



Securing Longevity and Maximizing Capital Budgets through Equipment Upgrades

By James Buchanan

Purchasing new Capital Equipment or a fully integrated processing line allows manufacturing and processing companies to install new technology with the highest efficiencies in preparation for future demand and production capacity.

Once operational, ensuring that equipment operates to its full potential is not only a factor of maintenance and operator training, but also lifecycle preparedness for consumables and componentry throughout the proposed working life of the equipment. Updates and retrofits, whether mechanical, electrical, or controls related are pivotal to enhancing the efficiency, output quality and safety of the equipment, while also securing an available supply of spare parts.

This white paper discusses the benefits of three different types of upgrade: **obsolescence, efficiency, and enhancement.**

Obsolescence, Efficiency, and Enhancement



LABELER

OBSOLESCENCE UPGRADES

During the last number of years, manufacturers are increasingly attempting to make customers more aware of the lifecycle of components so they can plan effectively for end of life and obsolescence. Technological advancements have typically given rise to component changes and upgrades, however more recently shortages in materials and sub-components have given rise to numerous unexpected and occasionally unplanned obsolescence or reduced availability.

Equipment operators should be aware of, and intentionally planning for, component obsolescence. One of the worst potential scenarios is an electrical component or controls system failure of a once readily available part which requires replacement by a new component requiring extensive programming changes with a long lead time – or worse—a viable replacement is not available. Some equipment operators’ trend towards repair / secondhand sources which offer little or no warranty or support if the components ultimately fail. Potential lost production, lost revenues, and escalating repair costs make this an unenviable proposition of any maintenance or production leader.

Central to the ongoing success of equipment operation is a well thought out and planned obsolescence review and replacement protocol. Equipment operators and their suppliers should maintain a regular dialogue on the health and life cycle status of their equipment components and ensure they are best suited to maximize the overall equipment lifespan by ensuring the components are upgraded accordingly.



Among others, the list below illustrates some of the many electrical components that require monitoring for obsolescence and upgrading:

- PLC
- HMI
- Servo Drives / Motors
- Cameras / Vision Systems



EFFICIENCY UPGRADES

At the point of sale, it is a fair assumption from a consumer viewpoint that a well-researched capital purchase would provide the customer with the best value and the most efficient investment for their requirement. After many years of operation updates, upgrades or changes in design may be available to enhance the old technology to benefit the equipment operator. Mechanical or electrical developments can often be retrofitted to older equipment to improve the operation of the equipment.

New production or SKU requirements may result in operators looking at the expense of a new capital purchase or machine replacement. Often these requirements can be met by implementing a retrofit assembly or updating an older component group on the machine to be able to meet the demands of these new requirements.

Maintaining a good supplier client dialogue, understanding customer needs and supplier capabilities is an important, yet often neglected part of the relationship. Many times, if the machine is running well, and there are no operation or maintenance issues, other opportunities go largely ignored.

ENHANCEMENT UPGRADES

In the current environment, suitably skilled and motivated operators are in high demand and short supply. There are many opportunities available to equipment operators that will enhance their operations and remove the required intervention from line operators.



Equipment suppliers can augment their equipment with many additional features to enhance the operation, repeatability, and dependability of their equipment. Examples of such upgrades may include:

- Automation of various previously operator-intensive functions
- Automation of monitoring and adjustment of feed or control functions currently monitored by operators
- Monitoring Systems
 - Preventative maintenance notifications for potential part failure
 - Maintenance monitoring for regular service requirements
- Line integration and Control
 - Recipe integration from one central source to all aspects of the production floor
 - Audit trail information from production floor to central QA database

In essence, continuous upgrades to processing equipment not only drive efficiency and quality but also pave the way for innovation and competitiveness in an ever-evolving industrial landscape.

The WLS Aftermarket team are continuously looking for opportunities to assist our customers in the optimization of their current equipment, in the maintenance of equipment throughout its expected operation lifetime, and in the process of taking care of any in a timely and efficient manner. Our equipment serial #1 is still in daily production over 30 years after initial installation – testament to not only the build quality but also the commitment to service and care for our customers on a daily basis. For more information on upgrades to WLS equipment, please contact us.



ABOUT WLS

Weiler Labeling Systems is an industry-leading designer and manufacturer of high-speed rotary and in-line trunnion labeling machines and serialization and coding solutions for the pharmaceutical and medical packaging markets. With nearly three decades of experience in providing labeling, coding, inspection, and precision-manufactured systems, WLS is at the forefront of delivering customized solutions backed by a culture of unwavering customer care. As part of the ProMach Pharma business line, WLS helps our packaging customers protect and grow the reputation and trust of their consumers. ProMach is performance, and the proof is in every package.