FROM REACTIVE WORK TO RELIABLE COMMITMENT

Integrating Weekly Work Management with The Asset Academy Maintenance Planning Circle

A practitioner methodology for converting asset strategy, reliability intelligence and ready backlog into safe, resource-balanced weekly execution



JOHAN SNYMAN

TFIEAust • CEngT • NER • IntET(Aus) • CAMA2 • CSAM

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From Reactive Work to Reliable Commitment

Integrating Weekly Work Management with The Asset Academy Maintenance Planning Circle

A practitioner methodology for converting asset strategy, reliability intelligence and ready backlog into safe, resource-balanced weekly execution

By Johan Snyman, TFIEAust, CEngT, NER, IntET(Aus), CAMA2, CSAM | Published August 2026

ABSTRACT

Maintenance organisations rarely fail because they lack work. They fail because demand is not converted into a credible commitment. This article presents an integrated methodology built from two Asset Academy practice models: the copyrighted Maintenance Planning Circle and the Weekly Work Management process. The Circle establishes the operating system around reliability, planning, inventory, execution, operations, contractors, safety, engineering and feedback. Weekly Work Management provides the decision rhythm that converts ready work into an agreed, resource-balanced and protected schedule. Together they create a closed control loop from asset strategy to field execution and back to learning. The article defines readiness gates, meeting cadence, role-based accountabilities, schedule controls, practical metrics and a 90-day implementation pathway. It also locates the method within ISO 55001:2024 and established maintenance thinking while preserving the originality and ownership of the Asset Academy model.

Keywords: maintenance planning; weekly work management; maintenance scheduling; ready backlog; reliability; asset management; ISO 55001:2024; work management; shutdowns; execution discipline.

1. The maintenance paradox: busy systems that do not control work

Most asset-intensive operations are not short of maintenance activity. Notifications arrive from operators, inspections, preventive routines, condition monitoring, audits, statutory obligations, engineering studies, shutdown discoveries and projects. Supervisors negotiate access. Planners chase scope and parts. Technicians improvise around missing information. Leaders review overdue work and ask why the schedule moved again. Everyone is busy, but busyness is not the same as control.

The central failure is usually conversion. A defect has to be converted into valid demand; demand into approved work; approved work into a technically sound job plan; a job plan into ready work; ready work into a resource-balanced commitment; and completed work into evidence that changes the next decision. When any conversion is weak, uncertainty is transferred downstream. The supervisor becomes the planner of last resort, the stores team becomes an expediter, the craft becomes the problem solver for missing scope, and the weekly meeting becomes a search for information that should already exist.

Reactive culture is therefore not only a behavioural problem. It is an architecture problem. The organisation may have a CMMS, competent people and formal procedures, yet still lack the interfaces that connect risk, reliability, planning, materials, operations and execution. A weekly schedule cannot repair those missing interfaces by itself. Equally, a sophisticated operating model has little value if it never reaches the weekly and daily decisions that release assets, people, parts and permits.

> ***"You do not improve maintenance by working harder. You improve it by preparing better, committing with discipline and learning from what actually happened."***
>
> *- Johan Snyman, founder of The Asset Academy*

The thesis of this article is simple: maintenance performance improves when an integrated operating model and a disciplined commitment rhythm are designed as one control system. The Asset Academy Maintenance Planning Circle describes the system. Weekly Work Management activates it. The first prevents narrow optimisation; the second prevents good intentions from dissolving into operational noise.

2. Method, evidence base and intellectual position

This is a practitioner technical article, not a claim that one diagram replaces established bodies of knowledge. The method was synthesised from more than three decades of work in defence, steel, mining, oil and gas, utilities, facilities and ports, and from the design of Asset Academy maintenance, asset management, shutdown and digital tools. The two supplied code packages were treated as the primary practice record. Their embedded process logic, meeting rules, role descriptions, illustrations, controls and commentary were analysed and reorganised into a publishable method.

The professional reference spine includes ISO 55000:2024 and ISO 55001:2024 for value, alignment and management-system control; the SMRP Body of Knowledge for work-management scope; Richard 'Doc' Palmer for the separation of planning and scheduling and the use of weekly schedules; Ricky Smith for practical maintenance and reliability discipline; Drew Troyer for standard work, precision and the connection between reliability and enterprise value; Mike

Gehloff for collaborative, science-based job planning; and Ron Moore for the manufacturing system, leadership and asset-utilisation perspective.

These sources are influences and reference points, not co-authors of the Asset Academy model. The Maintenance Planning Circle, its visual composition, its R-P-I-E operating spine, its connected control loops and its integration with the Weekly Work Management cadence are original Asset Academy intellectual property. External names are used with attribution and without implying endorsement, affiliation or ownership of this method.

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3. Reading the Maintenance Planning Circle as an operating system

The Circle should not be read as a collection of departments. It is a map of decisions, constraints and feedback. Its centreline is the R-P-I-E spine: Reliability, Planning, Inventory and Execution. Each element changes the quality of the next. Reliability determines what work should exist and why. Planning defines how the work can be executed safely and predictably. Inventory assures the material and tooling conditions on which the plan depends. Execution converts the approved method into a physical change in asset condition. Feedback returns actual condition, duration, material use, delay, quality and follow-on needs to the system.

3.1 Reliability defines the right work

Reliability is not a report-writing function beside maintenance. In the Circle it is a demand-quality function. Asset criticality, failure modes, plant-health evidence, inspections, condition monitoring, FMEA, RCM, RBI, FRACAS and root-cause analysis determine whether work is necessary, how urgent it is, what consequence it controls and whether the better intervention is repair, modification, operating change, redesign or replacement. Reliability prevents the backlog from becoming a flat list of requests with no technical hierarchy.

