

Industry Outlook: Helping Drive Maximum Asset Utilization

Written by Ken Brown, President, Invensys Process Systems
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Ken Brown, President, Invensys Process Systems The biggest challenge that our customers face today is how to drive maximum utilization and contribution from their human and industrial assets—without compromising asset availability or human safety. To a large degree, this is a knowledge management problem. In other words, how can personnel in industrial enterprises most effectively capture, retain, disseminate and apply critical plant-, supply chain- and market-level knowledge across their organizations to drive overall asset performance?

At the plant level, process-related knowledge requirements include real-time insight into process variables, understanding process control strategies and the knowledge to understand how interactions between these variables affect both process and finished product. A great amount of asset-related information also is needed at the plant level. What physical assets (instrumentation, equipment, process units, etc.) are available and what is their current status? When were they last inspected, maintained or overhauled? Are they showing signs of performance degradation? If so, at what point will this degradation begin to affect the process—and how much?

At the supply chain level, it's critical to have an accurate understanding of the various options available for obtaining raw materials from suppliers and how these will affect the ability to produce and deliver on-specification product to customer when it's needed. At the market level, planners need to understand market dynamics such as supply, demand, and pricing for raw materials, intermediates, and finished products; and be able to accurately interpret the likely impact of geopolitical activities on these dynamics.

Invensys Process Systems is helping our customers to capture and apply this type of critical knowledge through our asset performance management approach. Utilizing a variety of innovative methodologies and applied solutions, asset performance management (APM)

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provides our customers with the capability to balance asset availability and utilization to respond to rapidly changing market demands, and thus drive business value. Our new enterprise control system provides a platform for delivering APM. (What's really different about this system is that rather than replacing existing automation and information assets, it's designed to build upon and enhance the automation and information assets already in place in our customers' plants—providing a cost-effective means to unify these assets into a common data and application model.)

The APM approach forces our customers to take a more holistic view of the plant and the enterprise. This type of view breaks down the silos between operational, safety, maintenance, engineering and business departments.

Our new enterprise control system collects data from across the plant, aggregates and combines this data with business intelligence, then transforms it all into actionable information and delivers the information to the right people, at the right time, in the right context. It also provides the means to capture, deploy and re-deploy equipment, process and application knowledge (as nested and reusable objects) that would otherwise be lost through attrition.

This critical knowledge can be—and should be—used to help end users move to a more predictive and proactive operating model to drive overall asset performance. This is Invensys' focus today and will remain our focus for years to come. **MT**