

Cost-Cutting Travel

Written by Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor
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Robert C. Baldwin, CMRP, Editor I've been living the road warrior life this fall—out of the office traveling six weeks in the previous two months. And there is more to come.

I can't do my job without traveling. Fortunately, I enjoy it, but when it's more than one week a month, I start to feel my age.

No matter how uncomfortable or tiring, or how many misadventures, I don't believe I have ever had a bad business trip. There are always significant gains in information, knowledge, and ideas from face-to-face meetings with practitioners, suppliers, consultants, and even fellow travelers (more and more travelers have clothing or gear with company logos that can spark conversation).

Some of the people I expected to see at meetings recently have not been there because their travel has been curtailed to reduce costs. That is unfortunate for them and for their companies because they are missing out on opportunities to collect information that can be leveraged into considerable long-term cost reductions—for example, the nuances of using reliability centered maintenance (RCM) to increase maintenance effectiveness such as I picked up on a recent trip to the West Coast.

That trip took me to Sonoma, CA, for the user group conference of [Synergen](#), a supplier of enterprise asset management software, where I was able to renew my acquaintance with Peter Stock of Sentratch, one of the conference speakers and a licensee of the RCM II

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process explained in John Moubray's book
Reliability-centred Maintenance

Later, in Burlingame, CA, on the way to the airport for my flight home, I was able to get together with Mac Smith, author of *Reliability Centered Maintenance: Gateway to World Class Maintenance*, the second edition of which came out this year.

Thanks to Smith and Stock, who shared bits of their experience teaching and practicing rigorous RCM, I came home with a better understanding of this analytical process for determining the true maintenance requirements for plant equipment and systems.

Whether from a workshop, conference session, plant tour, or casual conversation over a cup of coffee, I treasure these encounters with people who have something to say about what they do. What you leverage from these conversations can make the difference between outstanding and ordinary performance.

If you can't network with practitioners and experts because you are cutting costs by not traveling, I hope it is proactive cost cutting—searching out and installing best practices, including the principles of reliability centered maintenance waiting for you in both of the books mentioned here. **MT**