The model connects this analysis upward to the asset strategy stack and outward to risk registers, engineering limits, OEM requirements and the portfolio project team. That connection matters. A repair that repeatedly restores a defective design is not reliability improvement. A project that hands over equipment without asset hierarchy, BOMs, spares, task lists, inspection points, competencies and safe isolation requirements creates future reactive work before operations even begins.

3.2 Planning converts technical intent into executable work

Planning is the conversion engine. It answers what must be done, why it must be done, where it will be done, how it will be done, what hazards and controls apply, which skills and hours are required, which materials and tools are needed, what access and permits are necessary, and what acceptance evidence will prove completion. Scheduling answers who and when. Coordination manages real-time exceptions. Confusing these three disciplines forces detailed planning into the weekly meeting and turns the schedule into a negotiated wish list.

The planning node in the Circle is linked to estimates, throughput and cost accuracy because a job plan is also a forecast. Its labour content predicts capacity demand; its material list predicts inventory and procurement demand; its access duration predicts the production window; its task sequence predicts risk exposure; and its acceptance criteria predict the evidence needed to return the asset to service. Plan quality is visible in field waiting, scope growth, estimate variance, rework and repeated schedule failure - not in the number of pages in a work pack.

3.3 Inventory protects schedule credibility

The inventory node is intentionally central rather than peripheral. BOM quality, critical-spares logic, stock condition, reservations, kitting, direct purchasing, repairable rotables, obsolete equipment and supplier performance all determine whether planned work can become ready work. A part shown as 'in stock' is not necessarily available: it may be unserviceable, reserved to another job, incorrectly identified, stored in the wrong location or missing the certification required for use. Readiness therefore requires verified material status, not a green icon in a system.

3.4 Execution is a controlled experiment, not the end of the process

Execution proves whether the preceding assumptions were valid. Supervisors provide field control, technicians apply craft judgement within the planned method, operations releases the asset and manages process interfaces, and contractors work to the same standard as internal labour. The result must include more than a completed status. Useful close-out records the as-found condition, work performed, actual hours, materials used, measurements, test results, delays, deviations, follow-on work and suggestions for improving the plan.

The large feedback arrows in the Circle are therefore its most important feature. Completion data must update job plans, task lists, BOMs, estimates, failure records, tactics, risks and training. Without that return path, the organisation repeats the same planning errors and calls the repetition experience. With it, each work cycle improves the next.

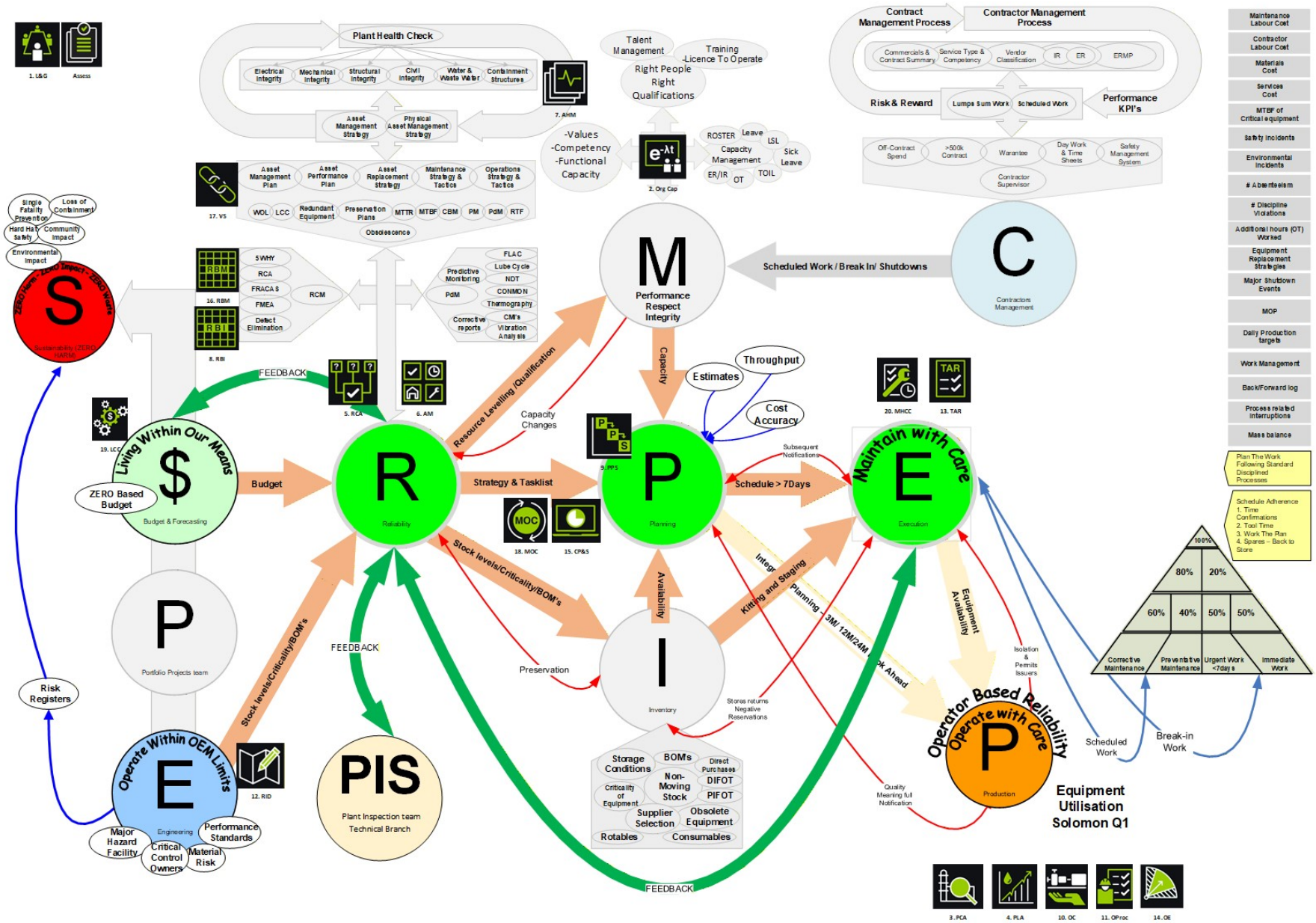


Figure 1. The Asset Academy Maintenance Planning Circle. The original model integrates safety, asset strategy, reliability, planning, inventory, execution, operations, contractors, engineering limits, capability, cost and feedback as one maintenance operating system. Copyright (c) 2026 Johan Snyman.

