

Starting a new era - Wearcheck joins Set Point Technology

AFTER 27 years as a family-owned company, Wearcheck has become a division of Set Point Technology, the Johannesburg-based listed industrial technology group, at a purchase price of R 20,9 million.

This marks the beginning of a new era for Wearcheck which has grown from a home-based business to a high-tech, internationally recognised operation employing 64 people, in less than three decades.

Wearcheck joint managing directors, Lesley Crawford and Gary Brown - now divisional directors of Set Point - are tremendously excited about the move which they believe will offer many new opportunities and tangible benefits for both the company and Wearcheck customers.

'We will be able to capitalise on the experience, expertise and synergy of the dynamic Set Point group with its 13 specialist operating divisions and its many global strategic alliances,' they said.

Set Point supplies process and environmental analytical instruments, systems and applications technology as well as high-tech analysis services to a wide range of industries throughout Africa and abroad (see box on Page 4).

According to Set Point chief executive, Mark Smith, the Wearcheck purchase is a natural expansion for the group which is experiencing rapid growth internationally.

Set Point mergers and acquisitions director Tony Dreisenstock and sales and marketing director Dr Linsent Martin seal the deal with Lesley Crawford and Gary Brown of Wearcheck.

'The deal opens another niche focus area which complements the group's diverse analytical operations,' he said.

'We were attracted by Wearcheck's international status, their advanced technology and their sound management structures.'

Lesley Crawford and Gary Brown will continue to manage the company from its existing offices in Durban and Johannesburg, and the staff complement remains virtually unchanged.

'Quality and customer care will remain our priorities, along with our ongoing resolve to keep abreast of technological advancements internationally,' the directors said.

'The ability to contain maintenance costs is becoming increasingly important for South African industries and we believe Wearcheck has a pivotal role to play in this process.' ✓



Wearcheck wins tribology award

WEARCHECK is the proud winner of the prestigious Louw Alberts Award for 1999 which is presented by the SA Institute of Tribology (SAIT) each year to recognise and reward outstanding achievements in this field.

Members of SAIT's Executive Committee said that Wearcheck was being acknowledged for furthering the

interests of tribology within the industry by establishing, developing and maintaining a reliable and proven oil analysis facility for proactive maintenance management over many years.

Set Point divisional director of Wearcheck, Gary Brown said that it was a great honour to be recognised by one's peers and that each and every

staff member had a share in the award.

'It is through team effort and the dedication of employees that a company achieves success,' he said.

Full details of the award will be published in the April issue of SA Mechanical Engineer, the official journal of SAIT. ✓

Portnet saves millions in maintenance costs

Rob Robinson, senior technical supervisor of Portnet Durban's CVR workshop, and technical manager Dinesh Mathura with one of the truck tractors in the organisation's 300-unit road transport and container manager's fleet.

OIL ANALYSIS has saved Portnet Durban's Container Vehicle Repair (CVR) workshop about R 2,5 million over the past five years on the organisation's turbo-charged V8 engines alone.

