RELIABLEPLANT

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A Proactive Approach to Team Collaboration

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Organizations that are reactive in their approach to maintenance, reliability, and operations are dysfunctional. Instead, companies should be operating as one team and focusing on the same goals. That means if a problem arises, everyone works together to solve it. Facilities can't continue to work in disjointed or dysfunctional ways and hope to see progress.

For example, most reactive organizations have maintenance in one spot, and then operations somewhere else. These organizations also don't hold regular scheduling meetings, or if they do, it's rare that every team will be represented. Why? Because the teams don't see the value in collaboration,

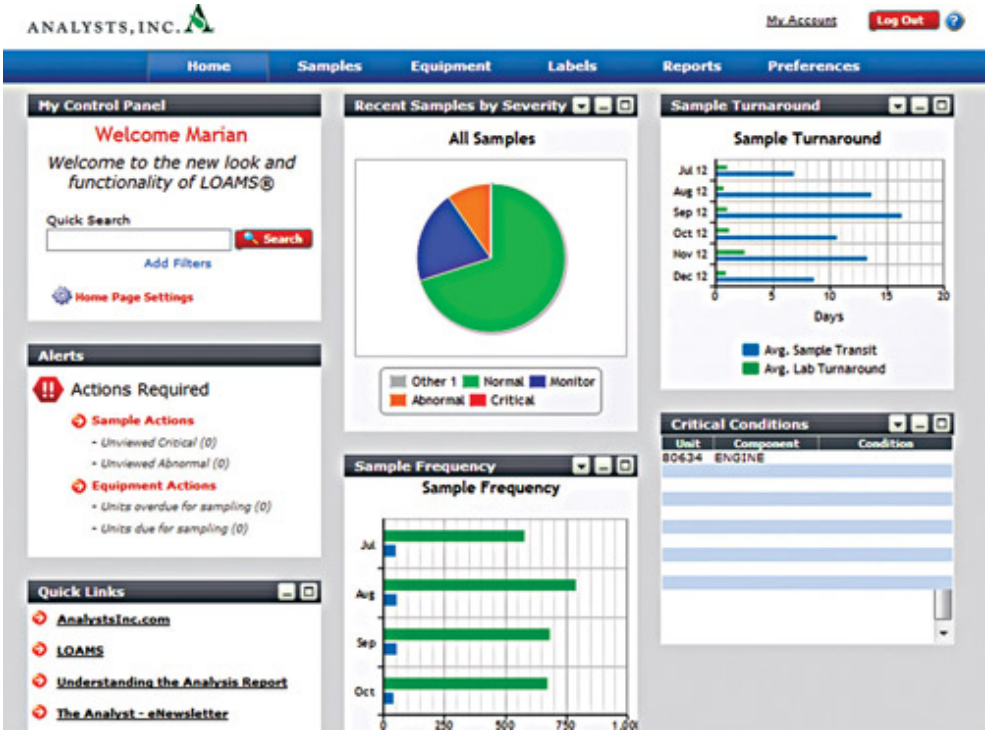
further strengthening the dysfunction.

Additionally, many of these reactive companies lack documented procedures. If a company doesn't have procedures, it doesn't have specifications. Everything within an organization should be synchronized. To reduce human-induced error, there must be formal procedures, planning, and scheduling.

To combat these issues, leaders must ensure they have a fully functional mobile solution and that their teams use it. It is ineffective to hope for progress without this synchronization. It's like trying to drive from New York City to San Francisco in seven days. It's possible, but if someone isn't monitoring the gas gauge, checking the GPS for waypoints, and ensuring that targets are being hit, the passengers will never make it.

The only way a company is going to get out of this reactive mindset is by admitting it has a problem. If not, the good people will leave. This concept has proven itself time and time again. There will be a promising leader within an organization, but if they find themselves at a point where nothing they do to improve the company is being met with support or is having any lasting impact, they will go find another company that will give them this support. Once this emerging leader leaves, it doesn't take long for others in the plant who believed in their mission to begin losing morale, increasing the risk that they will look for employment elsewhere, too.

If you're really working toward the same goals, then it makes achieving them a lot easier. One great way to achieve this is through a convenient and easy-to-understand dashboard. When clear goals are established and a company's teams know what actions are needed, sharing ongoing processes through a dashboard is an excellent way to make sure everyone "knows the score." Such a tool is an easy way to motivate a team as well as pull everyone together toward the goal of improving performance. Everyone will want to see the scoreboard and understand how they are doing individually, as a team, and as an organization.



Example of an online dashboard that provides an overview with easy-to-understand graphs.

Image source: machinerylubrication.com

Let's take a look at an example of creating a maintenance dashboard. To set up an effective maintenance dashboard, you'll need to measure maintenance processes to optimize asset reliability at optimal cost. Begin by identifying the steps in the maintenance process, from preventive maintenance (PM) and predictive maintenance (PdM) through your failure reporting, analysis, and corrective action system. This may include work identification, planning, scheduling, work execution, work order closeout, and failure reporting.

Once those requirements are met, select KPIs that are related to where your company is currently functioning, as well as your goal. For example, if you're mostly reactive and you're trying to move to PM, you should be measuring KPIs like the percentage of planned work and PM compliance. However, if you're already doing preventive maintenance and trying to move to PdM, you should be measuring things like defects found in PdM inspections and the number of PdM work orders executed.

A planner may go back into the system and pull a random number of work orders to see if they are closed accurately. Be sure to identify the metric used in each step and post it to the maintenance dashboard for specific audiences.

A dashboard can help a team understand if it is using the company's resources effectively, including specific players in an organization. As a result, a maintenance dashboard should be posted where everyone can see it. Maintenance score dashboards should tell a story, good or bad. When people know the score, reflected with consistent, accurate data, they can make better daily decisions.

For instance, it's critical that work orders are closed out correctly. Thus, a supervisor should review the work order, and a planner should close the order to ensure it's not done haphazardly in the middle of other pressing priorities for the day. This can help ensure the data going into your system is accurate, clean, and usable for the future.

Be sure to set high standards for your organization. World-class standards may seem unreachable but strive for them anyway. Typically, world-class organizations experience low costs, overtime, and production delays while seeing a significant increase in total production output. On the other hand, worst-in-class companies struggle with high maintenance and overtime costs, as well as production delays and low output levels.

Consider how much your maintenance, reliability, and operations processes impact cost, output, and quality. Look at your maintenance cost as a percentage of replacement asset value. Remember that this is industry, operations, and equipment specific. Where do you sit? How can you move in the right direction?

Start with production and what it requires. Determine things like rate, pressure, overall equipment effectiveness, availability, throughput, and cost. As we continue the process, reliability engineers ensure all asset reliability meets full functional requirements. The maintenance team must maintain equipment to those specifications with repeatable procedures.

A final important aspect to consider when evaluating the alignment of a company is certifications – specifically the Certified Maintenance & Reliability Professional (CMRP) and the Certified Maintenance & Reliability Technician (CMRT). By having management CMRP certified and the technicians CMRT

certified, it creates a cohesive unity amongst the team that helps align their goals and action plans. Certification not only helps align the team on their overall mission, but it also reinforces and continues to add to the wealth of knowledge that a company's technicians possess. By empowering teams, companies can foster a goal-oriented team that feels supported and heard.

About the Author

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Ricky has over 30 years' experience working as Maintenance and Reliability Professional for companies such as Exxon Company USA, Alumax Mt Holly, Kendall Company and the US Army. In additi... Read More

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