Written by Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor
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The words “reliability” and “maintenance,” two separate but linked disciplines noted in the tag line on our cover, are often used interchangeably be people who don’t understand the difference. (Do you?)

The people around the periphery of our profession have co-opted the word “reliability” because they have heard that it is important. Little do they know how important it really is. The producers of the Maintenance & Reliability Technology Summit (MARTS) certainly do and we have designed some unique offerings into that comprehensive conference and show for people new to reliability as well as experienced practioners.

The reliability curriculum begins with a pre-conference workshop on the Fundamentals of Reliability Centered Maintenance.

Elements of RCM will be addressed on the first day of the conference in a track introduced by Jack Nicholas, Jr. of Maintenance Quality Systems. Then, separate speakers will each focus on on one of RCM’s defining questions:

- What are the functions and associated performance standards of the asset in its operating context (functions)?
- In what ways can it fail to fulfill its functions (functional failures)?
- What causes each functional failure (failure modes)?
- What happens when each failure occurs (failure effects)?
- In what way does each failure matter (failure consequences)?

- What should be done to predict or prevent each failure (proactive tasks)?
- What should be done if a suitable proactive task cannot be found (default actions)?

The second day of the conference will present sessions on reliability methods: Wiebull Analysis, Proactive Root Cause Analysis, Human Error Reduction, and Cause Mapping.

The curriculum will be capped by a post-conference workshop on Reliability Engineering for Maintenance Practitioners.

Anyone participating in this unique program should walk away with as good an understanding of reliability and reliability centered maintenance as one can get in 4 days.

Now, back to the question posed in the first paragraph—the difference between the disciplines of maintenance and reliability. There are many definitions, but one that may count most is the attitude of practitioners, neatly summed up by Charles Latino, founder of Reliability Center, when he noted that maintenance practitioners are “today” people, while reliability practitioners are “tomorrow” people.

And speaking of tomorrow, don’t wait; mark your calendar to attend MARTS May 23-26, 2005.
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