

# How Telemetry Services Can Enhance Your Bulk Chemical Management

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In order to stay ahead in today's competitive and rapidly changing chemical market, businesses that rely on tank inventory need to minimize manual work, reduce the possibility of human error, and eliminate tank overflows and stock-outs that can put a stranglehold on operations and deplete a facility's bottom line. It's not enough to avoid a costly problem; successful enterprises play to win.



Telemetry, or the technology and services that automate tank inventory and level management, is becoming a de facto standard for large terminals and energy producers, but smaller manufacturers and downstream producers have been slower in adopting this simple but valuable tool.

The major reason behind this is the lack of awareness about the technology and its advantages, not to mention some erroneous information that is commonly heard in the field, such as the belief that small operators cannot afford the systems, or the technology is too difficult to use. Once installed, telemetry systems can convert skeptics into believers, and any lingering doubts and myths are easily dispelled. Let's unpack a few of the most common ones.

**Myth: Telemetry technology and similar services will eliminate jobs and replace good people on the site.**

**Fact:** First and foremost, telemetry systems are useful tools designed to help your team succeed. They comprise software, sensors and services to allow real-time monitoring, reporting and storage of tank-level data throughout an enterprise. Sensors monitor levels and report key findings so that staff can make important production decisions for improving business results.

Telemetry technology does not replace good employees, but it does allow them to do their jobs better and more accurately. It does not eliminate humans, but it does help

eliminate human error. Removing manual testing and guesswork from inventory control allows the staff to focus on more important and profitable tasks.

**Myth: The technology cannot be as accurate as experienced staff.**

**Fact:** In our experience, telemetry service readings are typically accurate within 1% to 3% of the tank volume, and systems can be configured to alert anyone, anywhere,

anytime, to a mobile device—and automatically re-order products at a predetermined level. Best of all, these systems are full of checks and balances that can be tailored to accommodate each unique operation.

**Myth: Telemetry systems are overly complicated and difficult to install, and this plant is already stretched too thin.**

**Fact:** Today's telemetry systems are meant to be easy to use, even for the most technology-averse staff, and are as simple as reading and writing emails and texts. Most are surprisingly easy to install—in some cases taking as little as two weeks from contract signing—meaning facilities can begin realizing the benefits right away. Many suppliers even offer services to monitor the tank levels and schedule deliveries.

**Myth: The benefits sound good in theory, but not in practice.**

**Fact:** The benefits are tangible, proven and quantifiable. For instance, how much production time has your plant lost in the last year when a key raw material was unavailable? What was the actual cost of your last inventory turn, and what if you could make that process faster and more efficient? How much does an overflow cost, and what about the risk to the personnel and the environment? How much does it cost to hold a "buffer stock" or safe inventory? Telemetry eliminates much of these costs altogether. These are real, tangible costs that can keep operators up at night.

Please bear in mind the intangible benefits are impressive as well, and these are often cited by users as the most impactful in daily operations. The ability to devote time to more valuable tasks rather than walking the site to check and recheck levels ... the inherent safety that comes from reducing manual activity at a worksite ... the peace of mind from knowing an email or text alert will report a problem early enough to take evasive action ... less anxiety during compliance audits ... more confidence in your documentation and decision-making. For many users, these prove to be the real game changers.

### **Myth: Telemetry technology and services with those kind of benefits probably make sense for large sites, but smaller facilities cannot afford it.**

**Fact:** Even small and remote sites can afford it—and cannot afford *not* to have it. That's because the technology is relatively inexpensive for the high-yield benefits that result. Of course, the actual return on investment depends on many factors, but the numbers are impressive for even the smaller enterprises. Also, flexible pricing and creative finance options can make the technology accessible for all volume levels.



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