3.5 The surrounding conditions prevent local optimisation

Safety and zero harm, living within financial means, organisation capability, contractor governance, management of change, engineering controls, operator-based reliability and equipment utilisation are not decorative satellites. They are boundary conditions. They prevent a planner from building a schedule that exceeds isolation capacity, a reliability engineer from recommending work outside the budget or asset strategy, a contractor from operating under a second standard, and production from treating asset release as an optional favour. The M circle - performance, respect and integrity - is the behavioural control that holds these interfaces together.

4. Weekly Work Management: the commitment mechanism

The Weekly Work Management meeting is the point at which prepared demand becomes an operational promise. It is not a broad maintenance meeting, a planner's status report or an opportunity to redesign jobs. Its purpose is to decide whether next week's proposed work is ready, worth doing, resourced, accessible and sequenced well enough to be released as the frozen weekly schedule. The meeting connects approved backlog, ready work packs, labour, contractors, parts, tools, permits, isolations, production windows and risk-based priority into one decision.

A schedule has no control value until it is published, communicated and understood by technicians, supervisors, operations, materials teams and contractors. The output of the meeting must therefore be a visible commitment: jobs by day or shift, crews and skills, plant windows, critical controls, unresolved actions, escalation owners and the contingency reserved for genuine urgent work. A schedule that exists only in the scheduler's screen is not an operational schedule.

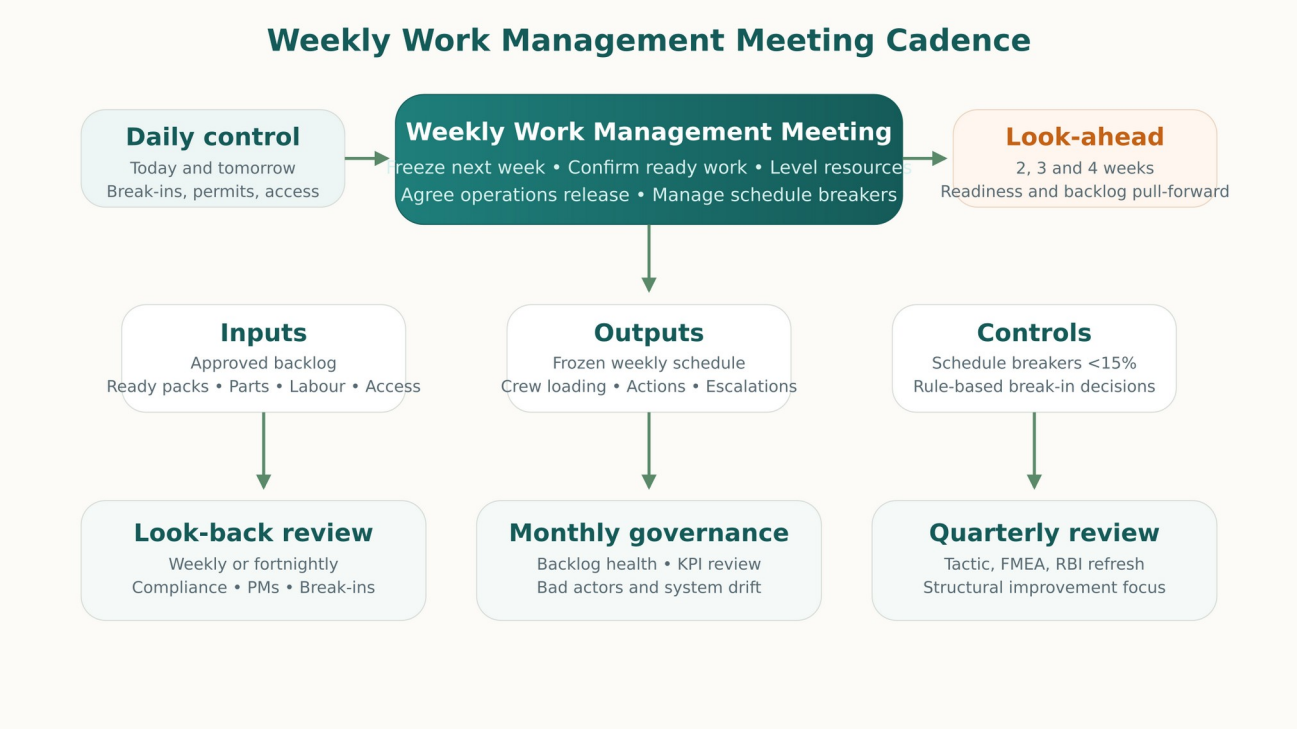


Figure 2. Weekly Work Management cadence embedded in the supplied process code. Daily control protects today and tomorrow; the weekly forum freezes executable work; look-ahead, look-back, monthly and quarterly routines progressively manage readiness, learning and structural improvement.

4.1 The frozen week is a governance rule

Freezing does not mean pretending emergencies do not occur. It means that a new job cannot displace committed work merely because a stakeholder is influential or a request is recent. Break-in work must pass a defined decision rule based on safety, statutory obligation, environmental consequence, asset criticality, production impact, likelihood and required response time. The decision-maker must record what entered, what moved, why it moved and which risk was accepted. This turns urgency from a feeling into auditable governance.

