

## **Top 8 Mistakes in Maintenance with Tight Budgets** August 17, 2009

1. **Change for the Sake of Change** - When times are tough, people have a tendency to try and over-control the situation, often making it much worse. As a result, they make changes in hopes of improving a situation, but without really knowing that maybe what they are already doing is already the best thing. The changes they make often come with much more work for everyone that doesn't produce much, but only gives them a sense of being able to say "we tried everything". So don't over react. If you had a maintenance strategy or processes you believed in when times were good, then how much more important is it to stay the course on that strategy when times are bad?

2. **Not Focusing on the Fundamentals** - Working on new projects means something else won't get done. Make sure the basics are covered and the fundamentals of keeping your plant up and running are not neglected.

3. **Cuts in the Training Budget** - You might make some short term gains on a budget issue, but the cost will only show up somewhere else, and in much bigger numbers. "Turning-them-loose-training" (learning from your mistakes), "Follow "Old Joe Training" (learning bad habits from others), and "Band-aid-training" (sitting a worker in front of a boring video or webcast), while sometimes are good supplements, are poor substitutes for professional training from a live human being. The costs for taking these shortcuts will eventually surface.

4. **Communication Neglect** - People tend to keep their heads low when they are stressed. This causes poorer communication across all lines at a time when it is more important than ever to have clear and consistent communication to pull your company through.

5. **Employee Neglect** - If management is stressed, you can bet the employees are too. Forgetting to remind people of the good job they have done or acknowledging their accomplishments will only make the situation worse. Improve their morale by letting them know you appreciate their work.

6. **Putting Off Small Repairs** - The stories are endless about companies who "hold off" on minor repairs during a budget crisis so that they can concentrate the bigger issues, only to have their neglected small repair become the bigger issue.

7. **Switching Vendors to Save a Buck** - If the lowest priced vendor wasn't good for your company before, what makes you think they will be good for your company now? Trying to save money on a \$1,000 component might sound like a good idea until you have to face a shut down for days or weeks at a time because it hasn't been delivered. Stick with what has kept you up and running.

8. **Laying off the Wrong People for the Wrong Reason** - Don't create a worse problem down the road than you already have. Maybe laying off the young novice to keep "Old Joe" around sounds like a good decision, but not if Old Joe decides to retire in the next year and leaves you high and dry. Likewise, laying off Old Joe because he makes the most money might help your short-term budget, but if he really can "do it all", you probably need to figure out a way to keep him around. Be careful to analyze your needs and company policies before making a quick decision. Knowing your employees on a more personal level can help to clarify these decisions as well.

Tip provided by American Trainco, Inc.

*Creating a Better, Safer and more Efficient Maintenance Workforce*