Maintenance 104

Implementing improved work processes

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Overview

The previous course outlined four phases of maintenance work processes that offer significant opportunities for improvement. This course provides tips on how to **implement** the improvements you decide are best for your plant.

Hint: As you go through the topics in this course, watch for answers to these questions:
- *Why standardize?*

- *What types of information must the maintenance management system provide for work analysis?*

- *What is the role of the core implementation team?*

Standardizing work processes

Start by defining standard methods of carrying out maintenance tasks and training personnel to follow them.

Standards "institutionalize" the new methods you've identified for improving maintenance practices. To say that standards make everyone perform a task the same way is missing the point; they help everyone perform the task the **best** way right from the start.

Doing things right the first time saves money, not only in eliminating repeat work but also in preventing subsequent problems. For example, if all instruments are installed according to the same factory-approved procedures, unforeseen problems caused by lack of training or "one-off" solutions are much less likely.

A good argument for selecting each type of product from a single vendor is that technicians become familiar with standard practices for frequently used products, thus reducing the chances of improper installation and subsequent maintenance problems.

Standardizing tools and rules

Make sure you have the procedures and systems in place to support the standard practices your maintenance team will be using.

For example, all areas of the plant must follow the same set of rules for making work requests and for allowing requests to become work orders. The terminology used to describe maintenance tasks and the way activities are recorded must also be uniform to avoid misunderstandings.

One tool for managing this standardized approach is a computerized system for scheduling, maintenance procedures, and safety procedures.

This Maintenance Management System must include categories, codes, and causes that are extensive enough to define the broad range of maintenance activities within the plant. These fields also form the database for work analysis. If they are not specific enough, technicians cannot enter data properly, and meaningful information cannot be retrieved. "Free-form" written comments are not as useful for analysis because they are not easily sorted.

Core implementation team

Launching work-process changes in a plant should be the responsibility of a team of individuals who know the existing process and understand what improvements need to be made. In many cases, team members will need appropriate training and certification.

The implementation team not only devises improvements in the work process to reduce maintenance costs; it also manages introduction of the changes to other personnel and follows up to see that the changes are implemented properly.

For example, the implementation team is responsible for "re-sizing" the crew and other resources needed for each maintenance task using the new, more efficient processes.

The Emerson advantage

One of the steps in the work process methodology used by Emerson is **maintenance resource optimization**.

After evaluating your organization's skills, we will recommend a focused program to build the essential competence for success. This may include training programs for existing personnel, recruitment of additional skills, and/or leveraging specialists from Emerson.

Measurable results

Any worthwhile change should add value to the operation — whether that value takes the form of reduced labor, longer equipment service life, less frequent repairs to specific instruments, improved product quality, or greater plant throughput.

The implementation team should therefore establish goals and a way to measure progress toward them.

Typically, after six months the implementation team should be able to evaluate the results of any change and determine precisely how well the organization has performed with respect to that particular goal. In cases where work processes extend maintenance intervals beyond six months, the evaluation period may be longer.

Of course, measurement depends on the availability of data, which the Maintenance Management System should be able to supply. Make sure you select a system capable of the necessary data indexing and retrieval — and make sure consistent, accurate data entry is part of employee training in the new work processes.

The Emerson advantage

Another step in the work process methodology used by Emerson is **performance metrics development**.

We will work with you to ensure that you have the right metrics in place to demonstrate the maintenance program's impact on business results.