The supplied process uses a local target of less than 15 percent schedule-breaker work and recommends loading only 80 to 90 percent of net available hours, leaving 10 to 20 percent for credible variability. These are operating controls for this model, not universal benchmarks. A highly stable continuous plant, a remote mobile fleet, a hospital, a port and a brownfield commissioning environment have different demand volatility. The principle is to make the reserve explicit, evidence-based and reviewable.

4.2 One list and one version of work truth

Verbal requests, emails, inspection findings, audit actions, PM and PdM results, engineering recommendations and follow-on tasks must enter one controlled EAM or CMMS repository. This does not prohibit specialist analysis tools; it prohibits hidden commitments. The weekly forum cannot balance risk and capacity if part of the demand lives in planners' notebooks, contractor spreadsheets or supervisors' inboxes. The work record is the control object that carries scope, priority, plan status, readiness, schedule dates, actuals and feedback through the cycle.

5. The integrated Circle-to-Commitment methodology

The combined methodology can be understood as eight control transitions. Each transition has an entry condition, a decision owner and evidence. Work is pulled forward only when the next decision can be made without transferring avoidable uncertainty to the field. This is the practical bridge between the broad operating model and the weekly schedule.

1. Identify and validate demand. Capture the defect, task, inspection finding or improvement in the formal work system with asset, location, symptom, consequence and evidence. Reject duplicates and requests that cannot be located or understood.
2. Screen and approve. Confirm that work is required, assign a consequence-based priority, identify the accountable function and decide whether the response is maintenance, operations, engineering, project, procurement, tactic change or no action.
3. Scope and plan. Field-verify the job, define the safe method, skills, hours, duration, parts, tools, services, permits, isolations, access, quality checks, handback requirements and contingency. Use standard plans where repeatability exists.
4. Assure readiness. Verify that the job pack is complete and current; materials are physically available or kitted; plant access is accepted; permits and isolation concepts are feasible; labour and contractor competence are confirmed; and technical queries are closed.
5. Build the look-ahead. Pull ready and near-ready work into a two- to four-week horizon and maintain a 12-week rough-cut view for long-lead materials, shared specialists, production events, shutdown interfaces and capacity changes.
6. Commit and freeze. In the weekly meeting, select the highest-value executable work, level it against net capacity, confirm production release, reserve contingency, resolve conflicts and publish the schedule.
7. Execute and control. Use daily huddles to protect today and stabilise tomorrow without reopening the whole week. Apply break-in rules, manage field constraints, verify quality and record deviations while they can still be acted on.
8. Close, learn and improve. Capture actuals and as-found evidence, code breaker causes, update reusable plans and BOMs, route failure learning to reliability, and use monthly and quarterly reviews to remove structural causes.

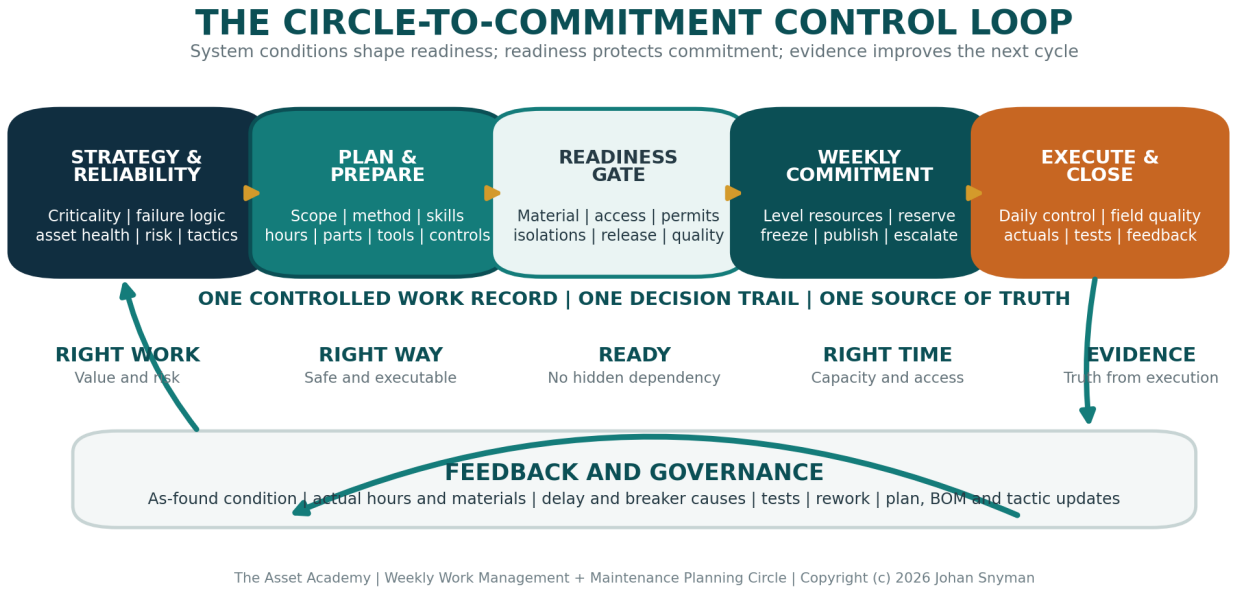


Figure 3. Circle-to-Commitment control loop. The Maintenance Planning Circle supplies strategy, technical quality and enabling conditions; readiness gates protect the weekly commitment; execution evidence returns to reliability, planning, inventory and governance.

