

"The past is the future, the future is the past: it all gives me a headache."—At least that's the word from one popular television show. Consider how this applies to maintenance and reliability.

In reality, how many "new" processes and procedures actually have been created in the area of maintenance and reliability in the last few years? Are the latest "buzzwords" simply new names for processes and procedures that have existed for decades? Preventive Maintenance, Reliability Centered Maintenance, Life Cycle Costing, etc.—many of these types of processes can be traced to the 1960s—maybe earlier. Consequently, the practices and processes that many companies are now planning to implement in the future actually existed in the past.

Even Computerized Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS), which provided the foundation for many current Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) systems, were being implemented in the mid-1970s. While those early systems may not have utilized all of the technologies to enhance the "user-friendliness" inherent in today's systems, they still supported maintenance business processes.

If we focus just on the CMMS/EAM aspect of the maintenance and reliability market, what do surveys tell us about the implementation and utilization of our current systems?

Most statistics show that today's CMMS/EAM systems are not being implemented properly; that they are not being utilized once they are implemented; and, that they are not delivering the returns they were projected to achieve. There are many common reasons why, including:

- Lack of management support for and understanding of the CMMS/ EAM project
- Lack of organizational business processes to properly utilize the CMMS/EAM system
- Insufficient implementation resources
- Insufficient personnel to utilize the system

We've been watching CMMS/EAM systems fail for these and related reasons for years. Why, then, would we let another implementation fail? Can't we learn from the past?

Somewhere In Time

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Do companies believe their implementations are so unique that they can't learn from the successes and failures of others? Would this type of shared information not help a company optimize its investment in a CMMS/ EAM system?

In Maintenance Technology and at our MARTS conferences, CMMS/EAM system implementation is an especially hot topic, and it has been covered from almost every possible angle. Yet, despite overwhelming interest, why has the percentage of perceived successful implementations still hovered at 50% or less?

How much money are we wasting by making the same mistakes time after time—year after year? Since expense dollars not spent become profit dollars, what we really should ask ourselves is: "How much of our company's profit are we wasting by repeating historical mistakes?"

With so many educational resources available today, there's no excuse for repeating historical mistakes in the selection, implementation and utilization of CMMS/EAM systems. If nothing else, we could find ways to make new mistakes. (This holds true for other types of maintenance and reliability processes, too.)

So, where does your company stand in its current CMMS/EAM efforts? In the past or in the future? To paraphrase that television show, just thinking about the question could be enough to bring on a headache! As for me, I'm off to find some Excedrin—but, I'll be back next month.