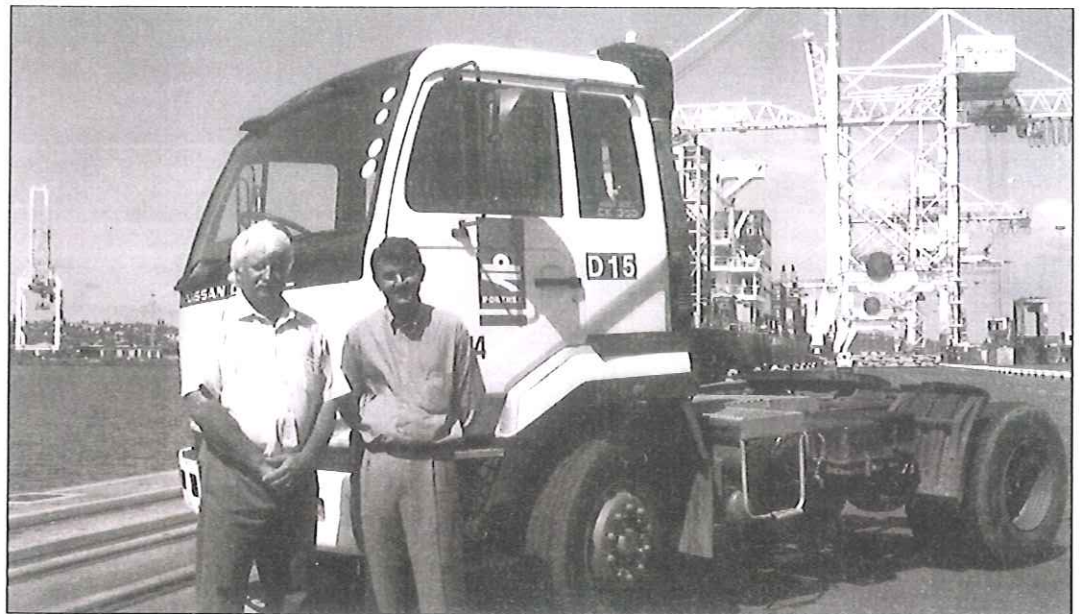
'This amount represents estimated direct costs where bearing failure would have resulted in the loss of the crankshaft or the complete engine,' says Portnet senior technical supervisor, Rob Robinson.

'Having access to wear metal trends has enabled us to successfully intercept bearing problems on the turbo-charged V8 engines,' he said.

'Information on turbo malfunction and dust entry is also of vital importance to us and identification of abnormal contamination has averted unforeseen failures on several occasions, as the workshop does not see the road transport vehicles often during service intervals.'

Portnet's CVR workshop is responsible for maintaining the 300 units which make up the organisation's road transport and container manager's fleet. These range from Mercedes Benz and MAN 6x4 and 4x2 truck tractors to the 4x2 ERF Harriers which operate mainly in the port enclosure.

'We rely heavily on oil analysis for monitoring oil condition because we extend drain intervals,' Mr Robinson said. 'We use a Canadian oil treatment, Power Up, to improve the service life of engine lubricants and some of our older units have already achieved double their normal life expectancy. Wearcheck's comprehensive reports on combustion efficiency and



Y2K strategy is on schedule

WEARCHHECK's strategic plan to prevent disruptions of any kind at the turn of the century is firmly on track.

'We are fully aware of the implications of Year 2000 readiness and it has been accorded high priority status by management,' says information systems manager, Larry Baddock.

'We are fortunate in that Wearcheck products do not have intrinsic date processing associated with them and have no expiry date. Also, the system on which the Wearcheck programme runs has never internally represented, processed or stored dates as two figure numbers. In fact, the only relevance of dates is in relation to previous sample history for trend analysis.'

'We are, however, implementing a number of procedures to avert any possible problems:

- ◆ We have requested Year 2000 project status from all approved suppliers to promote awareness and to allow us to assess their readiness. Any that do not meet our requirements will be replaced.
- ◆ Infocheck and Netcheck users have been approached by a member of our Year 2000 project team to ensure close co-operation in testing for readiness as these customers rely

on their own PC hardware and operating systems to provide accurate date information.

- ◆ An Infocheck upgrade will be issued free of charge to all Infocheck customers, and Netcheck customers automatically receive updates via e-mail, incorporating fixes for Year 2000 constraints that are revealed during product testing.



Senior systems administrator Lorain de Bruin and systems analyst Simon Robertson are part of Wearcheck's Y2K readiness team.

- ◆ Customers have been asked to supply us with as many different types of contact information as possible for sending Wearcheck reports (eg. fax, e-mail, modem, mail or courier delivery) in the event of the disruption of any one service which is beyond Wearcheck's control. This precaution

is being taken because, like all companies, we are reliant on many core infrastructure providers who are not prepared to furnish any guarantees for non-disruption of service.

