

Highlights:

- ❖ Tradesmen and supervisors have specific accountability beyond “uptime” and “overtime” measures
- ❖ Resources used to effectively complete pre-planned work
- ❖ Status of Work Orders and PMs well understood
- ❖ Heightened awareness of resource availability and usage



TAKING THE MYSTERY OUT OF MAINTENANCE | With maintenance crews working too much overtime, management frustrated about equipment performance, an underutilized CMMS, pressure to improve performance, and nagging questions about maintenance effectiveness that could not be answered, this western manufacturer knew they needed to do something significantly different. Additional resources or a new strategy were not the answers, improved execution was. >>

Can a maintenance department led by 20, 30 and 40-year veterans change the way they operate to improve performance? Absolutely. Was it easy? Certainly not. Was it beneficial? Read on...

IDENTIFYING THE GAP

Within one of North America's 500 largest manufacturing companies, this maintenance department's situation was similar to many others; filled with hard working tradesmen with decades of technical experience, but with few processes and tools in place to manage performance within the department.

It was popular opinion that there were things that could be done to improve overall performance. A statement reinforced by the site's General Manager, "we were not maximizing the productivity or efficiency of the equipment we already had in place, we wanted to make sure we're getting the most out of what we had before we went asking for capital to make improvements. There was room there to do better with what we had." How much more? During an initial analysis, millions of dollars in opportunity were identified across the operation based on increased throughput and finished-goods quality, not on short-term cost cutting measures.

Supported by comments from the management team that included "we need a system to ensure maintenance work doesn't slip through the cracks" and "it doesn't matter how many maintenance staff we have, it never seems to be enough", it was clear that maintenance needed to be part of the solution.

Two sets of maintenance issues needed to be addressed in order to help capture this multi-million dollar opportunity. First, the process in place to plan and execute work would need to be refined, and secondly, a process to manage the maintenance department's performance would need to be implemented.



PLANNING | The weekly maintenance planning meeting facilitates communication and is an integral part of the new management system.

When asked about dealing with these issues on their own the GM responded, "we're short handed with the current maintenance group; we just didn't have the resources required to design and implement a system that would get us to where we wanted to be in a very short window."

So was it an easy decision to bring in Perforex as part of the solution? The GM continues, "even if we only capture 50% of the opportunity identified, we'd be crazy not to go ahead with a project. On the other hand you are saying there is all this opportunity; you have to be comfortable enough with yourself to say 'hey maybe we're good at what we do but we can be an awful lot better', so your ego needs to be in check."

So with that, management decided to engage Perforex for a performance improvement initiative that included in-depth work within the maintenance department.

CLOSING THE GAP

Together with hourly and salaried staff, Perforex first worked to design and implement a site-specific system that would enable the maintenance department to identify, plan, schedule, assign, execute, sign off and close maintenance work. This meant designing a series of user-friendly tools that would not be intimidating to a seasoned maintenance staff. Revising work request forms, confirming preventative maintenance lists, designing planning tools and making the weekly planning meeting more robust were all part of the solution. Conceptually, all of these tools were straightforward, the challenge was in working with plant staff to put them to use in a disciplined and effective way.

Implementing a system to manage the maintenance department for performance was the next step. Going beyond typical maintenance measures such as up-time percentages and overtime costs, a complete set of performance indicators was developed that focused on the effectiveness of the maintenance function from a planning and execution perspective. Focusing on the specifics that the maintenance group actually controls allowed them to look at their own performance more critically and take steps to improve it.

This all adds up to significant process changes and even bigger cultural changes. As management says, "we are used to measuring production performance every shift and every hour, and while specific measures are needed to assess maintenance performance, we knew that implementing them would represent a huge change."

The GM was asked his opinion regarding



EXECUTION | Assigning pre-planned work orders, understanding progress and removing roadblocks throughout the day is key to staying on track.

the process that his organization went through, "it isn't Perforex coming in and saying this is what the answer is. It is Perforex coming in and leading our own people as a group, from the shop floor to management, through the design of how to better manage. That's what I like about it, it gets our people involved, I needed that so our people could learn the process because one day Perforex is going to go away and when they are gone I don't just want to go back to where we were."

BENEFITS

So what? Are things any better now? According to the GM, yes, "sure the financial benefits are important to me, but we knew we needed to realign maintenance and the Perforex approach gave my maintenance superintendent a good set of tools to do this." He continues, "we were prioritizing each day by who screamed the loudest, and now we are planning our work based on what is best for the entire operation."

As the Maintenance Superintendent explains, things are different now, "historically, we put a lot of value on the maintenance crew's ability to save the day when we had unplanned downtime, now the crew knows that we don't pat people on the back for getting us out of a ditch, we pat people on the back for keeping us out of the ditch."

References for this case study are available.

PERFOREX partners with companies to significantly increase their profits by implementing operating practices, systems and disciplines that drive results and create sustainable performance improvement. To date, Perforex has closed the execution gap at over 80 operations.