

# NewsStand - Heroes or Villains?

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The oil change business is by nature an extension of the oil industry, an industry that is much maligned by many environmentally conscious people who consider it to be "the enemy." It's a strange situation, because everything that has moving parts needs lubrication, hence we lube folks have actually played an essential role in the advancement of civilization by reducing wear and helping things last longer. How can we be perceived as the enemy?

For the past 100 years oil, in the form of fuel, has demonstrated itself capable of moving vehicles at greater speeds and for longer distances than any other form of energy, thereby enabling humankind to experience greater mobility with greater efficiency than any time in history. The oil industry also provides jobs and a product that is converted into a whole range of low-cost goods from plastics and wax to sulfur and asphalt. What's not to like about all this?

Well, there are some issues on the negative side of the ledger for many people. Burning oil produces CO2 and greenhouse gases which appear to be detrimental to our future. The process of acquiring oil is an imperfect engineering feat that has resulted in leaks and disasters resulting in damage to wildlife and ecosystems. Then there is the belief that dependence on oil is a problem because it is purportedly running out as a resource at a time when we are getting more and more people hooked on it. All these have conspired to create an image in the public mind that oil is a bad idea and those involved in this industry are villains, not heroes.

When you try by means of Google to find positive benefits of oil the first page of links go to articles about coconut oil, fish oil and olive oil... for your health. The nicest thing some people say about oil for cars is that it's a necessary evil, which isn't all that comforting.

How do we respond to this? I'd like to offer two suggestions, which I will elaborate on for the remainder of this column. First, that being a quick lube owner is an honorable profession in the era of automobiles. And second, that in the age of environmental enlightenment we need to embrace a green philosophy and walk the walk.

## **Oil Change Facilities Are Good**

For more than a century oil has helped fuel the engine -- and lubricate the wheels -- of progress. We use oil and gas for everything from heating our homes to driving our cars and blowing snow out of our driveways. Transportation of all kinds relies on fuel and lubricants, whether trains, planes or automobiles. Ships transporting goods to our country from overseas are powered by fuels extracted from the earth.

At this point in time automobiles are the primary means of transportation for most people and they are not cheap. Consequently, motorists need to take care of the cars and trucks they own. That's the bottom line, and as we help people maintain the vehicles they invest in we are engaged in an honest service that benefits our communities and provides for our families.

## **Green Is Good**

It's necessary to recognize that there are good reasons to run our businesses in environmentally responsible ways and I have two green suggestions. In addition to developing a rigorous recycling regimen, you will want to increase your understanding of the environmental benefits of synthetic motor oils.

Two of the most obvious green benefits of premium synthetic motor oils are extended drain intervals and their lower volatility, which results in lowered emissions. Because of their oxidative stability, premium synthetics can be formulated for a longer service life. These longer drain intervals between oil changes not only result in less used oil to be disposed of,

but also less packaging waste in our landfills. Because premium synthetic oils are inherently more stable, there is less boil off in high-temperature conditions. This results in lower oil consumption as well as fewer emissions.

Here's a tip. Most communities today have an organization that is committed to green business practices. By joining such an organization you will not only stay current with environmentally friendly practices, you will very likely gain new customers who want to support you because of your stance on this issue.

When your business makes a radical commitment to smart practices you'll be surprised at how many things you can recycle including corrugated cardboard, used drums, pallets, plastic bottles, paper, aluminum, glass, computer equipment, batteries, light bulbs, oil filters and more.

### **Concluding Thought**

Years ago I read a study by one of the auto manufacturers that captured peoples' buying motivations with regard to cars. Approximately 30 percent bought for style and comfort, 30 percent for performance, 30 percent on price and 10 percent considered the environmental impact. I'm sure this latter number is growing. For your customers who care most about these matters you'll always want to recommend a synthetic motor oil solution.