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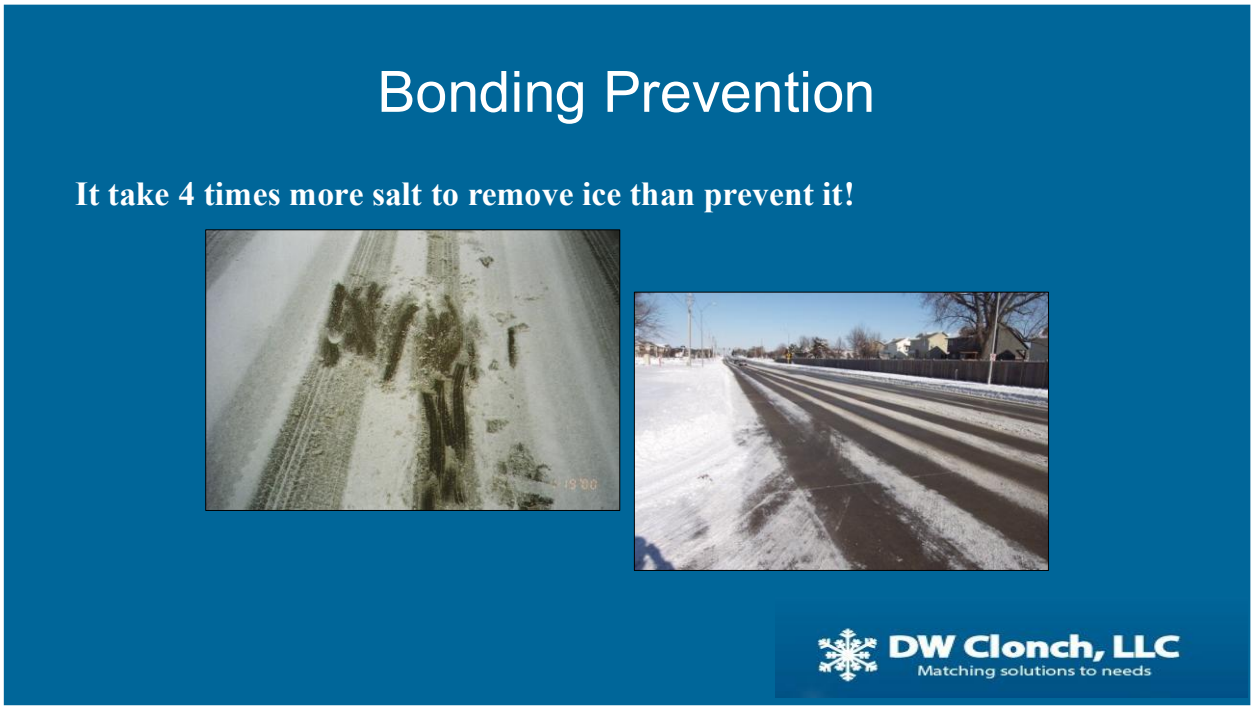
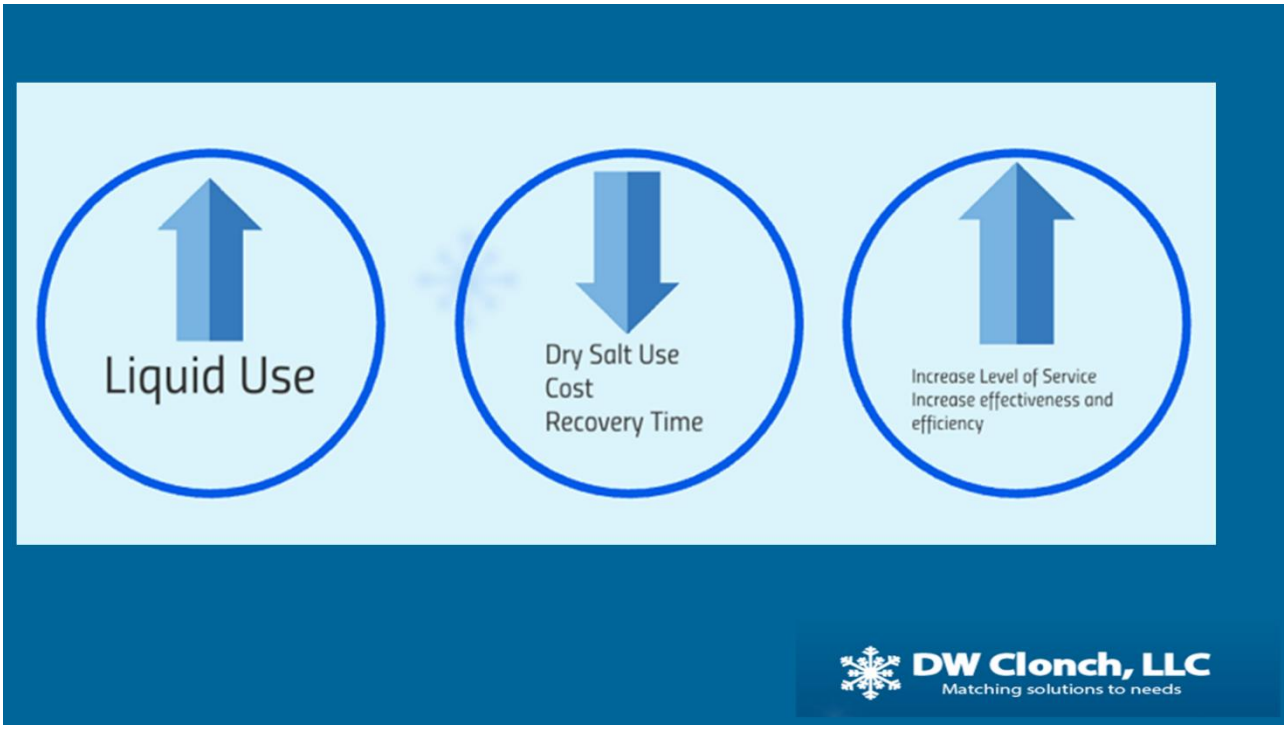
ROI: A Winter Maintenance Strategy for Success

