

Fact-finding trip paints a useful global picture

TECHNICAL manager Alistair Geach's recent fact-finding visit to the USA and UK has enabled Wearcheck to assess the company's global competitiveness - with extremely positive results.

'By combining participation in the annual Wearcheck International (WCI) meeting with attendance at a major condition monitoring conference and in-depth inspections of several of the latest oil analysis instruments on offer, I was able to gain a clear picture of what is needed for us to maintain our competitive edge,' Alistair said. 'The trip confirmed that Wearcheck Africa remains at the forefront of the industry worldwide and reaffirmed the value of regular visits of this kind to ensure that we keep abreast of international trends.'

The WCI meeting in North Carolina in the USA again presented valuable opportunities for wide-ranging discussions on issues affecting the industry, with diverse contributions from the 14 delegates from the nine member countries.

Collaboration on software develop-



ment and globalising services continued to be high on the agenda. Wearcheck Canada demonstrated their advanced Webcheck software which has started to make inroads into the international OEM market, with a view to greater involvement in the system by all WCI companies. Already a leading equipment manufacturer makes use of WCI's global service - their samples can be sent to any Wearcheck laboratory worldwide for central processing, yet they can retrieve their data through the Canadian organisa-

tion - although this has yet to take off in South Africa.

'Condition Monitoring 2001' in Oxford, UK lived up to its name as Europe's premier conference of its kind. Here Alistair was particularly interested in two of the papers presented at the conference.

The first dealt with the application of Lasernet Fines technology (LNF) to debris monitoring in both diesel engines and hydraulic systems, and the second described a new software-based wear debris classification system developed for the Royal Air Force. The LNF technology attracted a lot of interest from delegates as the technology was easy to understand and the experimental data very impressive. The debris classification software attracted similar interest and featured simple but effective identification techniques as well as a powerful tutorial component that will have tremendous value for training ferrographers.

'It was great to meet the scientists behind these products and have the opportunity to discuss the technology first-hand,' Alistair said. 'Both products have great potential for Wearcheck and will, I'm sure, feature as an integral part of our service in the future.'

Season's Greetings

DESPITE global uncertainty and the many challenges facing the business community in South Africa, Wearcheck has had a productive and rewarding year and we would like to thank you, our customers, for your valued support and the enduring relationships we have built up with many of you over the years.

The prospect of a new year inspires thoughts of hope and renewal, and it is in this spirit that we wish you all a joyful festive season

and a prosperous and optimistic 2002.

Remembering those who do not have much to be thankful about, we will again be providing financial support to the READ organisation instead of sending out Christmas cards this year. We know you will endorse our efforts to help supply books to disadvantaged rural schools and to train educators how to use these resources to the best advantage of the children, giving them the foundations to build a better future for themselves. ✓





Peter Hohne, a director of Supermix Readymix in Kimberley, with some of the equipment the company has on the Wearcheck programme.

Oil analysis helps Supermix Readymix save on repairs and improve resale values

WEARCHECK's oil analysis programme has helped Supermix Readymix in Kimberley save money on repairs on numerous occasions, often identifying problems before warranties expire, and has helped improve resale values on equipment.

So says Jahn Hohne, managing director of the Kimberley-based company which manufactures cement bricks, blocks and pavers; supplies readymix concrete; and mines alluvial diamonds. Most of the company's fleet of heavy load trucks, Caterpillar loaders and bulldozers, compressors and plant have been on the Wearcheck programme for the past five years.

One example of a substantial saving effected by oil analysis was a MAN truck which showed high bronze bush wear rates. On inspection it was found that the rocker shaft brushes were excessively worn, enabling Supermix to replace them while they were still under warranty

from the manufacturer.

'Detecting the problem before the engine failed not only saved on the cost of repair but meant a huge reduction in downtime,' Mr Hohne said.

On another occasion Wearcheck gave an 'urgent' on a sample from the middle differential of a truck on whose final drives Supermix had recently resealed and replaced the bearings. Wearcheck offered to do an RPD to determine whether the wear debris was due to the middle differential bedding in or the power divider failing.

When the test showed debris typical of a failure mode rather than bedding in, Supermix stripped the differential and spent R20 000 repairing it, whereas a failure would have cost three times that amount.

