

Start from The Beginning

Written by Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor
Tuesday, 01 July 2003 12:51



Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor This month we present our annual roundup of enterprise asset management (EAM) and computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) offerings from active suppliers in the industry. We provide some basic information about each, as a starting point for selecting your first system or for moving up to a larger system with more functions.

Now comes the real trick—selecting the system that will provide the most return. That task is not unique to maintenance and reliability.

Robert D. Boyle, a director in Deere & Co.'s Global AgServices Div., had some interesting observations about software selection and implementation in his article on "Unlocking ROI" published in the June 2003 issue of APICS-The Performance Advantage, the publication of [A PICS--The Educational Society for Resource Management](#)

. I was especially struck by the following paragraphs:

" ... an organization should not invest in ERP technology on a standalone basis. Instead, investments in the technology should be part of a holistic approach to effecting organizational improvement, and it should involve a comprehensive review of business goals and metrics, processes and procedures, human resources and training requirements, technology, and so forth.

" For example, merely implementing new ERP technology without aligning affected business

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processes and procedures and providing staff the proper training is not likely to produce favorable results. The costs and benefits outlined in the business case associated with such a program should be based on this broad perspective on organizational change. Planning and executing comprehensive change initiatives, as opposed to more narrowly defined ERP projects, is the way for an organization to get the most out of the time, dollars, and other resources it invests in such initiatives.”

Substitute EAM or CMMS for the ERP and it works for maintenance and reliability. And you get a clue as to why so many installations of maintenance software never get used to near capacity and never provide the projected return. Software selection and implementation is undertaken as a project, an end in itself, rather than to support a well-thought-out business process driving toward maintenance excellence.

In many regards, selecting the software is one of the last steps in the process of improving your maintenance and reliability operations. The first step is to develop a strategy for how best to do maintenance and reliability to support enterprise objectives.

Once you have the plan, selecting the right software will be much more straightforward. **MT**