Within snowy regions, snow and ice control is unquestionably one of the most important maintenance services provided for insuring the safety of the traveling public, the movement of goods and services, and the provision of an uninterrupted quality of life as enjoyed across our great country. Agencies and organizations responsible for providing such services spend millions of dollars annually striving to maintain levels of service established as acceptable to their communities, economies and motorist. Without doubt, the importance of providing an acceptable level of service increases with growth in our country's need for mobility and transportation and our economy's and livelihood's dependence upon such.

These facts are well understood among those providing winter maintenance services. In lieu of diminishing resources and declining budgets the challenges to achieve and maintain required levels of service cease to exist. The need to look beyond traditional methods, treatments and approaches is therefore elevated if one is to achieve success. Identification and implementation of areas offering improved effectiveness and efficiencies becomes a requirement and not an option.



Once identified, embracing and implementing the nontraditional method, treatment or approach offers its own set of challenges. All too frequently internal limitations negatively impact the ability to move forward thus creative thinking and strategy become paramount in the decision-making process. Evolution of alternative treatments, technological advancements, improved communications, and equipment upgrades have all suffered through the acceptance and learning curve associated with that which is perceived as nontraditional. Strategy for implementation must include consideration for overcoming the existing barriers within not one, but all areas of snow and ice control if optimal improvements in efficiencies and effectiveness are to be achieved.



One excellent strategy, considering the return on investment, ROI, for tangible and nontangible elements has played an important role in the acceptance and implementation of alternative treatments. Examples such as: using sand versus rock salt, while the initial cost of sand per ton is cheaper than rock salt, it has been proven many times over that in the long run sand is a much costlier treatment, both direct and indirectly; realizing the benefits of anti-icing and the prevention of a freeze bond that are now recognized as costing roughly 4 times less than the cost of removal; applying a prewetting agent to dry material creating a savings of upwards to 30% … just to name a few such examples illustrating the benefits of ROI over upfront apparent low cost.

This strategy is gaining momentum and those in the snow and ice community are seeing the benefits of its application. The migration away from apparent low initial upfront cost and/or low bid to consideration of the long-term investment and associated return is a critical element for achieving truly effective and efficient operations. Leaders within the snow and ice community as