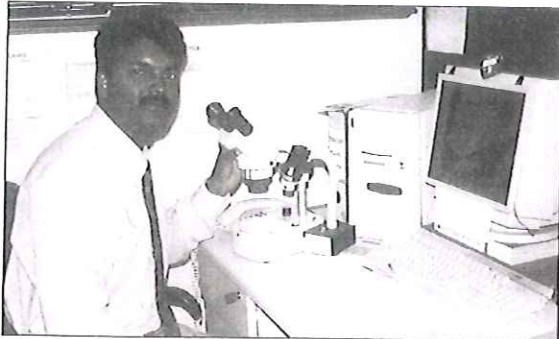
- ◆ We are an active member of the KwaZulu-Natal Year 2000 User Group and are keeping abreast of all new developments. ✓

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MAKING HEADWAY

Ravi Chetty and Clive Govender, who between them have nine years' service with Wearthcheck, have been promoted as part of the company's staff development scheme.

Trainee diagnostician



Ravi Chetty, trainee diagnostician

DIAGNOSTIC assistant Ravi Chetty is on track for achieving his ambition to be a diagnostician. He will be spending the next six months undergoing an intensive hands-on internal training course which will earn him the title of junior technical consultant.

At the same time, Ravi is nearing the end of his first year studies towards a three-year diploma in mechanical engineering through Technisa and, when this is completed midway through 2001, he hopes to become a fully fledged diagnostician.

Ravi's career path has been

moving towards this goal since he joined Wearthcheck in November 1994. Whilst working the night shift in the lab for two years, he did a one-year computer science course during the day. This enabled him to move to the data processing section where he gained experience in data capturing and data base creation. After six months he was promoted to diagnostic assistant and has been working in the debris lab for the past eighteen months.

Ravi's current training programme involves diagnosing a wide range of samples every

day which are then checked by a technical consultant.

'I am thoroughly enjoying my new position,' says Ravi who used to do diagnostic training whenever he had a spare moment whilst working in the debris lab.

'I am now trying to diagnose as many samples as possible every day. Of course, I realise that accuracy is more important than speed, but I am keen to gain as much experience as I can.

Communication

'I am also looking forward to interacting with customers when I have completed my training because I appreciate the need for effective communication. When I was involved in on-site sampling for customers in my previous position, I welcomed the opportunity of discussing oil analysis matters with their maintenance staff.

Before joining Wearthcheck, Ravi completed one year of an electrical engineering diploma at ML Sultan Technikon. His hobbies are swimming, playing squash and having a game of cricket whenever he gets the chance. ✓

Move to the debris lab

ADMIN CLERK Clive Govender has stepped into Ravi Chetty's shoes, joining Trevor Pillay in the debris lab.

As technical assistant his duties are to prepare RPD slides as well as aircraft and industrial filters for ferrographic and filtergram analysis. He also packs the aircraft kits and operates the Karl Fischer coulometer which measures very low levels of water contamination, mainly in refrigeration and compressor samples.

Another of his responsibilities is conducting on-site sampling as part of the industrial

programme for fixed plant. He will be travelling to Tongaat-Hulett Felixton every month to take samples, and will also take care of their data bases.

'I am finding my new work most interesting,' says Clive, who has set his sights on becoming a diagnostician.

'I began a mechanical engineering diploma at Technisa this year and am concentrating on learning as much as I can whilst broadening my practical experience.'

Clive has been working in Wearthcheck's data processing section for the past four years. During this time he spent a



Clive Govender, technical assistant

total of six months undergoing training in the lab. Prior to that he spent two years in the spares department at Williams Hunt Delta where he acquired a thorough knowledge of vehicle components.

In his spare time, when he is not socialising with friends, Clive enjoys swimming, playing volleyball and working out at the gym. ✓

CMS

merges

with

Wearthcheck

CMS International predictive maintenance services has been bought by Wearthcheck and Set Point Technology and all oil analysis operations have been centralised under the Wearthcheck banner.

