

# 5 maintenance challenges, and how to deal with them

The maintenance department plays an important part in every industry. But, it is also a job that never knows a dull moment.

“*Unexpected events will often reset your planning.*”



## Unplanned maintenance

As a maintenance manager you must deal with unexpected breakdowns. Unplanned downtime is often caused by an avoidable failure of equipment. Unplanned maintenance causes every day utility failures. Most maintenance managers also report struggles with unscheduled maintenance. In this case the planned service is not yet scheduled for a specific time, task or technician.

Both can occur when you least expect it. When you are knee-deep in these situations, the quickest action to take is to solve these problems. We call this reactive maintenance where you react to the failure of the equipment. But why does this same situation keep repeating itself?

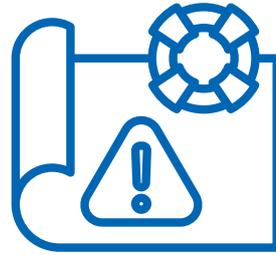
You should be thinking about maximizing the utilization of your operational assets. Scheduling preventive maintenance is the best solution to avoid recurring emergency situations. The main goal is to prevent risks in your operations. As a result:

- Your equipment will be more reliable.
- Your chances of failure of your assets will decrease.

There are options to use software that helps you schedule maintenance. This works by tracking previous maintenance and usage of the equipment.

**Solution: Implement a preventive maintenance strategy**

# 2



## Contingency management

Be always prepared for unplanned equipment failure. A contingency plan helps to handle these breakdowns in the most efficient way. It is designed to resume your operations after an emergency breakdown. A good contingency plan also handles a fluctuation in demand.

Where to start?

- First you need to identify the main risks and appropriate responses in different scenarios. Start by making a list of the risks that can have an impact on your operations.
- Next, rank the most important risks. Those are the ones that are most likely to happen or that can cause extensive damage when they occur.

After you have prioritized your risks, you can start to develop a contingency plan.

- The plan should include the main trigger that sets the plan in motion.
- It should also state the preferred immediate response.
- Furthermore, it also states who needs to be involved and informed when this happens.

Upon completion, you should get your contingency plan approved. Once approved, make sure to distribute the plan to all involved parties. It is recommended to check its effectiveness in the long term. A good executed contingency plan will save you time and money.

Implementing a preventive maintenance strategy is as important as developing a contingency plan. However you can never 100% avoid emergencies. So what should you do in case of an emergency?

- Always put safety first.
- Then start by inspecting the problem to find out what caused the breakdown.
- If someone in your team can solve the problem, then start repairing the equipment. You can also hire an external team to handle the repairs.
- If the equipment downtime is impacting your operation, consider hiring a temporary unit.
- If repairing the equipment is not possible, you should replace the piece of equipment. Do this by renting or buying a new piece of equipment.

**Solution: Develop a contingency plan**



# 3



## Maintenance budget approval

Industrial companies spend on average 10% of their annual budget on maintenance. Poor decisions in maintenance management often further increase this cost. Using a preventive maintenance program helps you to budget maintenance costs. Additionally, it saves unforeseen costs, while preventing breakdowns.

A lot of companies consider maintenance costs to be unnecessary expenses. Maintenance managers often have to convince their management investing in maintenance is a must.

It helps to list the long-term benefits. We have listed some for you.

Investing in maintenance results in:

- Improved ROI of your capital investment as it increases the lifetime of your equipment.
- Increased safety of every employee within your operation.
- Decreased risk of equipment downtime, thus avoiding unexpected emergencies. Equipment that is properly serviced keeps your operation running smoother.

When considering the total cost, one should also take the costs of a breakdown into account. Additionally, improving your maintenance plan also boosts production efficiency.

**Plan: Consider total cost when preparing your budget**

## Optimize productivity of your assets

Limiting downtime will be one of your main goals as a maintenance manager. One method to improve this is to increase the performance of your assets. Here is how you can achieve this.

Companies can save up to 18% of maintenance expenses by going from reactive to preventive maintenance.

Audit your facility to gain insights in your assets. This will allow you to identify unnecessary costs.

Most equipment should not be serviced while in operation. Safety should always be the top priority. Make sure you know which equipment maintenance can thus impact your output. This will allow you to schedule maintenance during planned downtime. An alternative is to temporarily lower your production output.

**Solution: Preparation is key**



# 5



## Time: your most precious asset

While you are optimizing your operational assets, do forget to also manage your time. This is your most precious asset. Most maintenance managers become overloaded with an endless list of tasks. Managing your agenda then becomes a daily challenge.

Take these tips into account:

- Plan the amount of time you will spend on each activity on your to do list.
- Prioritize your tasks. Always start with tasks that bring the greatest value to the organization. This is often forgotten in the daily rush.

A practical tip is to reserve 15 minutes each morning to plan your day.

- List all activities you would like to complete.
- Cross off the activities you have done and add the time you needed. After some time, this will show where you are spending most of your time.

Make sure to map your activities in the time management quadrant. This will reveal the tasks that waste time versus tasks that provide a huge return.

Over time, your daily schedule will become more realistic and easier to deal with.

**Solution: Measure, learn and adjust**



## So, what's next?

It is time to start implementing changes in your routine. Pick the solutions that seem most relevant to you and start testing them.

Small changes can already make a big impact. Remember, the goal is to improve resilience of your organization. This will make your operations less vulnerable in case of unexpected breakdowns.