Appvion, a manufacturer of coating papers in Appleton, WI, relies on a system of heaters and air nozzles to dry paper after it's coated with a substrate. In this high-production environment, reliable lubrication of the blower fans that supply the air is a must.

At this facility, mezzanine fans are located next to an oven, which provides heat and air to dry rolls of freshly coated paper. Within the oven, air nozzles are staggered two feet apart, above and below the paper. As it passes between them, it floats on a cushion of air.

The Appvion plant runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As a result, these blower fans run at least 70 percent of the time. The only downtime occurs when the plant changes from one type of paper to another - an event that happens several times a day.

When one of these air blowers fails, the coating line must be shut down immediately. Otherwise, the paper drags against the nozzles, damaging it. Also, if there's no air passing across the paper, then it's not being dried.

“When a heater goes down, we can adjust the temperature of the adjacent units to compensate for it. But when a blower goes down, we don't have any choice. We must shut down the line,” explains Appvion reliability engineer Kelly Caron.

As part of its efforts to reduce downtime and prolong the life of its fan bearings, Appvion has experimented with several lubrication methods during the last decade.

“We no longer have someone dedicated to lubricating our production equipment at this plant, so I've trained a millwright to do it. That makes automatic lubrication even more important.”
Kelly Caron, Appvion Reliability Engineer

“Traditionally, we scheduled manual lubrication during normal downtime, when we changed the paper running on each coating line,” he recalls. But that led to too many bearing failures. There had to be a better way to extend their life.

Appvion’s first solution was a large-scale distributed lubrication system, which was powered by compressed air. But it wasn’t configurable enough to meet the variety of fans and bearings Appvion used. “They didn’t
How can your facility benefit?

Contact us today to discuss your equipment lubrication needs, and to learn how automatic lubrication can increase the operating efficiency of your facility.

800 635-8170 | sales@powerlubeind.com