Written by Bob Williamson, Contributing Editor
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"OK, you got my attention with last month's Uptime column , 'The World's Best Maintenance Tool' (i.e., detailed work instructions). I see now that our PM work instructions are sorely lacking in details, leaving a lot to the mechanic's discretion. And, our production departments have used standardized work as part of their lean manufacturing process for years. So, here's my question: How should we begin straightening out our PM program without getting mired down in a major documentation project?"

First things first

Your efforts should focus more on improving equipment performance and reliability than overhauling your PM work instruction documents. Be careful NOT to get mired down in a massive rewrite or upgrade of all of your facility's PM work instructions—*the financial justification might not be there*
. Concentrate on delivery of measurable business results every step of the way.

Let's begin exploring a *Style Guide* to specify how to develop and deploy PM work instructions. We'll start by looking at three basic considerations when improving maintenance work instructions:

1. Focus on the most penalizing equipment.
2. Follow a structured developmental and deployment process.
3. Use a standardized document format.

#1. Focus on the most penalizing equipment

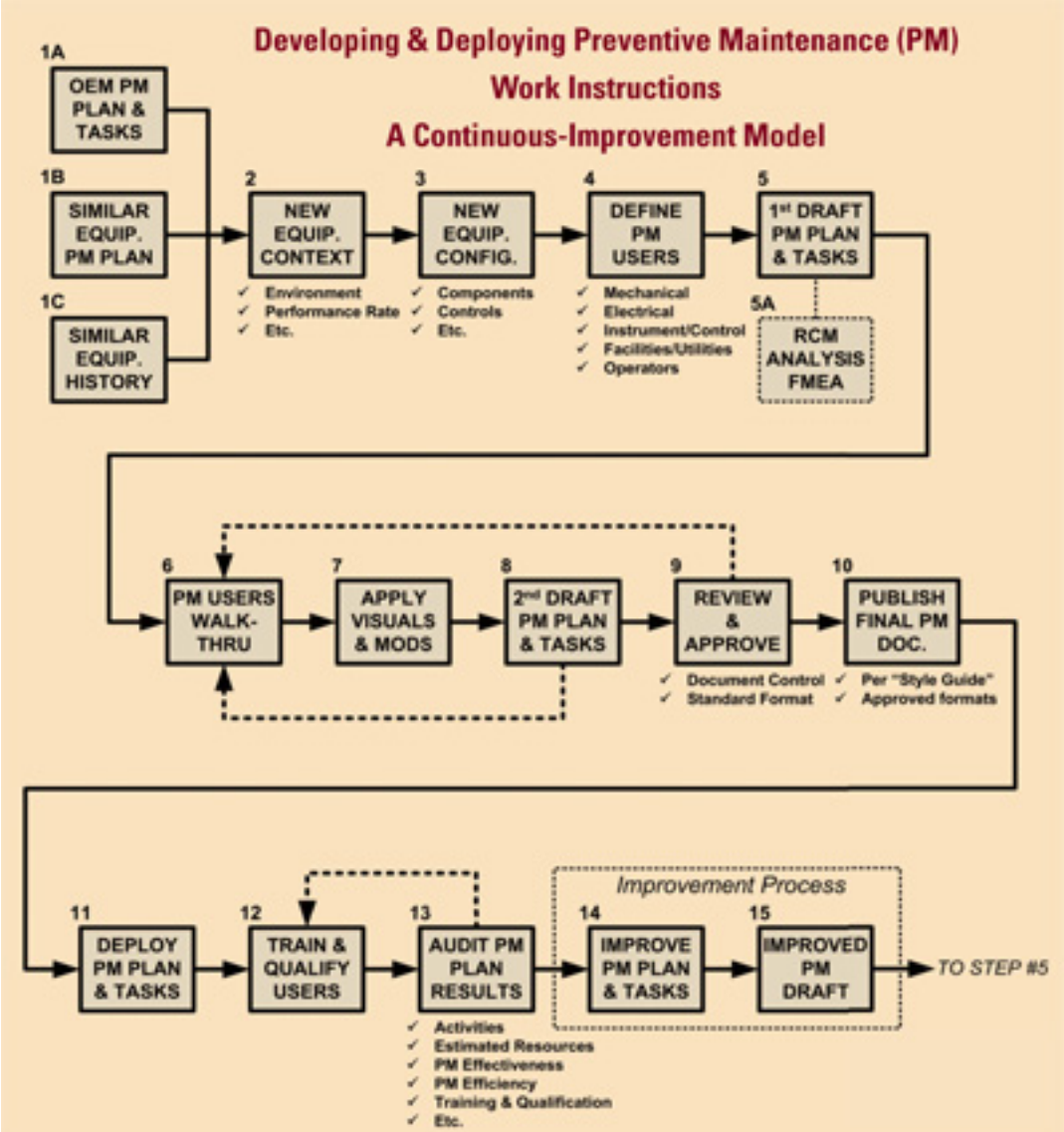
Begin improving your maintenance work instructions by targeting your most penalizing equipment items or processes. Look beyond the maintenance needs of the equipment and consider the plant or facility operations. Select your starting points with equipment that's a candidate for improved performance by asking a few questions:

- Do equipment problems often interrupt operations?
- Does the equipment create defects or off-spec conditions?
- Does the equipment cause sizeable delays in meeting customer requirements?
- Does the equipment seem to be environmentally sensitive and problem-prone?
- Do equipment damages or injuries occur during routine PM task completion?
- Are the PM work instructions sketchy, leaving much to the discretion of end users?
- Are they incomplete or not as efficient and effective as they should be?
- Do the results of the PM process vary with the person who performs the PM tasks?

The more "YES" answers to these questions, the more likely improved work instructions will be successful.

#2. Follow a structured developmental and deployment process

Given the "top 10 characteristics of the world's best maintenance tool" listed in last month's Uptime column, there may be as many ways to approach the development and deployment of maintenance work processes as there are writers. The challenge is to get started with one developmental model and improve it to suit your needs as you go—
then adopt it as a "standard."
I've found the continuous-improvement approach reflected in the accompanying process model (Fig. 1) to be especially effective in developing work instructions for NEW equipment.



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