

Art of total lubrication management

K. B. Mathur, a veteran in the field of lubrication management, tells Norman Pereira that most companies take lubricants for granted and explains how they can cut their consumption by half



K.B Mathur, Director, Global Technical Services

In today's world of cut-throat competition, cost reduction through manufacturing input conservation techniques is vital, especially if one has to succeed in the global arena. While industry professionals generally focus their attention on areas of their core competence and achieving their corporate objectives, they ignore important supporting functions like scientific lubrication of plant and ma-

chinery. Little do they realise that there is huge savings if one manages their lubricants professionally.

This is where Global Technical Services (GTS) comes into picture. Started by K. B. Mathur, the company has innovated the concept of Total Lubrication Management (TLM).

A Mechanical Engineer, who has held several senior level executive positions in companies like Indian Oil, Gulf Oil India and Reliance Petroleum, Mathur brings his rich experience of 36 years in oil industry into this business.

"We started a new concept called 'Total Lubrication Management' to impart knowledge to the industries that are consuming high quantity of lubricant oil and are not conscious of quality at all," states Mathur.

GTS's clients are mainly from the manufacturing sector and obviously those whose consumption of lubricants is very high, not less than Rs 50 lakhs per annum. The company charges the clients as per the savings that are accrued. "In case a company is using lubricants worth Rs 1 crore, and we guarantee him 15 per cent savings, the cost saved works out to Rs 15 lakhs, which is shared between us. So, our fee would work out to about Rs 7.5 lakhs, which is directly linked to the savings we have managed to do," he explains.

Majority of GTS's clients are from the cement sector while it also has a client from the steel sector, which is Jindal Steel. When asked why he is not diversifying into different domains, Mathur replies that he already has enough on his plate. However, GTS is currently developing a software for lubricant management and once this is complete, it will be able to service a large

gamut of clients, which use lubricants in huge quantities. "The software, which will be very user-friendly, would speed up processes and enable us to service more clients," says Mathur. About other verticals with potential, he states that "Large auto manufacturers too can be part of our clientele as they use a lot of lubricants in manufacturing vehicles and we make sense to them not only from the savings point of view but also about instituting good maintenance practices."

Talking about the scope and importance of TLM, Mathur says that "with prices of petroleum skyrocketing, the price of base oil, which is used in making lubricants, is also spiraling, resulting in the average price of lubricant going up to Rs 60 per litre as compared to Rs 28 per litre 5-10 years ago. And this spiral in the price of oil is not going to stop, and hence it is becoming very essential for people to conserve lubricants."

With machinery becoming more expensive and sophisticated, it is common for plant maintenance personnel to 'err on the safe side' by resorting to 'over lubrication' without many of them being aware of the fact that 'over lubrication is as bad as under lubrication.'

"However, the general practice that 'I can't take

chances with my machinery, and hence I don't bother about the lubricants' is slowly changing now," says Mathur. Lubrication aspects are generally taken for granted and little do maintenance people realise that lubrication planning starts right from the arrival of lubricants in the main stores. Therefore, storage, handling and dispensing lubricants assume a very important step towards feeding contamination-free lubricating oil to the machine.

TLM is an integral, inevitable tool in the successful implementation of 'Total Productive Maintenance'. TLM is, therefore, a great tool in cost reduction in Indian Industry and hence, is a positive and definite step towards achieving TPM. GTS has also filtration machines, which it has developed in-house. "Basically, what goes wrong with the oil is that it gets contaminated. In the cement industry particularly, there is a lot of dust flying around. This dust finds its way into the machines and oil. If you can remove all suspended particles through efficient filtering, the oil can become as good as new," explains Mathur. He is rightfully full of optimism when he says "This field has got a vast potential and we can make a huge difference." **[20]**