'Wearcheck forms an integral part of our maintenance programme,' Mr Hohne said. 'We have been very happy with their service over the years.'

SOS lab is successful partnership

THE SOS laboratory in Isando is the fruit of Wearcheck's longstanding and mutually rewarding association with Barloworld. It was established in October 1999 as a joint venture between Barloworld and Set Point Technology (with Wearcheck as operational partner) to process samples for owners and users of earth-moving, mining, materials handling, agricultural and trucking products distributed by Barloworld in southern Africa.

The lab contains state-of-the-art instruments like the latest Nicolet Avatar FTIR, Pamas particle counter and ISL Houillon viscometer, which are supplemented by a range of equipment acquired in the purchase of CMS

International in early 1999. Although semi-automated, the SOS lab produces analytic results which match the quality of Wearcheck's computerised Pinetown laboratory, and can handle up to 2 500 samples a month.

Says Set Point divisional director of Wearcheck, Gary Brown, 'Analysis is performed by Wearcheck staff - chemist Greg Morse and lab assistants, Cowboy Manana and Rodney Suchipersadh. Lutz Meyer of Barloworld then interprets the analytical results in line with Caterpillar procedure internationally.'

'The SOS lab is a fine example of a partnership between a service provider and a major customer which works to everyone's benefit.'



Quality administrator Melanie Hynd (right) chats to senior lab assistant Sheila Naidoo about the new ISO 9001:2000 system.

>> INTERNET UPDATE

New web site offers much, much more

WEARCHECK's new look web site went online in October. It has a vibrant new design and features a wealth of information including:

- ◆ A detailed company profile
- ◆ Useful information on the oil analysis process and tests
- ◆ Pictures and profiles of Wearcheck staff (the faces behind the voices)
- ◆ Catalogues of products and services
- ◆ Details of technical and NetCheck training courses with current schedules
- ◆ The NetCheck user manual
- ◆ Links to member companies of Wearcheck International

More than 20 of the Technical Bulletins which have been published over the years can also be accessed on the site, along with the most recent issues of Monitor and Flyer.

These have proved particularly useful to our customers. Bell Equipment, for example, has established a permanent link between their staff intranet and customer extranet and the Wearcheck web site to provide easy access to the bulletins.

Says Mike Dutton, Bell's technical services director, 'We encourage our staff and customers to refer to Wearcheck's Tech-

nical Bulletins regularly as they reinforce the messages we are trying to get across.'

Two handy troubleshooting charts are also featured on the Wearcheck web site - for engines or auxiliary systems - detailing common problem categories, possible causes and corrective action in simple point form. (You can also buy laminated A2 or A4 size copies of these charts).

You can make bookings for training courses directly from the web site and will soon be able to purchase Wearcheck's products and services online.

The web site will be kept updated and maintained by Melanie Hynd. Take a look at www.wearcheck.co.za.

Maximise NetCheck

Are you getting the most from NetCheck? It offers a host of handy features - if you know how to use them. Why not book for a two-day NetCheck training course and make the system really work for you. Phone Cathy Bolton on (011) 392-6322.

Is e-mail easier?

If you prefer to receive future issues of Wearcheck Monitor and Technical Bulletin via e-mail instead of in printed form, please e-mail a request to: support@wearcheck.co.za. By doing so you will join the growing numbers of people who are already doing so - from customers and interested people all around the world including Saudi Arabia, India, Mauritius, Australia, and Yugoslavia!

Ahead of the field in quality

WEARCHECK is at the forefront of KwaZulu-Natal companies who have converted to the new ISO 9001:2000 quality system. According to a SABS spokesman, Wearcheck is among only 2% of the 400 to 500 companies they audit in the province who have made the change.

'When we started work on the conversion early this year we found that we already met many of the requirements of the new system,' explains Wearcheck quality administrator, Melanie Hynd.

'One of the reasons for this is that the new system requires extensive management involvement. Wearcheck has always believed there is far more to a good quality system than simply handing the job over to a specialist and letting them get on with it. It needs to be proactively managed at senior level.'

