

## Industry Outlook: Driving Operating Improvements

Written by Steve Sonnenberg, President, Emerson Process Management  
Saturday, 01 August 2009 00:00

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Clearly, the pressures on process manufacturing management and their engineering and maintenance teams vary with the economy. Not long ago, high demand shined an intense light on capacity, availability and uptime— *this has changed*. Today, many industries are experiencing reduced demand leading to emphasis on operational efficiency and cost reduction.

Although the current market is weaker, this is in many ways a very good time for improvements. We are collaborating with users to combine services and technology to plan and implement changes that reduce maintenance costs, improve asset performance and enhance process control.

### **Solutions for today and tomorrow**

Risk assessment services help manufacturers reduce costs by focusing maintenance on the most critical assets. These services quickly assess asset risk so maintenance teams can properly focus short-term efforts to maintain target uptime and reliability—*while also looking at long-term impact to ensure both immediate and future success of a facility*. Out-of-target assets are sorted into priority levels for focus on improvement.

Automation planning and consulting services help improve operating efficiency by identifying predictive maintenance and process control improvements. New wireless technology is a great tool for realizing the plans. Flexible, easy and quickly implemented, it allows upgrades during turnarounds or full-scale unit modernization projects. It is especially valued for its expansion of predictive maintenance in facilities as new wireless devices deliver diagnostics for management of both instrumentation and process health.

Smart Wireless technology is a perfect match for the current economic environment. It removes many barriers to improvement, allowing engineers and maintenance personnel to do things they

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only imagined before. Consider the fact that pumps, motors, heat exchangers, filters, kilns, tanks—*virtually any process equipment or unit*—can be added to existing automation systems without running a single wire to field instruments. Predictive diagnostics and process information are wirelessly connected to plant personnel who can make fast accurate decisions based on the real-time information from plant assets.

### Improving operations around the globe

Hundreds of customers worldwide are successfully applying wireless field technology, including:

- Croda Inc. in Pennsylvania uses wireless to monitor rising temperatures in frequently moved railcars.
- Technochem in Singapore wirelessly monitors tank inventories, and moves wireless transmitters around to aid in troubleshooting and new process development.
- BP uses Smart Wireless at its Cherry Point refinery's calciner unit to monitor bearing and calciner coke temperatures to help prevent fan and conveyor failure.
- CFE Lapem analysis group in Mexico temporarily connects a full wireless measurement network for key thermal efficiency measurements, making them in 15 days, then disconnecting the wireless network and moving on to optimize each power unit in a 140-unit grid.

Much more is happening, too, as facilities are adding Wi-Fi plant wireless networks to provide such functions as mobile worker capability, location tracking and safety mustering, as well as video for process monitoring and security applications. These are just some of the advancements that reflect Emerson's commitment during these challenging times—*a commitment to protect our investment in technology and innovation so we can roll out even more new products to meet our customer's needs after the economy stabilizes*

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