

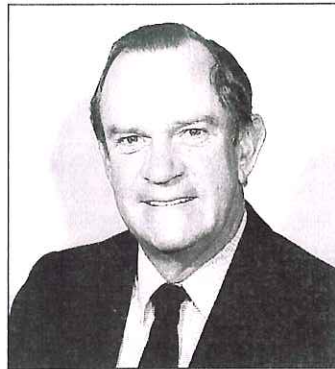
## Customers give Wearcheck's service the thumbs up

A NATIONAL survey conducted for Wearcheck by the Dorrian Consulting Group in October last year shows that customer satisfaction has increased since the previous survey undertaken six months earlier.

### Valued service

"Wearcheck has long been seen as proactive in its endeavours to provide not only the best, but superior customer service in its industry," said Dorrian's research manager Leon Buhr. "The latest survey shows that they have improved on their already high levels of service."

Generally the 50 respon-



Managing director, Wally Crawford.

dents approached - a sample of Wearcheck customers - valued the service they received and were prepared to pay for quality service. On a scale of 1 to 10, Wearcheck was rated 8,4 on value for money.

Although 28% felt that oil analysis was expensive, 79% of those were strongly opposed to Wearcheck's cutting back on service to reduce the price.

### More surveys

"We would like to thank all those customers who gave of their time to be interviewed," said Wearcheck MD, Wally Crawford. "We plan to continue these six-monthly telephonic surveys as part of our ongoing mission to achieve greater customer orientation and satisfaction."

Some customer comments made in response to the survey appear alongside.

### Customers comment on Wearcheck

● "It's a reliable, accurate service giving me an indication of how my fleet is running. I've already saved, with the assistance of Wearcheck, R50 000 - R60 000 on a transmission that would have cost R100 000 if it had been used for just another 100 hours." (Errol Woodhouse, Manager Engineering, Glisa Colliery)

● "They're the best!" (Ralph Povey, Workshop Manager, B&E Quarries)

● "If we have a problem we receive very efficient attention. If our problem needs to be sorted out higher up the hierarchy, we receive constant feedback." (M.Daniels, Foreman, Putco Ltd)

## Sasol Oil moves to Wearcheck

SASOL Oil moved its oil analysis account to Wearcheck at the end of last year after completing an evaluation of oil analysis companies nationally.

### Criteria

According to Dr Johan Botha, Sasol Oil's technical manager, the companies were judged according to four criteria: accuracy of results, clarity of reports, speed of response and cost.

"Wearcheck came out tops in all respects," Dr Botha said. "We intend to make full use of their service and anticipate a higher percentage equipment availability in the future."

Five Sasol Oil technical representatives attended a full-day familiarisation and train-

ing course run by Wearcheck in Johannesburg during September and the first 310 samples were sent to Wearcheck for analysis in November last year. This number is expected to increase as more of the group's mines, plants, and industrial equipment and vehicles participate in the programme.

### Performance

The performance and condition of the engine and drive train oils from Sarel van der Merwe's Sasol Ford Telstar and Ben Morgenrood's Sasol Lubricants Mazda, both well known on the local motor racing scene, are also monitored by Sasol Oil using the Wwearcheck programme.



Sarel van der Merwe's Sasol Ford Telstar and Ben Morgenrood's Sasol Lubricants Mazda, both familiar sights on the South African motor racing circuit, are monitored by Sasol Oil using Wwearcheck's oil analysis programme.

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# Courier Plus speeds up turnaround of samples

WEARCHECK has introduced a speedy new way for customers to send samples to the lab - Courier Plus - which offers a quick turnaround of samples at very little extra cost.

Courier Plus makes use of Speed Services' pre-paid envelope system introduced last year which operates counter-to-counter from 800 post offices throughout the country. Envelopes sent from a particular post office by a certain time (usually between 11am and 12pm depending on the post office) are guaranteed to arrive at the Wearcheck laboratory by 8.30am the next morning.

"We have introduced Courier Plus because postal deliveries vary from place to place, and customers with a slow mail service have to put up with the delays or use professional courier services for quicker returns," says managing director, Wally Crawford.

## Convenient

"The new system is convenient and cost effective. Unlike the professional courier services, it is the same price regardless of distance, and it is time-saving because there is no documentation to be completed."

If eight samples (the recommended maximum) are sent in each envelope, Courier Plus works out at only 38c per unit more expensive than the standard postage-paid kits. This translates to a 38c premium for all the advantages associated with a quick turnaround of samples.

"The system does not provide for door-to-door deliveries, but we have found that this is not an issue as most companies visit their post office daily as a matter of course," Mr Crawford said.

Having tested the Speed Services system and found that it worked well, Wearcheck went about customising the concept. As the Speed Services mailer is made of thin plastic, a bubble-



Wearcheck packer, Wellington Ndlovu, shows off the new Courier Plus envelopes and the existing courier kits.

lined envelope has been added as a liner to protect samples from damage. A Wearcheck label is also part of the package eliminating the need to fill in a waybill label for dispatch.