Setpoint divisional directors of Wearthcheck, Lesley Crawford and Gary Brown, believe this is an exceptional opportunity to broaden Wearthcheck's customer base and to consolidate the company's position as the leading oil analysis company in south-east Africa.

'We see this as an exciting new development and are doing everything in our power to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible,' they said.

'We are looking forward to building strong working relationships with all CMS customers.'

They went on to say that this expansion was an illustration of the confidence that Set Point Technology and Wearthcheck had in the future of South Africa and in the field of oil analysis which had a critical role to play in keeping the wheels of industry turning productively. ✓

Companies in the Set Point Group

- B & B Laboratories, Johannesburg (analytical services)
- Caser, Pietersburg (rural and urban water supply)
- Gas Detection Systems, Boksburg
- Gastech Services, Randburg (manufacture of portable gas monitors)
- Pollution Emission Measurement Services, Midrand
- Process Analytics, Boksburg (analyser consultancy)
- PSV Services, Edenvale (supplier of pumps, related components, and motor control centres)
- RBF Technology, Johannesburg (hi-tech products and services)
- Rocklabs, Johannesburg (analytical laboratory specialising in geology and mining)
- SMM Instruments (analytical instruments and solutions)
- VSA Geoconsultants, Pretoria
- Measurement Techniques Limited, UK
- Wearcheck Africa (oil analysis)

NEW CONTRACT NEWS

The Scharrighuisen Group

SCHARRIGHUISEN opencast mining contractors has become one of Wearcheck's high volume customers. The company operates plant and equipment at major mining sites countrywide. ✓

PORTNET SAVES MILLIONS

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blow by contaminants are invaluable in this process.'

Another example of a direct saving afforded by oil analysis was a recent successful warranty claim for the premature failure of ten ADE 366T engines.

'Wearcheck's reports enabled us to substantiate our claim,

saving us at least R 300 000,' Mr Robinson said.

Portnet Durban has been a Wearcheck customer for twenty years and sees the value in establishing a solid long-term relationship with an oil analysis company. All of their supervisory staff have completed Wearcheck's technical training courses. ✓

PUBLICATIONS are welcome to reproduce articles providing that Wearcheck is acknowledged.

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Wearcheck Technical Training Courses MAY - NOVEMBER 1999

Date	Course	Venue
19 May	2	Pinetown
20/21 May	4	Pinetown
21 June	2	Johannesburg
22 June	3	Johannesburg
24/25 June	4	Johannesburg
26 July	2	Johannesburg
27 July	3	Johannesburg
29/30 July	4	Johannesburg
10 August	2	Pinetown
11 August	3	Pinetown
12/13 August	4	Pinetown
6 September	2	Johannesburg
7 September	3	Johannesburg
9/10 September	4	Johannesburg
18 October	2	Johannesburg
19 October	3	Johannesburg
21/22 October	4	Johannesburg
16 November	2	Pinetown
17 November	3	Pinetown
18/19 November	4	Pinetown

Course 1 : *A practical introduction to oil analysis*
By arrangement. Cost: R2736 per day on site.

Course 2 : *The application of analysis and an introduction to troubleshooting*
(08h30 - 16h30). Cost: R478.80 (Wearcheck customers), R665 (others).

Course 3 : *Troubleshooting series*
(08h30 - 16h30). Cost: R478.80 (Wearcheck customers), R665 (others).

Course 4 : *The technical management of oil analysis and lubrication*
(Day 1: 08h30 - 16h30, Day 2: 08h30 - 12h30).
Cost: R912 (Wearcheck customers), R1197 (others).

Infocheck Training Courses MAY - NOVEMBER 1999

Date	Venue
11-13 May	Johannesburg
8-10 June	Pinetown
6-8 July	Johannesburg
14-16 September	Johannesburg
9-11 November	Pinetown

Cost per delegate : R1 368

All prices include VAT.

For bookings phone Melanie Hynd on (031) 700-5460.