



Staying In the Groove

Notices

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OVERVIEW

The go-live was a success although there were a few bumps. The personnel are comfortable with the program, and the routine has been established. Time passes and new reports are created to identify what work has been performed and what hasn't. The maintenance costs are tabulated and maintenance work throughput has been documented. You are in the groove!

It has now been two or more years since the CMMS has been installed and everything has become routine. The requests for work have been coming in and the maintenance people have been making the repairs. The bugs in the CMMS have been patched, and the help desk is relatively quiet. No contract negotiations this year. Budgets have been cut, so no new construction or projects have been approved or scheduled. Are you still in the groove, or what?

As everyone knows, when everything is going well within the maintenance organization, you need to expect something to happen that is totally unexpected. It may be equipment or system failure that results in lost production, or it may be an avoidable accident resulting in injured personnel. It could also be an unexpected change in management or business environment. Any of these things can knock you out of the groove. You can be reactive and let this happen, or you can be proactive and prepare your maintenance organization for whatever comes along. Ask yourself: Have you done everything possible to improve the maintenance situation, or has the groove become a rut?

In the past you have been proactive. When a company installs an EAM or CMMS they have usually done their homework and have identified everything that needs to be done to support the system, including:

- a method of making changes, including a review process
- a support team to assist persons using the programs
- processes in place to support the procedures required by the CMMS
- performance measurements are identified, and the associated reports have been created
- a workforce trained in the use of the software and how it applies to their responsibilities
- every possible support code, with description, has been entered into the CMMS

Things are going well. Why mess with success? Because you are ahead of the game and you want to stay that way. There are two paths that a company can follow:

- The **Evaluation** path involves a maintenance assessment, which may lead to positive changes in the maintenance organization. It may also reaffirm that the processes in place are the best they can be.

- The **Stagnation** path is where things are left the way they are. This is the “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” syndrome. This too can lead to changes in the maintenance organization, maybe not so positive.

If you choose the Evaluation path you must:

EVALUATE

Evaluation is when you are constantly reviewing what is happening within the maintenance organization and what maintenance is costing the company. While evaluating you need to ask the question: “Why are we doing the maintenance work that we are doing?” Most companies can give a positive answer to that question, but if the company is in the groove, it is probably not asking the question objectively. It is very difficult to ask the questions, either to yourself or others, and get an unbiased answer. It usually takes an outsider to give an objective answer.

When an outside consulting organization is used to evaluate your EAM/CMMS program, they bring a host of industry-wide experience and questions to ask your work force. They will interview all areas of the plant, including operations/maintenance, and tabulate the responses. This information will then be reported along with recommendations.

Samples of the questions you may be expected to answer are:

- How many assets in the system have few or no work requests written against them?
- Do all the assets have the correct criticality code?
- Are the appropriate assets assigned PMs?
- When was the last time an asset had a failure? Can you afford the failure?
- How much money has been spent on PMs?
- Have you done lube diagnostics on equipment requiring lubrication?
- Are you doing vibration analysis, and if so, what kinds of results are you getting?
- When was the last time you cleaned or re-lamped your plant?
- Are you on a safety program, and if so, how many safety coded work requests do you get?
- Have you evaluated the job performance of your maintenance personnel?
- Is there an ongoing training program in place?
- Do you have an employee awareness program in place?
- Are your personnel working in safe environments and with safe methods?
- When was the last time you had a crew/team meeting?
- Is there a “suggestion” program in place, and if so, is it being used?

ADMINISTRATE

Once the report has been presented to your company it should be distributed to management for evaluation. The report should be read and all recommendations thoroughly reviewed, analyzed, modified, and then accepted or rejected. Your consultant may act as a review facilitator. Understand that not all recommendations will be accepted, nor should they be. Only you thoroughly understand your environment. Only recommendations that add improvement to your operation should be adopted. Change for the sake of change is usually counterproductive.

INTEGRATE

Accepted recommendations should be integrated into your organization as soon as possible. Do not procrastinate. If you do, the change process will lose momentum, and you will have wasted your time and money.

Make a plan. You need to manage the change. You need to educate your personnel. You need to build consensus and get people to act. You won't be able to do this without a plan! If you are good at making plans and managing the change process, go for it! If not, get someone to do it for you. The consultant who drafted your recommendations can assist in development of your implementation plan.

Remember, the CMMS should be used to provide management information in a usable format that, with proper evaluation, can be used to improve the reliability of the equipment and the efficiency of the maintenance organization. It is not just a tool to track maintenance costs and equipment history. How you use this valuable tool needs to be evaluated on a regular basis. Evaluation and adjustment as time passes and conditions change will help you stay "in the groove".

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