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Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor Maintenance and reliability leaders in every industry and in all sizes of plants are searching out best practices and the processes that will help them close the gap between their current position and the department goals that will contribute most to corporate objectives. If not, they won't remain leaders for very long.

What practices are they installing? To find out, we tacked on a question to our annual salary survey (see page 30) asking a representative sample of Maintenance Technology readers to tell what they are doing in this area.

Respondents were provided a list of performance improvement initiatives and asked to indicate those that have been implemented at their plant in the past 18 months. Here they are in decreasing order of popularity:

- Preventive maintenance (PM) analysis and improvement, 59 percent
- Reliability centered maintenance (RCM), 38 percent
- Operator performed maintenance tasks, 36 percent
- Total productive maintenance (TPM), 27 percent
- Outsourcing specialized maintenance, 27 percent
- Supplier consolidation, 21 percent
- Knowledge transfer, 20 percent
- Lean manufacturing, 18 percent
- Kaizen initiative, 10 percent

Now that the votes are counted, we have a leader but we don't have a winner. Dividing the number of votes by the number of respondents who have recently launched improvement initiatives shows an average of 3.1 initiatives for each respondent. That seems like a lot at first glance, but the choices were far from mutually exclusive. Knowledge transfer and supplier consolidation, for example, do not necessarily have any connection to PM analysis.

It would seem that the respondents are doing the right thing by focusing on PM analysis and improvement because preventive maintenance is the foundation to almost any maintenance strategy.

The data shows that half the groups who are addressing PM also are employing RCM, whose structured approach leads to the selection of the most appropriate tasks for ensuring the continued function of the equipment to required specifications.

It also must be noted that three-quarters of the groups using Kaizen continuous improvement initiatives also are installing TPM.

Overall, 82 percent of the respondents have installed at least one of the listed improvement initiatives.

The real challenge is not the identification of the hottest new initiative, but keeping your current initiatives fired up and not letting them cool down before you get the results you are after. **MT**

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