5.1 Gate logic: incomplete work does not become scheduled work

A maturity model often describes good practice but does not stop a poor decision. A gate does. The schedule readiness gate should be a small set of binary or condition-based tests whose failure is visible. For example: scope verified; approved priority; current work instruction; hazards and critical controls defined; skills and labour estimated; material status confirmed; tools and lifting identified; permits, isolation and access feasible; operations window accepted; acceptance and testing criteria defined. A job may be planned but not ready if any execution dependency remains unresolved.

This distinction is technically important. Planned backlog measures work that has completed a planning process, even though timing, materials, access or other dependencies may prevent scheduling. Ready backlog is the subset that can be executed when the appropriate resource and asset window are assigned. Combining the two hides schedule risk. Reporting them separately tells leaders whether the constraint is planning throughput, material readiness, plant access, engineering closure or labour capacity.

5.2 Standard job plans as controlled learning assets

Repeatable work should not be re-invented from memory. Standard job plans preserve the best known safe method, but they must remain living assets. Troyer's work on standardised plans emphasises precision information, including tools, skills, duration, safety steps, torque, alignment and BOMs, as a basis for reliable execution and meaningful analytics. Gehloff adds a complementary social mechanism: the planner acts as an expert facilitator, collaborates with the people who perform the work and improves selected plans steadily rather than confusing plan quality with template length (Troyer, 2025a; Gehloff, 2023).

The Asset Academy method adopts that practical position. A standard plan is controlled knowledge, not a script that removes judgement. It defines what must not vary - critical safety steps, specifications, sequence dependencies, quality limits and required evidence - while leaving room for competent field decisions inside approved boundaries. Each

use generates actuals and feedback. The planner owns the plan's future quality; the supervisor owns safe field application; the craft owns truthful feedback.

6. Meeting architecture: different horizons, different decisions

Organisations overload the weekly meeting when they expect one forum to control every time horizon. The supplied process separates daily execution, shared resource levelling, pre-scheduling, weekly commitment, look-back learning, monthly system health and quarterly tactic review. Each forum should have a defined decision, standard inputs, a time box and an evidence trail.

Table 1. Work-management meeting architecture

Forum	Horizon	Primary decision	Minimum evidence
Daily control	Today / tomorrow	Protect today's work and remove barriers to tomorrow	WIP, permits, access, missing parts, delays, urgent-work decision
Shared resources	1-4 weeks	Allocate pooled trades, cranes, scaffold, specialists and contractors	Net capacity, leave, training, competencies, shared demand
Pre-schedule	2-12 weeks	Pull work forward and close readiness constraints	Backlog by risk, material report, operations windows, long-lead items
Weekly commitment	Next week	Freeze an executable, levelled schedule	Ready packs, labour, materials, access, isolation and release confirmation
Look-back	Prior week	Convert misses and actuals into system learning	Compliance, breaker causes, plan variance, rework, feedback quality
Monthly governance	1-6 months	Correct system health and structural constraints	Backlog ageing, PM compliance, bad actors, resource and contractor trends
Quarterly strategy	3-24 months	Refresh tactics, risk, capacity and lifecycle decisions	FMEA/RCM/RBI triggers, asset health, budget, shutdown and project outlook

6.1 A disciplined weekly agenda

The weekly forum is normally held late enough in the week that readiness information is current and early enough that the published schedule reaches crews before the new execution period. A one-hour time box is usually adequate when upstream processes work. The agenda should first review the previous week and open actions; then confirm the risk-ranked draft; test labour, skills, contractor, material and tooling capacity; confirm operations release, permits and isolation feasibility; decide exceptions; agree the reserve; freeze the schedule; and assign ownership for any residual readiness actions.

If basic job scope is debated, parts are first checked, priorities are invented or asset access is negotiated for the first time in the weekly meeting, the meeting has exposed an upstream failure. The response is not a longer meeting. It is corrective action on notification quality, planning standards, cut-off rules, operations participation, material coordination or decision rights. Meeting duration is therefore a useful diagnostic of process maturity.

7. Role clarity: contribution, decision and evidence

A weekly meeting improves only when each role arrives with something specific to contribute and a decision it is authorised to make. Attendance without accountability creates discussion. The role model embedded in the supplied code defines not only functional requirements but also stakeholder expectations, behaviours and evidence. The following summary preserves that intent.

7.1 Maintenance manager and planning superintendent

The maintenance manager owns the health of the work-management system, the breaker governance, resource capability, budget exposure and alignment between asset strategy and weekly execution. The manager need not chair every weekly forum, but must set the rules, attend by exception, remove cross-functional barriers and hold leaders accountable when the frozen week is routinely bypassed. The planning superintendent owns the quality of the planning and scheduling process: planner standards, ready-backlog health, cut-off discipline, look-ahead integrity, resource forecasts and the quality of the schedule proposal.

7.2 Planner/scheduler, superintendent and supervisor

The planner/scheduler converts approved work into usable job packs and a resource-levelled draft schedule. The role must arrive with scope status, labour and duration estimates, material and service status, access requirements, constraints and a maintained look-ahead. It must not use the meeting to discover basic planning information. The maintenance superintendent commits the area to the proposed work, confirms realistic crew capacity and resolves trade or area conflicts. The supervisor validates field practicality, allocates the daily work, verifies critical controls and quality, manages justified exceptions, and assures truthful close-out.

7.3 Operations, reliability, shutdowns, materials and contractors

Operations confirms the asset window, production sequence, isolation and permit capacity, operating hazards, handover conditions and the consequences of deferral. Reliability brings bad actors, condition findings, failure logic and tactic priorities so that proactive work is not displaced by visible but lower-value demand. Shutdown roles protect the boundary between routine weekly work and outage scope, identify shared resources and long-lead dependencies, and prevent the weekly system from unknowingly consuming outage readiness. Stores and procurement provide verified material status, kitting and supplier exceptions. Contractors provide confirmed competence, mobilisation, tools,

supervision and interface readiness under the same rules as internal work.