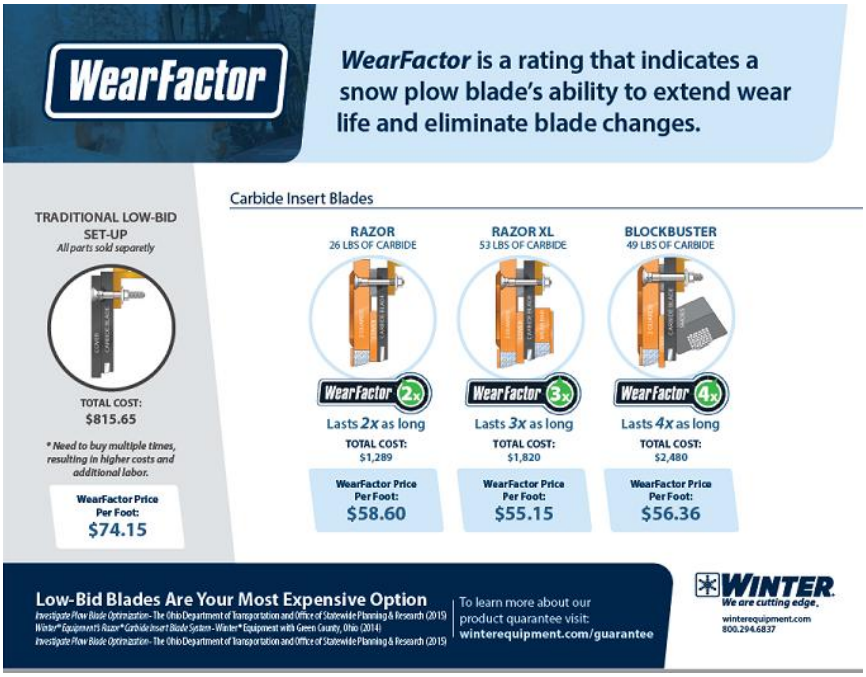
well as industry providers are embracing this mindset giving way to options for overcoming internal constraints and long standing barriers.

An excellent example of the industry's application of this strategy was illustrated by Winter Equipment Company during both the 2017 APWA North American Snow Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, and the 2018 APWA North American Snow Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, with the introduction of their "WearFactor" for assisted use in cutting edge selection. Based upon comparative costs and usage data for various blade types Winter's "WearFactor" provides a rating that indicates a snow plow blade's ability to extend wear life and eliminate blade changes, a concept not only applicable to their product line but to any blade available on the market. Winter's work in this area is backed with 26 years' experience in research and development as well as numerous customer testimonials. Tracking customer usage and costs data allows for the calculation of comparative life costs on all available products. The intention is to provide end users with necessary criteria for the standardization of specifications based upon performance and life costs which ultimately yield a much higher ROI than the traditional cutting edge products.

Winter Equipment Company's commitment to the development and marketing of this concept provides the end user with the information needed to move towards strategic selection and away from the apparent low bid in the cutting-edge selection process. As a leader in the cutting-edge industry, Winter Equipment Company, who provides a satisfaction guarantee on all their wear systems, fully understands the importance of ROI and recognizes the potential long run savings of such when made available to the snow and ice community. Helping the end user to recognize that low bid blades are the most expensive option is the first step, providing a strategic planning tool such as the "WearFactor" for moving forward is the required element for optimizing success.

Through the realization that adaption to change is necessary and embracing technology is critical for achieving optimal solutions, the snow and ice community can create efficiencies and effectiveness to aid in achieving desired goals. Granted it takes time, and is often met with great resistance, but in the end the ROI is well worth the effort.

Example of Winter Equipment's Carbide Blade Comparison:


WearFactor
WearFactor is a rating that indicates a snow plow blade's ability to extend wear life and eliminate blade changes.
TRADITIONAL LOW-BID SET-UP
All parts sold separately
TOTAL COST:
$815.65
* Need to buy multiple times, resulting in higher costs and additional labor.
WearFactor Price Per Foot:
$74.15
Carbide Insert Blades
RAZOR
26 LBS OF CARBIDE
WearFactor 2x
Lasts 2x as long
TOTAL COST:
$1,289
WearFactor Price Per Foot:
$58.60
RAZOR XL
53 LBS OF CARBIDE
WearFactor 3x
Lasts 3x as long
TOTAL COST:
$1,820
WearFactor Price Per Foot:
$55.15
BLOCKBUSTER
49 LBS OF CARBIDE
WearFactor 4x
Lasts 4x as long
TOTAL COST:
$2,480
WearFactor Price Per Foot:
$56.36
Low-Bid Blades Are Your Most Expensive Option
Investigate Plow Blade Optimization - The Ohio Department of Transportation and Office of Statewide Planning & Research (2015)
Winter® Equipment's Razor® Carbide Insert Blade System - Winter® Equipment with Green County, Ohio (2014)
Investigate Plow Blade Optimization - The Ohio Department of Transportation and Office of Statewide Planning & Research (2015)
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