Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor A maintenance and reliability practitioner selects a condition monitoring solution that samples certain conditions on a problem machine at an extremely rapid rate designed to capture transient anomalies that never seem to occur during the normal sampling frequency. The solution should help solve an elusive problem and reduce the amount of downtime and scrap produced by the machine.

He documents the expected return and walks the request through the company's internal funding process, but he gets stopped cold by the financial gatekeeper with: "But that's *new* technology." And he goes away empty handed.

That story from the technology vendor called to mind some tips from Thomas Edison on "selling" new technology that I heard 10 years ago at a conference keynote delivered by Wayne Burkan, a futurist from Alternative Visions, Farmington Hills, MI.

My notes show that Burkan gleaned eight selling points from Edison's notebooks—perceived advantage, compatibility, simplicity, divisibility, communicability, reversibility, relative costliness, and lesser failure consequences. The conclusion is that you can sell almost anything if you have a good case for all of the points, but you will sell nothing if you miss on the first or last: perceived advantage and lesser failure consequence.

The presentation stuck in my head because of the way Burkan tied these important points to how Edison may have sold his new technology of electric lighting.

His case for perceived advantages would include the points that electric lighting is cleaner than gas lighting and easier to use. Electric lighting could be installed one room at a time (divisibility), required only the click of a switch for illumination (simplicity), and could be dismantled and taken out (reversibility).

The clincher might have been lesser failure consequence. If the electric lighting failed, the consequence was darkness. If gas lighting failed, the consequence could easily be fire, explosion, and death.

Unfortunately, most people are risk averse and the threat of a loss has a greater impact on a decision than the possibility of an equivalent gain. This is especially true today in a turbulent economy where selling future gain can be more difficult.

When you make your case for investment in new technology, you must work the money bags as if you are Thomas Edison selling electric lighting. Go into the meeting with a convincing argument for all eight selling points. Anything less, and you may come across as not fully committed, and unworthy of financial support. **MT**