ACCOUNTABILITY RULE

Every participant must be able to state: what information I bring; what decision I own; what constraint I must disclose; what evidence I update; and what action I will complete before the next control point.

8. Quantitative control without metric theatre

Metrics should test the work-management system, not decorate it. A useful measure has a stable definition, a clear data owner, an understood decision response and enough segmentation to reveal cause. Schedule compliance without breaker reasons can hide unrealistic loading. PM compliance can be high while low-value tasks consume the week. Wrench-time observations can identify system delay, but become destructive if used as an individual productivity target. The measures below are therefore a control set rather than a league table.

Table 2. Core weekly work-management measures

Measure	Definition	Use and caution
Schedule compliance	Completed scheduled work / total scheduled work x 100	Use hours or jobs consistently. Code every miss; do not reward under-loading.
Schedule breaker ratio	Break-in work hours / total maintenance hours x 100	Local model target <15%. Segment genuine risk from priority churn and poor planning.
Loading ratio	Scheduled direct labour hours / net available direct labour hours x 100	Local planning range 80-90% where variability warrants. Base on net capacity, not payroll hours.
Ready backlog	Ready labour hours / sustainable weekly scheduled labour hours	Shows executable work cover. Separate from planned-but-not-ready backlog.
Planned backlog	Fully planned labour hours not yet completed / sustainable weekly scheduled labour hours	May include work waiting on timing, access, tools or materials; disclose constraints.
Estimate variance	(Actual hours - planned hours) / planned hours x 100	Analyse by standard plan, asset class and work type; large variance may reflect scope or feedback defects.
PM compliance	PM work completed on or before due / PM work due x 100	Pair with PM effectiveness and failure-mode alignment; compliance alone does not prove value.
Feedback quality	Close-outs meeting defined evidence standard / work orders closed x 100	Leading indicator for plan, BOM, tactic and reliability learning.
Rework rate	Repeat corrective work within defined window / completed corrective work x 100	Confirm causal relationship; distinguish recurrence from unrelated work on the same asset.

8.1 Capacity: calculate what can actually be committed

Theoretical paid hours are not schedulable capacity. Start with rostered hours for the relevant work centres and subtract known leave, training, meetings, restricted duties, statutory activities and other committed non-job time. Then account for realistic shift coverage, skill mix and supervision. Net available direct hours can be expressed as Hnet = Hrostered - Hknown exclusions. The planned loading ratio is L = Hscheduled / Hnet. If the organisation uses an 85 percent loading control and Hnet is 800 hours, the initial commitment envelope is 680 scheduled direct hours, not 800.

Do not automatically multiply schedule capacity by a wrench-time percentage. Wrench time is an observational measure of how the field system converts presence into direct work; it includes delays that planning and coordination should remove. Treating today's delay rate as permanent capacity can normalise waste. Conversely, loading 100 percent of payroll hours assumes away unavoidable variability and guarantees churn. Capacity planning must make both assumptions visible.

8.2 Compliance: measure commitment quality, not obedience

A job-based compliance percentage gives each job equal weight; an hours-based percentage reflects the size of the commitment. Both can be useful, but they answer different questions. Publish the basis and retain it. A ten-minute inspection and a 40-hour gearbox change should not accidentally be treated as equivalent in an executive discussion. Equally, an hours-only measure can hide many small missed statutory or PM tasks. The best review often uses both, segmented by work type, priority and breaker cause.

Breaker coding should be action-oriented: safety or statutory event; confirmed production emergency; asset condition escalation; missing material; access or permit failure; labour or skill loss; planning defect; scope growth; operations release failure; contractor failure; or management reprioritisation. The point is not to explain away a miss. It is to identify which part of the Circle must change.

8.3 Backlog: expose condition and conversion, not just volume

Backlog should be reported by risk, age, work type, planning status, readiness constraint and asset criticality. A single weeks-of-backlog number can look healthy while critical work ages, planners are starved of valid scope or material constraints accumulate. The conversion funnel - identified, approved, planned, ready, scheduled, completed and quality-closed - shows where work is stuck. Flow should be balanced: too little ready backlog causes fragile schedules; excessive ready backlog may indicate over-planning, deferred access or capacity loss.

9. Shutdowns, abnormal events and the limits of the routine week

Shutdowns are not simply large weekly schedules. They have scope-freeze gates, integrated production and maintenance objectives, critical-path logic, 24-hour execution control, temporary organisation structures, contingency plans and readiness evidence that must mature months in advance. The Weekly Work Management system must nevertheless interface with them. Routine work may compete for the same planners, scaffold, cranes, contractors, stores capacity and isolation resources. Equipment discoveries may move from routine backlog into outage scope, while shutdown findings create post-outage corrective demand.

The Circle places shutdowns on the connection between management, contractors and execution for this reason. A 12-week rough-cut horizon should show shutdown preparation, campaigns and major events even when the detailed shutdown schedule is managed elsewhere. The weekly forum should know which resources are ring-fenced, which jobs must not be consumed prematurely and which critical preparatory tasks have become routine-week commitments. A formal interface prevents two valid schedules from promising the same capacity.

Abnormal events test the operating model in a different way. The correct response may require breaking the week, but the event should still be captured, risk-tested and reviewed. After stabilisation, leaders should ask whether condition detection, operating discipline, spares, job plans, competence, contractor arrangements or engineering controls could have reduced the event or improved recovery. A resilient model learns under pressure.