Courier Plus envelopes can be purchased from Wearcheck in any quantity at R11 each plus VAT. Pre-paid envelopes may also be bought directly from Speed Services on account only, but without the protective lining and the Wearcheck label.

A list of post offices where Speed Services operates is available from Melanie Hynd on (031) 700-5460 and Amalia Sehannie on (011) 455-3342. They are hoping to extend the 800 post offices currently linked to the system to 1200 in the near future.

Wearcheck customers now have three options when ordering sample kits:

- Standard postage-paid kits - a pack of 10 sample bottles with mailing tubes.
- Courier kits - a pack of 20 sample bottles.
- Courier plus mailers - available in single units for use with sample bottles supplied in the courier kits.

## Keeping abreast of international trends

TECHNICAL director Gary Brown and laboratory manager Alistair Geach travel to Europe and the UK in March for three weeks of laboratory inspections, an international congress and the annual International Wearcheck Group (IWCG) meeting.

"This trip is part of our ongoing strategy to keep abreast of international developments in the oil analysis industry to ensure that Wearcheck offers the best possible service," says Gary.

Alistair starts his trip off at

Wearcheck UK in Llandudno, North Wales - a NAMAS accredited laboratory that has been awarded the equivalent of the SABS 0259 standard for laboratory accreditation.

### Inspection

He will be inspecting their laboratory facilities and collecting information that will assist Wearcheck SA with its application for accreditation by the South African Bureau of Standards.

He meets up with Gary at the International Condition

Monitoring Conference in Swansea, Wales, where he will deliver a paper entitled "An automated approach to measuring fuel dilution in used engine oil."

A tour of the Castrol research centre at Pangbourne, outside Reading in the UK will provide a valuable opportunity to inspect the latest available technology.

Next on the agenda is the annual meeting of the IWCG in Hamburg, Germany, where a formal charter binding the eight Wearcheck companies from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, South Africa, Spain, the UK and the USA will be signed.

A report-back on their trip will be published in the next issue of Monitor.

## Countdown to Comrades 1994

AS THE 1994 Comrades Marathon approaches, Wearcheck staff are gearing up for running a refreshment and first aid centre for runners once again this year.

Wearcheck staff will be keeping a special lookout for customers who have set their sights on conquering the uphill run.



## Welfare organisation packs Wearcheck sample kits

FEW may know it, but the thousands of oil analysis kits Wearcheck clients rely on for dispatching samples to the lab, are put together by just four women from the St Giles Association for the Handicapped in Durban.

### Team

Elizabeth Bauer, Joyce Smith, Christine Morris and Cheryl Kuhn churn out over 20 000 kits monthly. The team - part of a 50-strong group at the association's work centre - puts in a six-hour day supple-

menting their disability pensions by boxing and labelling Wearcheck sample bottles.

St Giles started assembling Wearcheck's sample kits 17 years ago, soon after the centre opened and, according to St Giles' works manager Mr Don Pett, this is the most labour-intensive of their contracts. "Our team is just as fast, if not faster, than any of the commercial assembling companies," he said.

Wearcheck managing director, Wally Crawford reiterated this: "The fact that St



The team from St Giles Association for the Handicapped which packs Wearcheck's sample kits: Joyce Smith, Christine Morris, Cheryl Kuhn and (seated) Elizabeth Bauer.

Giles is a welfare organisation is of no consequence. It is the results that count and we are very happy with the service we receive. We see it as a win-win situation where

everyone benefits."

The St Giles centre does work for several other local firms doing anything from sticking magazines together to making paper clips.

## How samples are diagnosed

ALTHOUGH Wearcheck uses a sophisticated autodiagnose computer programme to help diagnose oil samples, the bulk of the work is undertaken by the company's four diagnosticians who have a combined 50 years of experience to their credit.

### Complex programme

The autodiagnose programme was specially designed for Wearcheck about ten years ago to sift out the completely normal samples or "super normals" which do not need to be examined by the diagnosticians. It does this by comparing all incoming samples against its data bank of all commonly found oils and component types. This is a highly complex and sophisticated programme which allows no room for error.

"Obviously we have to be certain of these samples, so the margins built into the computer package are extremely tight, ensuring that the results are highly accurate," says diagnostician John Evans.

The system is also dynamic. As new products or components come onto the market they are incorporated into the programme.

About 15% of all samples go the "super-normal" route and the remaining 85% are divided up and appear automatically on the computer screen of each diagnostician.

At least half of the samples seen by the diagnosticians are completely normal and these are diagnosed very quickly.

