Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor The Challenge of Change. That was the title of the presentation I was making 5 years ago at various maintenance and reliability events. I was talking about expansive change and my speech was heavily laced with dot-com and e-stuff: eProcurement, eManufacturing, and even eMaintenance (however, I was using e to represent efficiency, effectiveness, enterprise, and excellence).

Although the content of that speech has changed, the title remains valid today, perhaps even more so than back then when we were talking about the so-called new economy. Now, we are talking about a business recovery without jobs and other challenges to our regions, industries, plants, and the maintenance function, and probably your job.

Last week, in two different meetings of maintenance and reliability professionals, I heard vastly contrasting stories from some of the participants of the challenges they are facing.

On the down side, one of the participants in a multinational company was informed that top management “felt” his plant was overstaffed and that head count must be reduced by 25 percent. (How would your maintenance organization react to such a loss of personnel and know-how?)

Participants from two other companies were unable to attend one of the meetings because company policy had frozen travel. One was under intense competitive pressure in an industry where its former leadership position was virtually wiped out by new technology. The other had

a change in leadership at the top and many activities were put on hold until the new leadership could disseminate new policies and procedures.

On the up side, one company said it was investing $600 million in new plant and equipment. Another told of the reliability centered maintenance study being planned to determine a maintenance strategy for new automated production lines to be installed in multiple plants.

One group is facing stress from expansive change while the other is facing stress from constrictive change. In both cases, I would think that people with solid maintenance and reliability skills and knowledge would have the best chance of dealing with that stress.

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,
Reliability-Based Maintenance Program Creates New Breed of Technician
,

We hope it helps you cope with the challenge of change facing you and your organization. **MT**