10. Common failure modes and what they reveal

- The meeting replans jobs. This reveals weak scoping, unclear planning standards or an ineffective pre-schedule process. Move technical clarification upstream and enforce a planning cut-off.
- The schedule is consistently overloaded. This reveals theoretical capacity, hidden leave or contractor assumptions, unmanaged break-ins, or leaders using the schedule as an aspiration instead of a commitment.
- Operations attends but does not commit access. This reveals unclear decision rights or a meeting scheduled before production constraints are understood. Make release evidence an entry condition.
- Work is marked ready while parts are merely ordered. This reveals a false readiness definition. Distinguish ordered, received, inspected, reserved, kitted and staged material states.
- Compliance is high because difficult work is repeatedly deferred before freeze. This reveals KPI gaming. Track pre-freeze churn, critical backlog ageing and reasons for deferral.
- Break-ins are accepted without displacement decisions. This hides risk transfer. Record what moved, the consequence of delay, the approving authority and the recovery plan.
- Close-out is fast but empty. This reveals a completion-status culture rather than a learning system. Define minimum as-found, actuals, test and feedback evidence before technical closure.
- Planners spend most of the day expediting current work. This reveals that planning is not protected. Separate future-work preparation from same-day coordination and restore planner capacity.
- Contractors operate through a parallel spreadsheet and different work packs. This creates dual standards, broken history and weak assurance. Integrate contractor work into the same readiness and feedback controls.
- The CMMS contains every field but no trusted decisions. This reveals digitised ambiguity. Simplify the workflow, define ownership and make the system support the control process rather than compete with it.

11. A 90-day implementation pathway

The method can be deployed using the Asset Academy 4D pattern: Discover, Define, Design and Deploy. The purpose of the first 90 days is not to install every feature of the Circle. It is to establish a reliable conversion path, a credible weekly commitment and a learning loop, then expand on evidence.

11.1 Discover: days 1-20

- Map actual work flow from notification to technical close-out, including the spreadsheets, emails and informal decisions that bypass the CMMS.
- Observe planning, weekly scheduling, daily control and look-back meetings. Record decisions, information gaps, rework and unresolved actions.
- Baseline backlog by status and constraint; schedule compliance; breaker hours and reasons; PM compliance; plan-versus-actual variance; material delays; rework; and feedback quality.
- Complete targeted day-in-the-life observations for planners, supervisors, stores and technicians to identify waiting, searching, expediting and duplicate entry.
- Select one operational area with visible demand, a willing operations partner and enough data to test the method without hiding behind enterprise complexity.

11.2 Define: days 21-40

- Agree the work status model: identified, validated, approved, planning, planned, ready, scheduled, in progress, complete and technically closed.
- Define priority and break-in rules using consequence, likelihood, criticality, statutory obligations and response time. Name the approval authority for each threshold.
- Define the minimum job-plan and readiness standards, material states, operations release evidence, planning cut-off and frozen-week rule.
- Confirm role accountabilities for the maintenance manager, planning lead, planner/scheduler, superintendent, supervisor, operations, reliability, stores, shutdown and contractor interfaces.
- Choose a small metric set and publish definitions, formulas, data owners, review frequency and expected action when control limits are crossed.

11.3 Design: days 41-60

- Configure the CMMS workflow and dashboard around the agreed status and evidence, removing duplicate local trackers where practical.
- Create standard meeting agendas, a visual look-ahead, a readiness exception list, a published weekly crew schedule and a breaker decision record.
- Build or improve a small library of high-frequency or high-risk standard job plans with technicians, supervisors, reliability and stores.
- Establish a two- to four-week readiness review and a 12-week rough-cut resource view that includes shutdowns, projects, long-lead materials and shared specialists.
- Train participants through real work. Each role should practise what to bring, what to decide, what to challenge and what evidence to update.

11.4 Deploy: days 61-90

- Run four consecutive weekly cycles in the pilot area. Hold the cut-off, publish the schedule and record every break-in and displacement decision.
- Use daily control to remove barriers without silently rewriting the week. Escalate recurring constraints to the look-back and monthly governance forums.
- Review misses by system cause, not by blame. Update work packs, BOMs, estimates, material rules, access agreements and decision rights from evidence.
- Compare baseline and pilot results, including confidence in the schedule, ready-backlog health, breaker causes, feedback and frontline perceptions.
- Decide whether to stabilise, expand or redesign. Scale only the controls that the pilot has shown people can operate and leaders will protect.

12. Worked example: a port conveyor week

Consider a hypothetical bulk-handling area with 12 maintainers and a mixed electrical-mechanical crew. After leave, training, toolbox activities and known support duties, the planner calculates 800 net direct hours for the coming week. The local 85 percent loading control produces a 680-hour commitment envelope. The approved backlog contains 1,920 planned hours, but only 940 hours are genuinely ready. The difference is important: 310 hours wait on materials, 270 on operations windows, 210 on engineering clarification and 190 on specialist contractor availability.

The pre-schedule review pulls forward a conveyor-head-pulley inspection, two critical-control verifications, a belt-cleaner replacement, motor-alignment work, statutory lifting-equipment inspections and repeatable PMs. A gearbox change initially proposed for the week is planned but fails the ready gate because the replacement unit has arrived without the required inspection record. It is not hidden inside the schedule. Stores owns the verification action; reliability confirms the risk of one-week deferral; operations agrees enhanced monitoring.

The weekly forum commits 665 hours and keeps 135 net hours uncommitted. On Tuesday a high-temperature alarm on a shiploader slew bearing meets the break-in threshold. The superintendent authorises a 34-hour inspection and lubrication response. A lower-risk 28-hour cosmetic-corrosion job is displaced, and the remaining six hours are absorbed by the contingency. The change, decision authority and deferred risk are visible. The crew does not silently work beyond the schedule.