'The SABS audit report completed in August complimented us on a well managed and integrated system and commendable commitment to quality at all levels,' said Melanie.

'Another reason we managed to convert quite easily is that the new system emphasises service excellence and customer satisfaction and requires

continuous improvement to meet the unspoken needs of clients. We have always made an effort to be proactive - to go the extra mile to identify and resolve any problems and then build the solutions into the quality system. This has meant we rarely have any findings during our quality audits.'

Prizes for motivation

Keeping staff motivated about quality is another priority. During quality awareness month in November Melanie organised an internal competition with prizes for employees with a thorough knowledge of the system.

Companies were given three years to upgrade to the new system, starting from January 2001.

'We decided to begin straight away,' said Melanie. 'After months of renumbering and restructuring to conform with the new guidelines, we went live with the new system on our Intranet in October.'

'This will give us a chance to iron out any kinks before our next SABS audit in February when we hope to receive official certification for the 9001:2000 upgrade.'

MAKING HEADWAY

Switched on ...

MYRON Deonarian is the man responsible for maintaining Wearthcheck's computers, since being promoted to junior IT support in July.

Currently in his second year of a computer science degree at Unisa, Myron is thoroughly enjoying working in his field of study.

'This is a big learning curve for me but I am fortunate to be gaining practical experience at the same time as I am acquiring the theoretical knowledge,' he said.

Myron has a good grounding in laboratory procedures as he spent two years working night shift in the lab after joining Wearthcheck in August 1999.

Before that, he spent eight



Myron Deonarian

interesting months as a junior technician for Pro-Pool, a manufacturer of arcade games and pool tables, repairing monitors and power supplies in gaming arcades around Durban.

Our customers comment

TWO customers have recently expressed their appreciation to Wearthcheck for good service.

◆ Sean Wood, works manager, Coedmore Quarry (a division of Alpha Stone):

'Wearthcheck's technical training courses are of real benefit to our employees, both in their day-to-day work and in monitoring contractors who take samples for them. They find the hands-on approach especially helpful. We plan to send more of our staff on future courses.'

◆ Elzanne Retief, until recently of Stellenbosch University's Centre for Automotive Engineering:

'Thank you for your good service over the past few years. Without it, a lot of our projects would have been much more of a challenge.' ✓

Christmas opening hours

WEARCHECK will be open for business on all working days over the festive period to provide the best possible service to customers, and will only close on the public holidays of 25 and 26 December and 1 January. Staff will work a half day on 24 December, closing at midday. ✓

PUBLICATIONS are welcome to reproduce articles or extracts from it, providing the Wearthcheck Division of Set Point Technology is acknowledged.

Wearthcheck Training Courses

MARCH - MAY 2002

Date	Course	Venue
18 March	Course Two	Johannesburg
19 March	NetCheck	Johannesburg
23 April	Course 2	Cape Town
24 April	NetCheck	Cape Town
20 May	Course Two	Pinetown
21 May	NetCheck	Pinetown

Technical Training Course Two

The applications of oil analysis and an introduction to troubleshooting. 0830-16h00. Cost: R650 + VAT.

This course covers the functions and classifications of lubricants, the value of oil analysis, sampling and reporting procedures, tests and their significance, troubleshooting methods and case studies.

NetCheck

08h30 - 16h00.

Cost: R 1 325 + VAT.

For bookings phone Cathy Bolton on (011) 392-6322

Engineering students visit

MORE and more engineering students are becoming familiar with oil analysis after visiting the Wearthcheck laboratory in Pinetown. This is because Wearthcheck issues a standing invitation to mechanical, chemical and agricultural engineering students from all universities and technikons in Durban and Pietermaritzburg to tour the company's Pinetown laboratory and diagnostic facilities.

Recently, students from Technikon Natal and ML Sultan Technikon were given a guided tour of the company's operation, and a group from the chemical engineering department at the University of Durban-Westville will visit early in the New Year.

Says Set Point divisional director of Wearthcheck, Lesley Crawford, 'There are large numbers of engineers in South Africa who do not appreciate that condition monitoring is a valuable science which could greatly assist them in their work. We believe that giving future engineers a practical demonstration of the benefits of oil analysis whilst they are studying will help to remedy this.' ✓

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