

Not Enough People

CREATE REACTIVE, PM, AND PLANNED MAINTENANCE CREWS

This is the 11th follow-up article to the July 2004 article, *Not Enough People*. These articles have been written to provide the reader with some practical concepts to apply in an attempt to slow down and eventually STOP the self-fulfilling prophesy of *Not Enough People*. As we have discussed previously, your organization's culture will not change if you do not apply the appropriate forces because 'a body at rest tends to stay at rest'. It should not be surprising that you have to apply these forces. If you are expecting things to be different than in the past, but you do nothing different then you may want to think about the following definition: "Insanity is doing the same things over and over and expecting different results!" Successful implementation of the fifteen action items listed in the initial *Not Enough People* article will eventually reduce the level of firefighting to a manageable level allowing you to move your organization's culture into the proactive zone. These proactive steps will increase the efficiency of your existing resources and provide much needed additional resources for more proactive activities that will eventually increase capacity, reduce costs, and improve safety performance. These activities will eventually reverse the *Not Enough People* environment that you may be currently experiencing. The first ten forces we have discussed were:

- 1) Educate your maintenance/operations staff about the benefits of Reliability Excellence (Rx)
- 2) Establish the appropriate performance metrics
- 3) Clearly define the criteria for an Emergency Work Order and apply the discipline to ONLY break the schedule when TRUE emergencies occur
- 4) Establish the appropriate priority system and instill the discipline in the organization to use these priorities
- 5) Ensure the discipline in breaking the schedule with an Authorization for the Inefficient Use of Company Resources, if required
- 6) Dedicate planners with the proper span of control ratio
- 7) Select the Right Planner(s)
- 8) Build your Ready Backlog then insist that these are placed on the schedule
- 9) Dedicate Maintenance Engineering staff to take ownership of the reliability effort
- 10) Improve the Downtime Tracking System (Production Losses) and establish an RCFA process to attack these problems

If you haven't realized it yet, the only way to get out of the firefighting mode is to stop doing what created this reactive culture in the first place! A proactive organization develops the discipline to do the right things instead of just reacting to the problems in the plant day after day. This article, like the previous ones, is about doing just that...working smarter, not harder!

This month we are going to talk about a very simple concept; keeping dedicated crews working on planned and scheduled work (Ready Backlog), PM/PdM, and even a REACTIVE MAINTENANCE crew. You may be thinking, ‘What, a reactive maintenance crew? How can we be more proactive by dedicating a crew to reactive work?’ Before you answer, ask yourself whether or not you are in a firefighting mode and, if so, how much of the time your personnel are working on unplanned and/or unscheduled work. And yes, there is a difference between planned and planned and scheduled work. It seems that a lot of organizations have actually merged these two concepts together and become fooled into thinking that jobs are planned just because they are on the schedule, but that was the subject of another article. You may also remember a previous article that discussed the fact that unless you are planning AND scheduling your work, you are losing valuable manpower hours to less efficient and more costly reactive work. If you create a reactive maintenance crew to handle the emergency unscheduled work, then you can keep other crews focused on Backlog relief while also increasing the percentage of PM/PdM. Yes, this is difficult in the beginning of the effort, but you have to start increasing the amount of planned and scheduled work and more importantly the amount of PM/PdM work performed before the amount of reactive maintenance will go down.

After discussing this concept, a plant manager once said to me, “I feel like the equipment is running the plant and not me!” Sadly, he was correct in that all of the plant employees were focused on one thing and one thing only: what is broke and what do we need to fix today! That type of focus will only lead to the self-fulfilling prophesy of *Not Enough People*. Many organizations that are totally reactive may in fact be the best in the world at emergency repairs with personnel that are often heroic and commendable in their efforts. These employees deserve recognition and have been rewarded for many years in reactive organizations. Many of these dedicated individuals are often promoted into supervision, but few find the way to proactive thinking on their own. And although you will always need these skills in any manufacturing organization, you may never be able to change your organization to a proactive one with only these employee skills. A production manager once debated this statement with me so I asked him, “Would you rather be able to fix a problem once a month better and faster than anybody in the world or would you rather be able to prevent the problem from ever occurring in the first place?” This quickly ended the debate and the production manager actually ended up leading the effort to create separate reactive, Backlog Relief, and PM/PdM crews. (We have previously discussed the value of not pulling off personnel from planned work in an earlier *Not Enough People* article.)

You may be wondering what will those assigned to a reactive crew do if there are no emergencies on any given day. After all, there are always variations in the need for resources to equipment issues. There are several decisions to be made in this regard. First, you need to have historical data to calculate what your average resources needs are over a significant period of time. But be careful in this calculation and make sure it is after you have eliminated the ‘bogus’ emergency work discussed in a previous article, which typically can reduce the historical need in half! If you normally have 30-50% of your crews working on reactive work, then you can either be a pessimist or an optimist by selecting the crew size on the high (50) or low end (30). I usually recommend starting in the middle so you are ‘challenged’, but not pulling from the other crews repeatedly. The objective is to eventually reduce this reactive crew to less than 10% of your total work force.

You also need to determine what type of work can be assigned to the reactive crews so as to allow them to pull off and respond promptly to emergencies. That's right, even with a reactive maintenance crew, 100% of the crew hours should be scheduled for those days when there aren't enough emergencies to keep them all fully occupied. This work should not be complex in nature due to the negative impact to the organization in both time (response to the emergency) and costs from the inefficiencies that occur when you stop the existing work, prepare for the emergency, and then do perform the unplanned work. Often second and third shifts as well as weekend shifts are a resource for proactive work that goes untapped. Some organizations still only expect these crews to work when there are serious problems to address. When, in fact, these crews can often be a great force in the battle against *Not Enough People*.

So if you want to take a giant step toward moving your organization's culture into a proactive state and win another significant battle in the war against *Not Enough People*, create dedicated reactive, Backlog Relief, and PM/PdM crews. Over time, the percent of reactive should diminish, while the other percentages will increase to the point where the equipment is no longer running the plant and you may discover that you had *enough people* all along!

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