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Who doesn't remember the late comedian Rodney Dangerfield, whose humor was based on getting "no respect," regardless of his efforts? Dangerfield's lament used to be a common refrain in countless maintenance departments. Recently, with the emergence of reliability groups making sense of data and years of collected history, as well as the use of—*and respect for* —certified personnel in the condition monitoring sciences, that tune has grown fainter.

In my opinion, however, the lube side of the equation continues to be viewed largely as an "anyone can do it" function. Even though "doing it" ineffectively can cause up to 70% of all mechanical failures, lubrication still gets no (or little) respect.

This past summer, I was honored to speak at an international condition monitoring excellence conference. While there, I learned, through an attendee survey (representing the manufacturing, mining, oil & gas, utilities and transportation industries) that oil analysis is the number one preferred condition monitoring technique in the Pacific Rim of Australia and New Zealand (with 29% of the respondent vote). Vibration analysis came in second, with 25%. Infrared thermography ranked third, with 20%. Fewer than a handful of respondents acknowledged having formal lube programs or certified lubrication professionals at their sites. In contrast, every attending company had numerous certified vibration analysts and thermographers in their maintenance and reliability departments. (Ironically, several attendees privately admitted that even though they supported an oil analysis program, many oil changes were still activated on a calendar basis, not on condition.)

Based on my experience, these findings aren't out of line. They are, sadly, reflective of industry worldwide—*including here in North America.*

Sometimes we have to find a catalyst to make people pay attention to the positive effects of GLP (Good Lubrication Practices). My conference presentation discussed just such a catalyst: the fact that all Australian corporations must now pay a carbon tax based on their CO2 emissions.

The good news I shared with the attendees is that the use of lubricants and lubricant-delivery methods and systems can deliver up to 18% energy reduction through decreased electrical energy consumption that converts directly into a CO2 reduction at the rate of 0.526 kgCO2 units for every 1kWh saved (*Carbon Trust – UK grid electricity conversion – 2011*). That's a "threefor" in my book: 1) increased asset/component lifecycle/reliability; 2) reduced energy consumption; and 3) a reduced carbon footprint. All of these goals and more can be obtained for almost no capital outlay. Needless to say, such benefits cast a respectful light on GLP, and my audience's attention could not have been higher.

Moving GLP forward requires understanding, measurement and communication (all hallmarks of a world-class organization). A significant step toward GLP and achieving respect is the training of lube, maintenance and reliability personnel in the area of industrial lubrication and the promoting of accreditation through any of three international bodies: ICML (International Council for Machinery Lubrication), the largest international certifying body at this time; STLE (Society of Tribologists and Lubrication Engineers); and ISO (International Organization for Standardization).

Only with qualified and knowledgeable personnel will the practice of GLP ever be able to gain traction—*and finally silence the "no respect" refrain that lubrication has lived with for so long.*

On a lighter note, take a look at the innovative work that you and your department are doing and consider entering the "2012 Maintenance & Reliability Innovator of the Year" award competition. It can be a team effort. Details and entry forms are available at www.reliabilityinnovator.com . Good Luck!
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