

All aboard: How an international coach company saved fuel costs and improved engine performance by switching lubricants

Transport Company B, a luxury, international coach company saved over £38,000 per year in fuel costs by switching their fleet to fully synthetic Castrol lubricants.

Operating throughout Britain and Europe, Transport Company B has provided professional coach hire for over 50 years. Reliability and quality of service are a top priority for the company and to ensure its customers travel in style and comfort, Transport Company B invests in top-of-the-range vehicles and excellent engineering facilities to keep them operating at peak efficiency.

With its fleet of 19 vehicles on the road for an of average 6 days a week, covering an average annual distance of 24,188km per vehicle, the coach company needs to be confident that its vehicles and engines are in top condition and operating as efficiently as possible.

Lubricants typically represent a small percentage of total running costs but, as the Transport Company B case clearly shows, choosing the right lubricant could potentially save thousands on the annual fuel bill as well as maintenance and repair costs. As Alan Gray, Managing Director of Transport Company B summarised, *"anything we can save a penny or two on these days has got to be worth looking at."*

Driving performance with synthetic lubricants

Transport Company B had previously been using mineral-based oils for their engines and basic mineral-based gear and axle oils. They worked with Race Lubricants, now part of Certas Energy, to look at ways they could save money on their fuel spend and select a lubricant that would work for both older and newer vehicles in their fleet.

A key consideration was selecting a lubricant that would be suitable for not only different ages and types of engine but also different manufacturers as Transport Company B's fleet included IVECO, Mercedes Benz, MAN, Cummings and Volvo vehicles.

Initial trials were done with gear oils in an Allison gear box using fully synthetic Castrol Transmax Z. Synthetic lubricants contain more highly refined base oils than those used in conventional mineral oils, offering superior protection and performance. Castrol Transmax Z is a high quality fully synthetic transmission fluid that is particularly recommended for use in automatic and semi-automatic transmissions in buses and coaches. The oil is recommended by all major gearbox manufacturers and so was ideal for Transport Company B's mixed fleet

of vehicles. It offers extended drain facilities and optimized frictional characteristics which delivers smoother gear changes and protects against wear. The resistance to oxidation prolongs the life of the lubricant which also helps to reduce costs.

Transport Company B had been using a mineral-based 15w/40 engine oil but Race Lubricants converted them to Vecton Long Drain 10W/40 which is a fully synthetic low SAPS engine oil. It's unique System 5 Technology™ adapts to changing engine conditions to maximise performance. The high-performance oil is engineered to fight against harmful acids which form during engine operation as well as preventing wear to critical engine components.

With most of the fleet now using the new Vecton 10w/40 oil, including their 1979 Bedford which has an 18 year old Cummings engine, Transport Company B decided to change from EP 90 to fully synthetic Castrol Syntrax Longlife 75w/90 on the axles. When used in conjunction with Castrol's synthetic engine and driveline fluid, the entire mechanical process become more efficient, by creating less drag and frictional characteristics. This smoother process resulted in improved fuel efficiency and extended component life which is essential for a busy company operating a fleet of vehicles.

Fuel and efficiency savings

By converting their engine, gearbox and rear axle lubricants to fully synthetic, high performance Castrol products, Transport Company B was able to save 6 litres of fuel per day per vehicle which added up to a total saving of £38,058 off their annual fuel bill a year. These savings represented excellent ROI for the company and by using the lubricants in 90% of their fleet, the investment in a higher quality product is now far outweighed by the benefits.

Geoff Willoughby, Workshop Manager at Transport Company B commented that *initial feedback from the drivers found that "vehicles had to be filled up with fuel less frequently, with noticeable improvements in driving performance – gear changes were much smoother."* These changes not only brought operational efficiencies for the drivers, but a smoother, more enjoyable experience for passengers. With some vehicles in the fleet operating over shorter, more local distances (such as the school run) and some carrying out longer distances across the UK and Europe it was easy for Transport Company B to measure fuel savings over time.

In addition to a dramatic reduction in their annual fuel bill, their oil change intervals have been extended from intervals of 8,000km every four months to every 24,000km once a year, saving valuable maintenance time.

Quality products for maximum performance

Race Lubricants, as part of Certas Energy, supplies high quality lubricants helping customers to increase performance and profitability by choosing the right lubricant for the right application. As a key supplier of Castrol products, Race Lubricants can offer customers a service that drives performance and reduces running costs.

To find out more, please contact Race Lubricants on 01384 263 614 or visit www.racelubricants.co.uk.