it's so worth it!

Have lubrication questions? Contact Dr. Lube, aka Ken Bannister, who specializes in helping companies build successful lubrication-management programs. Author of the book Lubrication for Industry

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section on Lubrication, he's also a contributing editor for

MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY

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LUBRICATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

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