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Factories
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SUCCESS STORY

Comprehensive Lubrication Program Improves Equipment Life, Increases Uptime and Reduces Overall Costs

Problem

A major OSB (Oriented Strand Board) manufacturer was striving to improve uptime as the demand for product increased. It was recognized that a significant portion of downtime could be attributed to inadequate lubrication practices. Gearboxes, bearing and hydraulic pump failures were some of the problems that the manufacturer was seeing. With over 1,500 lubrication points, the manpower dedicated to lubrication was inadequate, and limited processes were in place to handle the large lubrication scope. The manufacturer had made attempts to add lubrication equipment and improve lubrication PM's, but the attempts were not successful due to low priority and lack of resources.

Solution

The OSB manufacturer looked at finding an outside company to improve their lubrication. They chose to contract with Advanced Technology Services, Inc. (ATS) to improve their lubrication program. ATS, in partnership with Lubrication Engineers (LE), offered a comprehensive program that included all lubrication related equipment, lubricants and manpower to handle all lubrication activities and processes including pm and lube route development. ATS/LE did a comprehensive assessment of the lubrication needs at the site and presented a proposal that included all of the above scope in a long term contract. Manpower included lubrication technicians and manager and equipment included an upgraded lube room and filter carts as required. The combined expertise of ATS and LE enabled the development of a lubrication solution that addressed all of the needs of the OSB manufacturer.

Bottom Line

Equipment was installed which included automatic lubrication, breathers and sight glasses, pm's and lube routes were developed, and a comprehensive oil analysis and lubricant filtering schedules were implemented. One year after the start of the program, the manufacturer realized the following savings:

- Reduction of hydraulic fluid usage by 50%
- Customer maintenance tech time to do lubrication reduced by two man years resulting in improved utilization of maintenance technicians
- Increased uptime
- Overall improvement of safety and housekeeping
- An increase in customer awareness of lubricant issues, more operator pm's
- Reduced gearbox and bearing costs
- Improved equipment life

A world class lubrication program was implemented by the manufacturer which yielded outstanding results in a limited amount of time. Typically manufacturers find when they implement a challenge by themselves; they do not find they achieve positive results in a timely manner. In addition, the metrics and data generated by the ATS/LE team helped the entire plant to look at areas to both focus and improve overall plant productivity. Improved performance in a timely manner at this facility resulted in the corporation making a decision to expand the program at other plants.