At look-back, 637 of the 665 scheduled hours are complete, giving 95.8 percent hours-based compliance. The breaker ratio is 34 hours divided by 699 total executed maintenance hours, or 4.9 percent. The belt-cleaner job used two hours more than planned because access scaffolding obstructed a fastener. The planner updates the standard plan and access note; the inspection finding is routed to reliability; stores adds a preservation check for spare gearboxes. The numerical result matters, but the stronger result is that the system learned.

13. Relationship to established maintenance thinking

Palmer's handbook provides a disciplined foundation for planning future work, estimating labour, staging materials, creating weekly and daily schedules, handling reactive maintenance and using planning measures without confusing planning with supervision (Palmer, 2019). The Weekly Work Management method is consistent with that separation and extends it through explicit cross-functional readiness, breaker governance and the wider Circle interfaces.

Smith and Mobley place practical planning, scheduling, roles and reliability decisions within the everyday work of maintenance engineers and managers (Smith and Mobley, 2007). Smith's broader practice reinforces the need to remove waste and establish proactive maintenance rather than using planning as clerical control. Troyer makes precision and standard work visible, while also arguing that asset performance and reliability must be understood in financial and enterprise-value terms (Troyer, 2025a; 2025b).

Gehloff's science-based planning position strengthens the social design of the model: plans improve through collaboration with craftspeople, steady experimentation and ownership of execution outcomes, not through more elaborate templates (Gehloff, 2023). Moore's manufacturing-excellence perspective is reflected in the Circle's outer system - design, procurement, parts, operation, maintenance, training, leadership, CMMS and utilisation must operate together if maintenance is to improve business performance (Moore, 2004).

The contribution of the Asset Academy method is the synthesis and the control interface. It makes the full maintenance operating environment visible in one Circle, then provides a weekly decision mechanism that turns that environment into a credible promise. It also makes failure diagnosable: every miss can be routed back to the appropriate system condition rather than being labelled simply as poor execution.

14. ISO 55001:2024 and line of sight to asset value

ISO 55001:2024 requires an organisation to establish, implement, maintain and improve an asset management system that supports its asset management objectives. ISO describes the purpose in terms of balancing performance, risk and expenditure across the asset lifecycle to realise value. The standard does not prescribe this Weekly Work Management method, but the method supplies practical operational evidence for that intent: objectives and risk influence work selection; resources and competence constrain commitment; lifecycle plans and reliability strategies create demand; outsourced work is controlled; changes are governed; execution is monitored; and performance information drives corrective action and improvement (ISO, 2024a; ISO, 2024b).

The most important line of sight is not a diagram in a SAMP. It is the ability to explain why a specific job was selected, which asset objective and risk it supports, why it was ready, what resources were committed, what happened in execution, what evidence proved the result and what changed afterward. The Circle maintains that line across functions. The weekly process makes it observable in routine decisions.

AUDIT EVIDENCE CREATED BY THE METHOD

Examples include controlled work status, consequence-based priorities, approved readiness rules, competency and resource records, material and contractor assurance, published schedules, exception approvals, performance trends, technical close-out, plan and BOM revisions, reliability actions and management-review decisions.

15. Conclusion: maintenance excellence is a promise kept repeatedly

World-class maintenance is often described through outcomes: fewer failures, higher utilisation, lower cost, safer work, better quality and longer asset life. Those outcomes are real, but they are produced through a less glamorous discipline: converting imperfect demand into prepared work, committing only what the system can deliver, protecting that commitment, telling the truth about exceptions and improving the next cycle.

The Maintenance Planning Circle shows why no single department can produce those outcomes. Reliability without planning creates recommendations that cannot be executed. Planning without materials creates paper readiness. Scheduling without operations release creates conflict. Execution without feedback creates organisational amnesia. Contractors outside the system create dual standards. Metrics without decisions create theatre. The Circle keeps the whole system visible.

Weekly Work Management gives that system a heartbeat. It is the place where the organisation proves that priorities are real, plans are usable, capacity assumptions are honest, materials exist, access is agreed and leaders will protect a decision once made. Daily control then manages reality; look-back converts reality into learning; monthly governance removes structural constraints; and quarterly review reconnects work to tactics, risk and lifecycle value.

> ***"Plan the right work, prepare it properly, commit it honestly, execute it with care and make every completed job improve the system that follows."***
>
> *- The Asset Academy maintenance-management position*

That is the practical meaning of reliable commitment. It does not promise a week without surprises. It promises a system that can distinguish surprise from poor preparation, respond without losing control and become stronger because the truth of execution is returned to the model.

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Selected Asset Academy resources

The Asset Academy home page: https://asset-academy.com/

Maintenance Planning Circle animation: https://asset-academy.com/wcm-asset-academy-circles-animation/

Maintenance Maturity Assessment: https://asset-academy.com/mmrev1-maintenace-maturity-tool/

Integrated Shutdown Management process: https://asset-academy.com/shutdown-process/

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ABOUT THE FOUNDER

JOHAN SNYMAN

TFIEAust • CEngT • NER • IntET(Aus) • CAMA2 • CSAM

Johan Snyman is the founder of The Asset Academy and a senior asset-management practitioner with more than three decades of experience across South Africa, Mozambique and Australia. His career spans defence, mining, oil and gas, steel, utilities, facilities, FMCG, robotics and ports—from radar, electrical and automation practice through maintenance and shutdown leadership to asset-management systems, digital transformation, training and advisory work.

THE INTEGRATED BODY OF WORK

Asset-management systems • AMBOK and SDBOK • Data and digital
Maintenance and shutdowns • AI and simulation • Learning and mentoring



FOUNDER • PRACTITIONER • TEACHER

FOUNDER STATEMENT

"Assets exist to deliver value. Our job is to make that value visible, measurable and achievable."

BUILD SYSTEMS THAT WORK. MAKE VALUE VISIBLE. LEAVE CAPABILITY.