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Monday, 18 April 2011 14:04

Despite sizable investments in these types of systems, many organizations still aren't realizing their full potential.

It's an unfortunate truth: CMMS/EAM implementation efforts often fail. In our company's experience auditing and assessing plants and facilities around the world, we've found that many companies utilize only 30-40% of their CMMS/EAM's functionality. Such a situation isn't just tragic—*if not corrected, it can be devastating to an organization's bottom line.*

How does an operation ensure that its CMMS/EAM investment (which for some could be in the millions of dollars) becomes an "enabler" rather than a "blocker" to organizational improvement? First, let's look at the symptoms of what might be characterized as a "poor" implementation effort:

- The workforce views the CMMS/EAM as the source of all its problems. Staff members complain that they received inadequate training and no real clear vision on how to use the system. In most cases, the management team has not provided the support or direction for frontline personnel.
- Work is performed without raising a work request. Supervisors record problems on pieces of paper to get the work done, without entering the information in the CMMS/EAM. Equipment history is lost.
- Newly created work requests are not reviewed or approved by anyone except the supervisor, who, in many cases, hands it off without any review to the technician the day he/she wishes it to be completed. This type of preparation usually results in inefficient— *and sometimes unsafe*

—work execution.

- Planning and scheduling does not occur in the CMMS/EAM. Sadly, no one is responsible for work preparation and scheduling. Supervisors merely print a list of jobs and post it on the bulletin board. Technicians simply cross off when complete. A “whiteboard” would be a better investment in this case. Numerous inefficiencies occur because of failure to use the tools and follow the process.
- Labor hours and costs, as well as materials costs, are recorded erratically and inconsistently in the CMMS/EAM. In this particular situation, having bad data may be considered worse than having no data. Using such data could lead to wrong conclusions and costly decisions.
- The CMMS/EAM is not used for reporting. Since no one trusts the data, reports are not generated. This begins the slippery slope of marginalizing the CMMS/EAM: Because no one uses it, the system clearly must not be important.
- There is a large queue of work orders in the system waiting for someone to confirm, complete or close out. By not closing out the work orders in a timely manner, reports will be inaccurate and equipment history and failure data will be incomplete.
- The plant has a limited supply of desktop PCs for users to access. When it’s time to input data, a workstation can’t be found. Of course, what can’t be done today gets put off until tomorrow. If this cycle continues, timely data entry will not occur and may ultimately stop.
- There are no designated super-users or power-users onsite to aid in managing questions and issues that arise about CMMS/EAM functionality. Operators, technicians and the support team are left to fend for themselves.
- Since the management team is focused on financial data that is kept apart from the asset-management/plant management module, they have a “hands off” attitude regarding the CMMS/EAM.
- The workforce isn’t effective with its preventive maintenance (PM) routines. These routines are poorly written, incomplete or, in some cases, don’t exist. The frequencies and estimates haven’t even been updated since the transfer of the legacy system.
- Corporate no longer supports the CMMS/EAM and the business units have to manage for themselves.

These are but a few of the many symptoms we see when reviewing a company’s CMMS/EAM as part of a comprehensive asset-management assessment. The picture is bleak and self-perpetuating: Frontline operators and technicians see no value in information management systems. The information in the CMMS/EAM is untrustworthy and management doesn’t seem to care. If the boss isn’t interested in the system, then the frontline is certainly not interested.

To compound matters, when the CMMS/EAM is not implemented properly or completely, it usually impacts the work-management system to include the use of work orders, PM routines and the risk-based inspection (RBI) and condition-monitoring programs. When these programs are broken, the company suffers incalculable losses that may take years to overcome.

Protecting your investment
An organization that wishes to thoroughly—*and effectively*—implement an “enabling” CMMS/EAM system should consider these seven steps:

1. Select an executive sponsor for the implementation.
The person in this role should not be confused with the project manager. The executive sponsor will ensure the following:
- Advocate the project both internally and externally
- Champion the project
- Obtain budgets for the project
- Accept responsibility for problems escalated from the project manager
- Sign off documents such as the business case and project initiation document
- Support the project manager in managing the project

The executive sponsor will typically stay in this position until the implementation project is complete, the bugs worked out and all elements of the project plan have been completed to his/her satisfaction. This could be a year beyond the “go live” date.

2. Develop a clear vision of what the organization wants the CMMS/EAM to do. Software selection is more than just a good relationship with a vendor. Functional specifications must be developed that will deliver the vision that the organization has agreed upon. The right vendor must be selected that will partner with the company to deliver what he has promised. Process maps and work flows should be created to depict how and what the users are required to do. A governance structure should be set up so configuration changes and updates can be done in a coordinated fashion. Ultimately, this structure should be signed off on by the project manager and the executive sponsor.

3. Select a project team that will deliver. Team members should be selected based on what they have accomplished. They should have a passion for the project and be willing to share the responsibility for all the work. The executive sponsor should inspire a sense of urgency and reward the team for their efforts, as well as be demanding of project-execution excellence. Their project plan should also include a robust change-management and communication plan. This is where many companies falter. They fail to assess the risks, as well as identify and mitigate the resistance to change in the organization.

4. Establish mandatory requirements. Once the CMMS/EAM has been installed (as opposed to implemented, which is the next, more time-consuming step), clear requirements for its use must be established by all levels of leadership in the organization. Every manager and supervisor must understand the importance of the CMMS/EAM—
and the company vision of how it will be utilized
. It should also be made clear that this is not an optional program: It is to be the way that business is done. Managers and frontline supervisors will be point persons for ensuring the CMMS/EAM is used properly. The project team should be actively engaged during this time to support ongoing implementation. Implementation may take up to a year to embed and entrench this information management system in

the culture.

5. Train everyone in the organization. Training should be role-based and provided to personnel in ways that are commensurate with their functions. Training will be ongoing, and a full-time training group should be created.
Although its size should decrease as the project reaches maturity, this training group will never go away: Training will always be needed.

6. Begin generating CMMS/EAM reports. No one goes to a sporting event without looking at the scoreboard. The same goes with a CMMS/EAM implementation. Personnel need to know how they are doing— *it's called feedback*. Regular feedback to end-users through reports and scorecards will provide information on what they need to do to improve. Sometimes, merely posting a report or scorecard in the break room or displaying it in the morning meeting can lead to improved use of the CMMS/EAM.

7. Audit, audit, audit. During the implementation effort, regular assessments and audits of CMMS/EAM usage should be conducted. This will identify areas of weakness that need intervention by the managers or project team. Once the implementation is considered complete, the project manager and executive sponsor should sign off on it. Regular "usage" audits should be conducted by the CMMS/EAM governance structure left in place after the implementation is complete.

Summing it all up
Industry is awash with companies that are not leveraging the power of their CMMS/EAM systems due to incomplete implementation. The resulting losses, if accurately calculated, could be staggering. Regrettably, many organizations are willing to live this way and never realize the full potential that a CMMS/EAM offers. Don't let yours fall into this category. By following the seven steps discussed here, it won't. **MT**

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