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All Things Are Not Equal

How many times has a customer said, “Your oil is not performing as well as you promised.” As an oil distributor, you probably hear it more often than you’d care to admit. But if you’ve had customers tell you this, more than likely one of two things has happened - the customer is either using the product beyond the original parameters you initially discussed in the sales process or, the maintenance practices in place leave a lot to be desired. In either case, “all things are not always equal.” But oil analysis is a very effective tool to use in discovering the truth.

Sometimes the customers’ expectations are not always realistic. That’s right - you heard me correctly. Sometimes, the customer is not “always right.” But by educating them and taking a “solutions provider” role, you’ll gain a customer’s respect and very possibly retain that customer for life. When you provide good products, attentive service and solutions to problems that maximize profitability, you force customers to think long and hard before changing vendors.

The following is a situation I was personally involved with about a month

ago. A Midwest over-the-road trucking company, with just over 400 tractors, had set the fleet’s drain interval at

oxidation and nitration values, no dirt or coolant contamination and a TBN typically around 6.5 to 7.5 at drain.



22,000 miles. They were using a good quality, Group II, heavy duty diesel motor oil and sending in oil samples at every drain.

The fleet is 15% Cat 3406Es, 25% Cat C-15s and the remaining 60% are Cat C-12 engines. The oil analysis reports showed that the 3406E & C-15’s had very low wear, low soot, acceptable

The C-12s, on the other hand, were an entirely different story.

Oxidation and Nitration values on the C-12s were very high (30 – 40 au/cm), TBN was typically less than 4.0, viscosity @ 100° C was running 15.5 – 18.5 cSt. (Centistokes). A 15W40 typically runs 14.7. And many of the C-12s had much higher upper end