

In The Limelight

Written by Bob Baldwin Editor
Thursday, 01 May 1997 15:56



The secret is out. The cat is out of the bag. Companies are using off-the-shelf software packages to control expensive inventories of spare parts and to track purchase orders. Some companies are using the software to collect equipment failure data that can be analyzed to provide information on how maintenance procedures might be improved. Still other companies are using the software to manage maintenance activities and costs by tracking work orders. And the most progressive companies are using the software for all these activities combined, and more.

The payback is outstanding: unscheduled downtime has been essentially eliminated, purchasing and inventory functions are under control, maintenance and inventory costs have been slashed, and current cost information is easily available, all through using off-the-shelf software. That software, of course, is computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS). But that's not the news.

I read about these CMMS benefits in magazines that focus on automation, manufacturing processes, information technology, and instrument and control systems, all during the first quarter of this year. And that's the real news.

But is it good news or bad news? It depends on where you stand technically, financially, and politically within the corporate and plant management structure.

For well-positioned reliability and maintenance managers, it is good news. It is helpful to have other managers become more aware of the benefits of modern reliability and maintenance practices and learn that performance can be enhanced by investing in maintenance technology.

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On the other hand, for a poorly positioned maintenance manager, it could be bad news. Top management in business and operations could get the impression that maintenance is not all that hard if you invest in the right software, and perhaps they may believe that anyone can do it. They may even try to dabble in it themselves.

The attention being given to reliability and maintenance, sometimes under the banner of availability or asset management, provides an opportunity for you to better your position. If you act now, you become part of the business solution. If you wait, you could become part of the problem.

Reliability and maintenance managers are on stage. The spotlight is headed your way. It's time to see what kind of performance you give. **MT**

Thanks for stopping by,

