Written by Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor
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Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor Last month, I had the opportunity to meet with two practitioners whose knowledge and judgment I respect. Both have significant experience in the maintenance and reliability field and have made significant contributions to the body of knowledge.

One was Charles Latino, perhaps the first person to institute equipment reliability practice in a major industrial company. The other was Jack R. Nicholas, Jr., one of the early practitioners of reliability centered maintenance. Both shared some ideas they believe fundamental to success.

I spoke with Latino at the offices of The Reliability Center (www.reliabilitycenter.com), Hopewell, VA, a company he founded 20 years ago when he entered private practice as a teacher and coach for equipment asset reliability.

I met with Nicholas, CEO of Maintenance Quality Systems, who is developing an approach for evaluating RCM activity, at the International Maintenance Conference in Florida where he delivered the keynote address.

Both conversations, which took place within a couple days of each another, touched on some of their work experience and included key factors they deemed important for success. Here are some of the points that stuck in my head:

- Lasting solutions to reliability problems come from paying attention to detail and using proven methods for systematic identification and analysis of reliability issues.
- Many of the latent causes of equipment failure can be traced to management policy decisions such as emphasizing speed over quality in repairs and failing to invest in skills training.
- Many elegant solutions lie hidden because workers fear to come forward with suggestions. They don't want to get in trouble for mistakes or errors, or get their coworkers in trouble.
- Technology is a tool rather than a solution. Too many companies reach for the technology without developing the process first.
- It is important to minimize intrusive maintenance because it leads to the infant mortality failure profile, the most common type. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
- Invest in the development of written procedures for precision maintenance to help insure that work is done right the first time, every time. Workers retire and leave, but the procedures remain.

We will be bringing you more helpful exprienced-based information from these two practitioners and others this year. I hope you also will share your experiences with the maintenance and reliability community in e-mails, conversation, and articles so all can gain from your voice of experience. **MT**

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