

As Sisyphus well knew (knows?) pushing things up mountains is difficult, and the uphill struggle from the Reactive to the Proactive Maintenance World is often a frustrating three steps forward, two steps back, process.

A major reason so many slide back into the familiar, ugly, day to day, survival morass at the bottom.

One of those steps on the way up, is where PM inspections are getting done, and we're finding things that need to be fixed, and we're fixing them. But we're still just not getting that much better. We're constantly fixing the same things over and over.

The famous quote "Those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it" remains as true as always.

The "Find it, Fix it and Move On" mode granted, is a big step up from the "Fix it When It Breaks" mode, but it doesn't look or feel like great improvement, so many get discouraged, and will look for faster, more rewarding opportunities.

This is where the maintenance planner can really make a contribution.

**An item I emphasize in Maintenance Planning and Scheduling Classes is the importance of the planner, as one of his first activities on a job, checking to see if we've done this work before on this or similar equipment.**

If we can get the planning information from previous work, (even copy the work order) a huge amount of the planner's time is saved.

That's a big plus for planner productivity and accuracy.

**But what's a huge plus for maintenance and operational improvement, is that now the planner is looking at the number of times the same work has been done before.**

That tends to raise the questions Why? and What Can We Do About It?. So that we just don't keep making that same repair over and over again. And then we get folks together and we work on it. And usually it's an operational or equipment care gap that we can fix pretty quickly.

And now we really start to get better!

I remember a case of a motor that kept burning out every six months or so. But it was a small motor, and always someone different making the fix, on a different shift, and it was a pretty quick replacement, so it took a while to get noticed.

A sprocket had been replaced on an emergency repair and as the right one wasn't in stock, the closest one was substituted. But no follow up work order was written to make the right replacement.

So the motor was overloaded, but not hugely, so it took a while to die, and of course, sadly, it seemed that we were always replacing small motors anyway, so why would this one stand out?

But if you search for that work in a CMMS system the list of occurrences jumps up right away, and it's pretty obvious we need to ask why.

The big issues in plants are usually well known and so have a somewhat, reasonable chance of getting attention. But the planner is really the only one looking at all the repairs, and likely to see patterns in the smaller ones.

**And routinely finding and fixing small items is a key indicator of excellence**

But using history takes a few things though, and the biggest of those is a value for using history.

**As a society we'd rather "Jump in and Just Do It" and not "waste time" researching because "This time it's different".**

So managers really need to encourage and foster planners doing this work.

Also there's concern that if we don't find anything we've wasted that research time. But it doesn't take that long, and besides worst case, we're learning what information needs to be there, and can fix some work orders that aren't clear.

The quality of the information is key. The sixty or eighty character work description is the most significant information seen when a work order listing is pulled up, so that really needs to tell the story clearly.

A work request description often states an issue, but the final description should describe the actual work.

Something else I really recommend, is routinely visiting all completed work orders to make sure all useful information is captured. Unfortunately completing "paperwork" does not have the same value for everyone, and more so, not everyone knows and understands the use and significance of the various work order fields.

**Besides amazingly, it's always useful to actually talk to mechanics to find out how things went, and what could have been better in the plan.**

**Because that's how we get better at planning too. Effective planning is always a team activity.**