This leaves about 40% of all samples



Wearcheck's four diagnosticians - Gary Blevins, Nick Thomas (seated), John Evans and Rowan Maartens - have the difficult task of analysing all abnormal samples sent to Wearcheck.

requiring further attention, and it is here that the diagnosticians' experience comes into play. Before joining Wearcheck, the four worked in diverse fields.

### Experience

John Evans is an industrial chemist with 11 years of experience in the earth-moving equipment and mining industries, Rowan Maartens spent 14 years working with light vehicles, Gary Blevins is an engineer with a heavy trucking background and Nick Thomas is a metallurgist who has several years of marine engineering experience.

"Most problems are fairly common and quick to diagnose," explains John. "In these cases, it does not take long to write a report and suggest corrective action."

It is the unusual problems - about a dozen every day - which provide the headaches.

"These are the samples which do not tie in with any profiles we have seen before. In really troublesome cases there may be two unrelated problems which have to be distinguished. These may need further tests, then we rely on our combined experience to diagnose the problem."

Often the diagnosticians go down to the laboratory to check a difficult sample for colour and smell.

### Clues

Sometimes the customer has the key to a really mystifying sample which is often an obscure piece of information that he thought was irrelevant.

"For example, we tested and retested a sample from a petrol engine which should have contained amounts of lead as a combustion by-product, but which showed virtually no trace of the metal. Eventually I rang the customer to confirm that the sample did indeed come from a petrol engine. It did, but it was an imported engine not commonly found in this country which used lead-free petrol."

On average, between 200 and 250 samples are seen by each diagnostician every day. John and Nick hold the record for the most samples processed, completing 900 samples one morning in an attempt to reduce an unusually heavy workload.



# Survey finds Wearcheck lab safe and healthy

A CHEMICAL exposure survey conducted at Wearcheck's Westmead laboratory last year has revealed that all vapour levels are well within the exposure values allowed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Chemical components of vapour samples - collected by a sampling pump worn by lab staff - were analysed by Poltech (Pollution Technologies) to assess the possible danger of organic vapour levels in the laboratory air.

Julie Hills of Poltech went so far as to label Wearcheck's lab one of the best she had inspected.

## Considerate

"I have always found Wearcheck to be considerate of employee health and they showed a great deal of responsibility in terms of occupational hygiene long before it was a legal requirement," she said.

"Their new premises are superb and

their fume cupboards are an example to other laboratories."

Lab manager Alistair Geach was pleased but not surprised by the results of the survey.

"The lab was specifically designed to ensure that worker exposure to potentially dangerous organic vapours would be kept to a minimum," he said. "The survey has confirmed our belief that the lab provides a safe working environment, and we will do our best to maintain it this way."

# Demand for technical training courses grows

THE technical training courses which were introduced by Wearcheck last year were so successful that they are to be offered on an ongoing basis.



Taking a quick break during a training course at Pinetown in December are Bob Hill and Coenraad Moolman of Protea Asphalt with course leader, John Evans (standing).

Over 150 people from Johannesburg and Durban companies have attended the three courses with Course 2 - the applications of oil analysis and an introduction to troubleshooting - being the most popular.

They are also moving across the border to Namibia where Gary Brown and Gary Blevins are to run four courses for over 100 people at a large diamond mine in Oranjemund.

"The aim of the courses is to give delegates, most of whom are employed by our customers, a thorough understanding of oil analysis and enable them to gain maximum

advantage from our service," says technical director Gary Brown.

## Bookings

The three courses will be run in both Johannesburg and Pinetown until the end of June. Thereafter, additional dates will be set according to demand. For bookings, please call Melanie Hynd on (031) 700-5460 or Amalia Sehannie on (011) 455-3342.

## WEARCHECK TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSES

DATE	COURSE	VENUE
March 15	1	Johannesburg
March 16	2	Johannesburg
March 17/18	3	Johannesburg
April 18	1	Pinetown
April 19	2	Pinetown
April 20/21	3	Pinetown
May 2	1	Johannesburg
May 3	2	Johannesburg
May 4/5	3	Johannesburg
May 23	1	Pinetown
May 24	2	Pinetown
May 25/26	3	Pinetown
June 7	1	Johannesburg
June 8	2	Johannesburg
June 9/10	3	Johannesburg
June 20	1	Pinetown
June 21	2	Pinetown
June 22/23	3	Pinetown

- Course 1:** A practical introduction to oil analysis (8h30-12noon) Cost: R90 per person
- Course 2:** The applications of oil analysis and an introduction to troubleshooting (8h30-16h30) Cost: R228 per person
- Course 3:** The technical management of oil analysis and lubrication (One and a half days) Cost: R570 per person

MAKE sure you receive future issues of Wearcheck Monitor. Fill in this coupon - or make a copy of it - and post it today to: Wearcheck, P O Box 15108, Westmead, 3608. Please put me on the mailing list for Wearcheck Monitor.

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