



IS YOUR BUSINESS BUILT TO LAST?

TODAY MORE THAN EVER, QUALITY OF FUEL IS EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT AS QUALITY OF SERVICE.

BY PAUL NAZZARO, PRESIDENT

In his book, *Built to Last*, management expert Jim Collins examines how it is that some companies manage to achieve and sustain excellence across decades, and even centuries, through multiple generations of leaders. By studying companies that have prospered over the long term, Collins and his team were able to identify timeless fundamentals that enable organizations to endure and thrive through constantly changing times. One such fundamental that I find particularly resonant is the concept of “dynamic duality.” Collins explains:

“On the one hand, enduring organizations have a set of timeless core values and purpose that remain constant over time. On the other hand, they have a relentless drive for progress—change, improvement, innovation, and renewal. Great organizations keep clear the difference between their core values (which never change), and operating strategies and cultural practices (which endlessly adapt to a changing world).”

Most fuel dealers have the first part down pat. Their core values—service, dependability, honesty—have informed their businesses from the start. It’s the second part of the equation—the willingness and ability to adapt—that separates fuel dealers who will endure from those who will flicker out.

And make no mistake about it: For those who sell or consume fuel, there have never been more variables around which to adapt. Growing competition from natural gas and renewables aside, with the policy directives currently being placed on refiners and OEMs, today’s ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuels are proving increasingly problematic for heating oil customers and diesel fleets alike.

While ULSD is certainly a cleaner burning



fuel—especially when blended with biodiesel—it is not a fix-all for every common fuel problem, nor does it come without its own set of operability concerns.

Because sulfur acts as a natural lubricant, ULSD is “drier” than traditional diesel, meaning that its lower in lubricity, more prone to holding entrained water, and more susceptible to water and microbial contamination—the precursors to corrosion.


The refining process used to remove sulfur also removes oxygen, nitrogen, and other functional elements, yielding a fuel that is more paraffinic, or waxy, to the detriment of its cold flow operability, and less stable in storage. ULSD is also more solvent, or liable to loosen filter-plugging deposits in tanks. Lastly, just because ULSD is “cleaner” than traditional diesel, it is not any less corrosive to tanks, pipes, and system components if left untreated.

For diesel fleets, ULSD has plagued High Pressure Fuel Injection systems with a number of issues, including injector failures, filter plugging, loss of power, and reduced fuel economy. More recently, fuel injection systems with exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) and diesel particulate filters (DPF) are increasingly more problematic.

The point is, businesses that tout premium service but continue to sell generic fuels that


meet minimum ASTM specifications are simply not built to last in today’s rapidly evolving market. In fact, they’ll be the first to fall. Now more than ever, quality of fuel is every bit as important as quality of service.

A fuel maintenance program that combines today’s advanced additive technology with sound storage, transportation, and general housekeeping practices, can prevent unnecessary fuel problems and optimize performance to create a premium product tailored to meet the needs of customers.

Offering a premium product can only serve as a differentiator if consumers are educated on the subject. Raising consumer awareness via website, social media, marketing brochures, traditional advertising, customer newsletters, and through personal interaction are all good ways to market fuel quality. But the most effective marketing strategy is to provide evidence that the enhanced fuel actually works. Showing customers their fuel filters, tracking efficiency measures, and recording drops in maintenance issues goes a long way towards debunking the tired “oil is oil” narrative, strengthening your value proposition, and building a business that won’t only last, but thrive. 

AFS WELCOMES NEW OFFICE MANAGER

Advanced Fuel Solutions is pleased to announce the addition of office manager Christine Vieira-Trant to help the company manage and sustain its continued trajectory of growth in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and beyond.

Christine comes to AFS after 30 years of serving the New England Fuel Institute in a number of administrative and leadership positions, including, most recently, as their membership services administrator. We are thrilled to welcome her aboard. 

WINTER FLEET PREPARATIONS

With Hurricane Irma looming ominously off the U.S. coast, Florida Governor Rick Scott advised residents to "hope for the best. but prepare for the worst." Whether you're a homeowner preparing for a major storm or a fleet manager preparing for winter, I'd urge you to heed Gov. Scott's advice.

In the latter scenario, preparing for a worst-case winter means utilizing a multi-functional winter additive package suited to your particular needs and climate conditions. Is your diesel equipment stored inside or out? Is it subject to extended periods of shutdown? These are some of the questions that can help determine the right additive package for you. Generally speaking, a well rounded winter additive package will include a cold flow improver, a wax anti-settling agent, a pour point depressant, and a deicing compound—though the concentrations of these components may vary from package to package.

The pour point, though not the deciding factor in winter operability, is the lowest temperature at which fuel can maintain its fluidity and continue to flow. The cloud point is the temperature at which wax crystals begin to precipitate out of the fuel, falling to the bottom of bulk and saddle tanks. Once wax does begin to form, a cold flow improver will interfere with the crystals' growth, modifying their size and shape so that fuel can flow freely through filters, or lowering the cold flow filter plugging point. Advanced cold flow additive management relies on wax anti-settling agents to suspend wax that would otherwise precipitate out of fuel during extended equipment shutdowns. This advanced technology works hand in glove with cold flow improvers by keeping the heavy wax from settling to the bottom of the tank, preserving the flow rate of fuel that has been sitting idle. Finally, a deicing compound will prevent ice crystals due to the presence of water in the fuel and in your storage system (water is the number one contaminant in diesel) from loading in filters or causing abrasive wear to your fuel system.

Diesel additives are constantly becoming more sophisticated and refined in order to keep up with today's rapidly advancing


Your fuel specs are none of our business.



But we'd like them to be.

NEXT-GENERATION PERFORMANCE ADDITIVES

Call today for a complimentary fuel sampling and analysis.

engine technology. Winter additives have come a long way since wax modifiers were first introduced in the 1970s. Unless you have a firm understanding of the latest additive technology and diesel operability points, make sure to work with a fuel or additive supplier who does. The proper application of an advanced multifunctional winter additive package—complimented by a vigilant housekeeping protocol—should carry you through even the most extreme winter temperatures with no problems. With the possibility of another harsh winter on its way, will your cold weather defense be validated, or exposed? 


ADDITIVES AND FUEL ECONOMY

A recent article in a fleet management publication revealed that engine manufacturers are increasingly endorsing additives to help close the compatibility gap between today's ultra-low-sulfur fuels and advanced engine technology. While the article provided some valuable insight, it repeatedly seemed to suggest that diesel additives have little or no bearing on fuel economy.

The author quotes one industry professional as saying, "There are no magic formulas out there that are going to turn your world

around and improve your fuel economy."

While it is technically true that fuel additives won't "improve" fuel economy, a proper additive treatment will absolutely prevent the unnecessary loss of fuel economy that occurs when fuel breaks down due to the extreme engine pressures, temperatures, and tolerances of today's High Pressure Fuel Injection systems.

As fuel quality professionals, our customers closely monitor the efficacy of our additive solutions. When they find that their fuel economy is better than it was before our treatment, they'll often tell us, "it improved our fuel economy by X-percent." When we hear this, we'll usually correct them. We didn't improve it. We restored it. It's an important distinction to make. 

UPCOMING EVENTS

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND ENERGY CONFERENCE

- September 18-19, Newport, RI

NACS SHOW

- October 17-20, Chicago, IL

SIGMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- November 8-10, Chicago, ILA