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TyreTrends

2-W TYRES

ROUGH
TOUGH
TYRELESS





VIEW POINT

By Adam Gosling



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ARE YOU MAKING A LOSING PROFIT FROM YOUR TYRE OPERATIONS?

Tyres form a substantial cost centre for any heavy transport operation. The operating costs of tyres can be easily overlooked by treating the humble servant as just a consumable. Tyres will provide very good returns on your investment IF they are treated appropriately.

The question then is how to analyse the performance of the diminishing asset. For a heavy truck this is easily, the distance it covers along with the costs of operations. Fuel burn rates are often examined to ensure the vehicle is performing according to expectations. Of course, the cost of repairs and maintenance are also closely watched but tyres?

By using a dedicated computer software package tread performance can be not only closely monitored but then analysed. The best programs will also have the ability to accept inputs from pressure monitoring systems so that the life history of the tyres can be reviewed.

Any irregular wear patterns can also be determined, to be able to answer the questions, is this facet caused by the road conditions, the vehicle condition or the driver? Without real time monitoring issues cannot be identified until the tyre is end of life, then it is too late, the asset is wasted, the return on investment is lower than expected. Costs are higher so the bottom line may be financial pain.

One aspect that is usually not considered when reviewing tyres for heavy transport is that of fuel burn. By tying the fuel burn to the specific tyre (and tyre performance) a determination can be made as to which tyre is the most efficient in operation. If there is no control over which tyre has been used on the vehicle (and this includes subordinate trailers) then how can any calculation be meaningful?

The TyreSafe Australia 6M rule applies, put simply if you don't

Six M Rule

Measure how can you Monitor, Maintain, Manage and so Make Money?

So many transport companies have just an "overall" idea of their tyres. They manage by treating tyres as consumables, "just throw another one on" is often heard. Aspects of tyre maintenance such as matching dualled tyres, maintaining inflation pressures are deemed unimportant by those not interested in making a better return on the tyre investment, that is more profit!

A good tyre tracking program will treat each tyre as an individual identity understanding how it performs through its life cycle. Groups of like individuals are grouped as batches so the performance of one specification can be reviewed against another. There may be a tyre that provides more miles in some cases but has a higher failure rate, or even has a more substantial reject rate when it hits the retreading shop. One particular specification may be more suited to retreading but unless there is

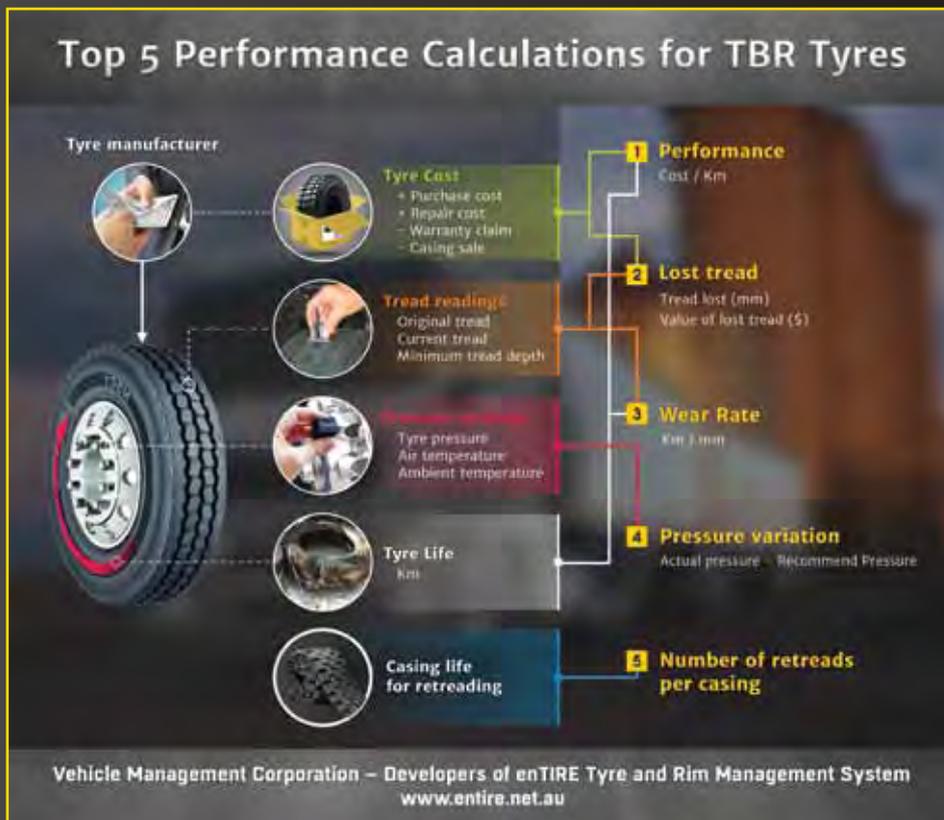
tracking in place then how could this be determined?

