



How to Get the Most Out of Your Plant Equipment

Six Tips for Implementing a Successful Predictive Maintenance Program

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The goal of every predictive maintenance program is to perform equipment maintenance in the most cost-effective way and at the most appropriate time – before a piece of machinery fails. Predictive maintenance programs have several advantages over routine time-based maintenance, which focus on maintaining equipment whether it needs it or not.

Improving Safety

Predictive maintenance helps you get rid of the bad eggs in your system and gives you an early warning system that allows you to plan for a repair on your own schedule rather than having a breakdown plan for you. Catching a problem early – particularly in a capital-intensive operation like a steel plant – can help avoid a major failure that could cost millions in downtime, spoilage and repair costs.

Six Tips for Predictive Maintenance Success :

Whether you're just beginning to implement predictive maintenance or you've been doing it for some time, there are a few steps you can take to maximize the return on your investment and ensure that employees are engaged in making your program a long-term success.

1-Determine whether it's realistic to implement and manage a predictive maintenance program yourself

Has your company ever purchased an expensive piece of predictive maintenance equipment, only to stick it in a storage area and never use it? If so, keeping your program in-house is probably not the best option.

Condition monitoring and other reliability products are only helpful if there is someone there who knows how to operate them. If you know you don't have the time or resources to train anyone on how to use the equipment or interpret the data, then outsourcing is going to be a more effective option.

For those companies that do have the resources and the manpower, in-house predictive maintenance allows for consistency and timeliness. With the same engineers and technicians working on machinery every time, the staff gains an intimate knowledge of the plant's systems and can have additional insight into problems that outsourced service providers may not have.

2-Choose the right predictive maintenance technologies for your operations.

Whether you decide to outsource your program or keep it in-house, it's important to choose the right equipment and technologies. It's a waste of money to invest in technologies that are beyond what you need, just as it can

be ineffective to choose the cheapest or most basic technologies when your operations require much more.

3-Involve everyone from the shop floor to upper management

Different levels of an organization have different priorities, but everyone benefits from a successful predictive maintenance program.

On the shop floor, employees are interested in how a program is going to make their daily jobs easier. Maintenance personnel want to be proactive rather than reactive. Operations managers want to know how a predictive maintenance program is going to help them see problems ahead of time so they can plan and schedule accordingly.

4-Set expectations

Particularly when starting a new program, it's important to communicate realistic expectations to management about when cost savings will occur.

Realistic expectations also should be set for how long it takes to implement a new program or add new technology to an existing one. Because baselines need to be set to measure improvement later, programs can take several months to set up, depending on the condition of the equipment.

5-Measure your results and publicize the big wins

The only way to be certain that a predictive maintenance program is saving you money is to analyze the reports provided by your reliability equipment and software. Whether you measure the results yourself or have a service provider do it for you, it is an absolutely necessary step in building a business case for further investments in reliability.

6-Don't let your program go stale

Once you've shared the positive results a predictive maintenance program can yield, company leaders will have high expectations for even greater numbers. To manage a program that doesn't just keep producing results but actually improves those results year after year, plant reliability professionals need to keep their program fresh.

No matter the size of your operation, there are predictive maintenance programs that are designed to suit your needs. Whether you choose to outsource your program or keep it in-house, remember to follow these six tips to maximize your company's return on its predictive maintenance investment.