



## Steps to Organizing and Developing an Asset Reliability Program

An asset reliability program is easily described in a lot of ways, *world class, mature maintenance, high performance maintenance, reliability-centered maintenance*, and on and on. When I started in the business, just out of school and way back in 1978, we didn't have a fancy name for Asset Reliability. We were just doing what we were paid to do! We just knew our job was to keep all of the assets in the plant performing like they did when we bought them or better.

What has developed over the years has turned into a pretty well-defined process most everyone who is successful in the asset reliability business follows. They may call it something else and describe it in a different order but the tried and true process is pretty standard.

Before we get into the specifics of what it takes to set-up a successful reliability plan we need to discuss some of the basic management components you will need if you have any hopes of being successful. The five management tools you need are:

1. Long range vision and culture or where you want to go
2. An attitude continuous improvement
3. A well documented and communicated plan
4. An organized process
5. A method to measure your progress

As you can see from the above list, I have described what I would call leadership. Not management which we have way too much of in the world today but leadership. In my opinion it is one of the scarcest commodities in the business world. The troubling part is that we are in a time when we need it the most and true leaders are either not there or they are hiding someplace. So let's assume you are or have one of those leaders ready to make some major changes to your organization. As we get into the details of building an asset reliability program my lifelong faithful maintenance guys, *Bubba and Skeeter* can do a lot to assist the reliability process but without the assistance and leadership from above it is like pushing a length of chain. Doesn't work out well in the long run.

So let's get into the details for the particular components you will need to make this process a success.

**Management Support and Culture** - Management must take the lead on this process; they must own it and be an integral part of the leadership and management of the process. It can't be delegated to a subordinate with no leadership and expect it to be successful.



**Organization and Staffing** - It is critical your organization is staffed and organized properly if you are going to pull this transformation off. You must have the right people in the right places for this to work. Painful changes in staffing may have to take place.

**Asset Data Management** - It is mandatory you have in place a modern Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) in place and running flawlessly. There is no substitution for this piece of the puzzle. All of your assets, **yes all**, must be documented in your CMMS. Work orders must be written for all work performed. I don't mean half, or 75%, or 90%, **but all!**

**Preventive and Predictive Maintenance** - This component is a Silver Bullet, you must have an accurate and detailed preventive and predictive maintenance program in place that is well-managed, audited, and improved on a regular basis. PMs should never be late or canceled and they should be the first type of work performed right behind your emergency work and before any capital or project work is attempted.

**Maintenance Control Function** - This function is where all of the work planning and scheduling takes place. This is the heart of the maintenance process. This group is the 'gate keeper' for everything coming in and going out of the maintenance organization.

**Training and Staff Development** - This one is commonly overlooked in asset management organizations because training, for some reason, always seems to get shortchanged when the yearly budget is being debated and haggled over. We seem to have the impression that once we train an electrician or HVAC technician they will be highly competent tech's for the rest of their career. I have an old friend who was responsible for maintenance training in a large fortune 500 company and the CEO said to him one day, "What if we train them and they leave the company?" His reply was, "What if we don't train them and they stay 35 years?"

**Supplies and Repair Parts** - Most people would say this is a no brainer but you would be surprised of the number of large and very large organizations that have no organized supply and parts storage or purchasing process in place. How do you repair stuff with no parts?

**Customer and Client Coordination** - This piece of the puzzle can be managed in many ways but the simple description is that you must have some regular and organized method to communicate with your customers about their assets and the condition of them. If you are not communicating with them then they must assume what your asset reliability process is. We all know what happens when we start assuming!



**Performance Measurements** - I saved the best for last. This may be the most important part of the entire program. You must have performance measures in place so you can easily and quickly see if the changes you are making are having a positive result towards your vision. Measurements must be simple, visible, easily understood, and always have goals associated with each one of your measures. A measurement or scorecard is useless without an associated goal.

So there you have it, a simple and straight forward process of how to change your vision and culture for your assets. Keep it simple, have a vision of where you want to go, layout a master plan and road map, and find a method to measure progress towards your vision.