It is of little value asking the tyre supplier as their core business is moving more tyres through their warehouse, they are not really interested in assisting you to make a profit at the expense of their own. Absolutely a short-sighted view as I know of no-one that will push a supplier away that has been helping improve the bottom line. A long-term view is required when tyre supply is considered.

A tracking package will be able to accommodate different locations so that individual depot managers can review their own tyres but also the corporate management can review the overall data when deciding upon tyre supply contracts. With hard numbers to work with accountants need no longer be ravaged by irregular wear or poor performance, they can actually see how the tyre performs in exactly the same manner as they do when considering vehicle performance.

So why are tyres not considered worthy of tracking? The reason is mostly I feel as a result of ignorance. No one knows the numbers about tyre performance so no-one can make any determinations. This is exactly the same situation we face when commencing real time pressure monitoring of tyres. Everyone has an idea of what they think a tyre will do when it is in operation but is there any evidence? So many times I've heard that inside tyres run hotter than outside tyres. All things being equal this doesn't have to be so. Carefully pressure setting can yield equal pressures but

Top 5 Performance Calculations for TBR Tyres



K-Prim Design studio

it takes management, which requires monitoring, i.e. the application of the 6M rule.

If the procurement department bases the acquisition of tyres solely on price alone then they will be providing little if any value to the organisation. A low-cost tyre is priced down for a reason. Research and Development (R&D) programs have substantial costs which have to be paid for by you guessed the consumer. So, does a low-cost tyre provider have a reputable R&D program? It is not only tread life of the tyre that has to be considered, as mentioned previously fuel burn, repair rate, failure reasons, retreadability as well as retread life aspects are all important considerations when reviewing tyre operating costs.

Of serious concern when considering operations in a holistic sense is downtime. As the TyreSafe Australia motto says "if your tyres aren't turning, they're not earning." Too many bean counters do not understand this aspect. If the vehicle is standing still it is not earning. Unplanned downtime on the side of a road somewhere waiting for tyre service is highly expensive. A tyre failure could render the vehicle a tow home option only. A catastrophic tyre failure could result in serious injury or worse yet management of

the tyre asset seems to be well down the list for consideration.

A software package to track tyres is a difficult development. Sure, a tyre looks easy, a round back rubber doughnut that holds air. Way too simplistic! A tyre is the single most complex component on a modern motor vehicle. A flexible composite construction developed to contain inflation pressure whilst rolling down the road through corners and braking all the time supporting loads that take it within an inch of its life. Did I mention safety too? A highly complex item! So why would tracking tyres be an easy proposition? It is not. The many aspects of tyre specification, added to vehicle specification, added to usage makes for a complicated database that has to be able to relate all the differing aspects in a reliable and easy to understand form.

The very first rule of computing is GIGO, Garbage in equals Garbage Out. Being able to decipher how the tyres perform and what aspects are important to consider takes an in depth knowledge of the tyre industry. This intelligence is not something a coding developer can pick up and so design a suite that "looks good". Unless the understanding is founded upon in-depth industry knowledge then the development will fall over

somewhere down the road, just like a low-cost tyre will more than likely fail, when it is least expected, under the most arduous conditions. The sweet taste of the low cost will be well soured by the huge costs incurred later. Think about the failure of a steer tyre on a heavy truck. At what cost is this failure event?

Tyre tracking software packages must have a history of development, they have to be able to cater for the differing aspects of tyres, they must be enTIRE in their focus.

How do you treat your tyre assets that provide you with income? With disdain or with close attention and care for their well-being. I know the successful operators can all tell the tyre manufacturers how their tyres perform. Some manufacturers don't like this but when it comes to a return on your investment why are tyres treated any differently to the other profit generating assets in your organisation? You know your best employees, do you know your best performing tyres?

• Adam Gosling and the team at TyreSafe Australia provide guidance and direction for all tyre users. Safety is paramount, so is efficiency and sustainability. Tyres are a globally universal product, the requirement for tyre safety is also a global standard