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"You mean we're going to have to work on the equipment *before* it breaks down?" That's what one experienced mechanic asked after he heard about his company's new proactive approach to maintenance. His statement points to the crux of one of the biggest challenges we face when moving from a reactive maintenance work culture to one that emphasizes equipment and process reliability. In many cases we are challenging the maintenance mindsets of the people at all levels in the organization. So, how do you go about changing the work culture?

The core concept that works for maintenance and manufacturing in North America is to focus on results, and change the culture along the way. One book that has served as a guide is *The Breakthrough Strategy*
(Robert Shaffer; Harper Business, 1988). It is not a new book, nor one that addresses maintenance and reliability, but the approaches Mr. Shaffer describes are continually validated in many other writings and by other researchers and authors. Here are the key points of the *Breakthrough Strategy*
as applied to maintenance and manufacturing improvement:

- Top management must orchestrate the change and lead the way. It must establish the context and the challenge by setting increasingly tougher demands to meet the needs of the business and the needs of the people. The new directions should be tested through strategic projects. Make sure technology supports the desired improvements, and avoid becoming a slave of technology. Orchestrate the total movement process. Don't just make pronouncements, then back away. Get involved, listen, and pay attention.
- Identify "zest factors" to help accelerate the new ideas. Is there a true sense of urgency? A challenge to meet? Is there an opportunity for a clear and near success? Can the change be exciting, novel, like a game? Don't expect people to get engaged with an idea just because top management espouses it. Determine what will truly engage others in the improvement process.

- Go for results. Immediate successes are essential if people are to increase their confidence and expand their vision of what is possible. Nothing speaks louder than actions and results. Look for opportunities to make equipment run better, last longer, and require less tinkering and tending, and ways to make people's work easier.
- Form a steering group to leads improvements by focusing on a common goal in a collaborative manner. In union plants be sure to use a joint/management steering group of formal and informal leaders.
- Design a breakthrough project or pilot activity. Develop a plan to achieve results quickly. Don't forget these key points: Urgent and compelling goals; short-term first step sub-goals (quick, sustainable hits); measurable bottom line results; ready, willing, and able people; achievable target using available resources and authority; and breakthrough project leaders with accountability.
- Honestly support the breakthrough project or pilot activity. Incorporate individual accountability, clear-cut decision making, written work plans and progress reviews, structured involvement, demonstration and testing of innovative approaches, and frequent reinforcement and rewards.
- Form a breakthrough project team. People who have the skills and knowledge to work together "outside the box" are likely to exceed your expectations. But, be sure to define the

parameters they must work within. Select people who can become teachers, coaches, or role models of the new way. Then, get out of their way.

- Put the breakthrough project plan into motion. Avoid getting stuck in the plan-to-plan loop and never quite getting around to action.
- Expand key learnings from the breakthrough project to related areas and institutionalize the new ideas. Showcase the results and the new behaviors. Indisputable proof goes a long way to changing behaviors.

In the past 7 years a number of total productive maintenance/manufacturing (TPM) culture changes have knowingly, and unknowingly, followed these steps to achieve significant results and change the way the organization thinks about maintenance and reliability. It is rewarding to see what can happen when the talents of the entire organization are tapped by in the breakthrough strategy. Changing the work culture means changing the individual and collective behaviors of people. Go for results in ways that will change behaviors along the way. **MT**