6 Ways to Improve Your Oil Analysis Program

There are more than 20 million industrial oil samples collected annually across the U.S. Smart companies with an experienced oil analysis provider, such as Eurofins TestOil, can demonstrate an impressive ROI. To realize that kind of return, your oil analysis program probably needs a little tweaking. Here are some suggestions.

1. Establish Proper Sampling Procedures

Sampling is the most important part of any lube analysis program and the quality of your samples is vital to the success of your program. To deliver accurate test results, your lab needs consistent samples from the same locations every time. To achieve this, standardize your sampling method. To achieve this, standardize your sampling method--taking the following suggestions into account:

- Dedicated Sample Ports: Accurate samples employ a pitot tube or ball valve. By using either of these devices you will be pulling samples from the same place.
- Train the Sample Takers: Samples should be taken by well-trained people who know how, when, where, and why to take a sample.
- Onsite Lube Audits: Generally, an auditor will investigate several areas including equipment criticality, past performance, safety hazards associated with equipment failure, new lube usage, and current practices.
- Cross Plant Audit: By doing a cross plant audit you may find that some of the practices and procedures that have become standard at your plant site are not correct.

2. Avoid Delays in Receiving Results

The information contained in your sample begins to lose its value almost as soon as the sample has been taken. This is why you should ship samples as soon as they are collected. Otherwise, you run the risk of not catching potential problems. You should expect to have a report in your hands within 24 to 48 hours from when the sample reaches the lab. Not all labs offer this, Eurofins TestOil does.

3. Learn How to Interpret Results

Too often the failure of a program can be attributed to the lack of interpretation of the conditions report and an inappropriate response to the results. The reason for this can largely be attributed to the lack of training of your maintenance professionals. Training and education should occur at several different levels and involve everyone who contributes to machine reliability, from management all the way to frontline workers.

4. Communicate with your Lab Analysts

Develop a relationship with your lab analysts, with the confidence that you can call on them at any time to discuss concerns about your equipment or overall program. Your analysts need to be familiar with your equipment, and more importantly, to know your goals and the expectations for your program. Before choosing a lab, check references. You should find out how often the lab visits customer sites and if they charge for speaking to their analysts (Eurofins TestOil does not).

5. Establish Adequate Performance Tracking

Many plants tend to focus on how fast a machine is repaired, without emphasizing reduced downtime and increased levels of machine availability. A true predictive maintenance program should be proactive rather than reactive; focused on monitoring and controlling root causes that will ultimately diminish the frequency of machine failures. Tracking such things as machine availability, replacement parts costs, labor hours on planned and unplanned activities, and lubricant consumption are also important. Identify benchmarks early.

Procedures for Documenting Savings

It is wise to have procedures in place to document savings and here are two great ways to do that.

- Monthly Management Reports: Your lab should provide monthly management reports to help track your program's progress. A good example is a sample compliance report, which tells you if all of your samples have been taken for the month. These reports should also help you understand why significant changes are occurring with your equipment.
- Program Review Meetings with Your Lab: Most labs have the ability to compare your program with other programs throughout the industry. It is a valuable checks and balances process that is offered by Eurofins TestOil, but not all labs. You have the right to know how your program is doing.

6. Give Your Leader Authority

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Have questions about Eurofins TestOil?

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