

The Guru Principle

Written by Bob Baldwin, Editor
Tuesday, 01 July 1997 17:55



Today, few people question the potential rewards of predictive or condition-based maintenance. But why does this modern approach to maintenance deliver spectacular results in one plant yet fall short in a similar plant? According to Ralph Buscarello, the primary reason most programs fail to reach their potential is the find-and-replace mentality of many maintenance organizations. They create some savings by finding pending failures in a timely manner and by replacing the components before they fail in service. However, much bigger savings accrue in plants that are focused on improving and managing machinery. These organizations use vibration, balancing, and alignment technologies to identify and rectify the root cause of the failure and correct it rather than simply swap out the failed component.

Buscarello is the founder of Update International, a vibration and alignment training and consulting company based in Denver, CO. I had the opportunity to hear him explain the precision maintenance approach to machinery management and improvement recently, while attending a special presentation of his seminar on "Vibration Understanding from the Supervisor and Manager's Perspective." The course was arranged by the Society for Maintenance and Reliability Professionals as a part of the society's free workshop program for members.

Buscarello presented a number of observations on the makeup of truly successful programs. One of the suggestions that made a lot of sense to me was the Guru Principle, whereby an appropriate person is designated the plant guru for a maintenance technology and is given license to acquire knowledge and develop plant capabilities for that subject.

For example, the alignment guru would strive to learn everything about alignment, both good and bad, from plant personnel and industry experts. Although the alignment guru becomes the plant precision alignment expert, he is not expected to do the alignment himself. Instead, he is responsible for improving alignment practice in the plant. The person selected as guru must relate well to people because he is expected to be an agent for changing attitudes and work practices. He serves as consultant and coach and works with management to set company

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standards for precision, evaluate performance, review training needs, and scout for new talent.

The guru is judged not on how well he can align shafts personally, but on how well others do alignment. Which brings up the question: How are you being judged? **MT**

Thanks for stopping by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bob Baldwin', with a stylized, cursive script.