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# Not Enough People
# BUILD YOUR READY BACKLOG THEN INSIST THAT THESE JOBS ARE PLACED ON THE SCHEDULE

This is the eighth follow-up article to the July 2004 article, *Not Enough People*. For any of us who studied basic physics or engineering, we know that a body at rest tends to stay at rest and a body in motion tends to stay in motion unless acted upon by an outside force (i.e. friction or gravity). Organizational culture change is similar in that if you do not apply an outside force, then the culture will tend to stay the same (i.e. reactive). The first seven "forces" discussed in these articles 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 EWO 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)

Now that you have chosen planners with the right stuff and dedicated them to proactive maintenance planning with the proper span of control, you can now focus on building your ready to schedule backlog. Ready to schedule backlog or simply *ready backlog* is defined as all work orders that have met the minimum criteria for planned work (the criteria for planned work will be discussed in a later article) with all required tools, equipment, parts, and materials on hand. The only exceptions to this requirement are those times when renting a crane or other large mobile equipment. For obvious financial reasons, these are not at the plant site when the weekly, multi-week, and monthly schedules are developed. But even so, it is still best practice to bring this equipment to the work site 4-12 hours (depending on the difficulty of setup, complexity of the equipment, and chance for delay to occur) before the start of the job to allow for set up and for some time to address transportation or reliability issues with the rental equipment.

A two to four week ready backlog is considered a best practice. Too little ready backlog will not allow you to improve your work force efficiency because you may not be able to keep enough planned work on the schedule. And that is what will allow you to reduce much of the typical wasted efforts during reactive work execution (e.g. finding parts, drawings, specifications, tools, materials, parts, mobile equipment, waiting on the equipment from operations, and obtaining the

proper PPE, permits, etc.). Obviously, in the beginning of the reactive to proactive culture change, you are not going to have enough ready backlog to have only planned jobs on the schedule. But you must immediately begin to insist that jobs from the ready backlog are put on the schedule first with the ultimate goal of only planned work orders being placed on the schedule as soon as your ready backlog can support your weekly schedule 100%.

You can be sure there will be extreme pressures to not put these jobs on the schedule and go after other work that is perhaps on the total backlog. But if you succumb to this pressure you will only prolong your reactive status. Don't be confused as many are….scheduled work is not planned work. You could schedule unplanned work every week and the only impact on your efficiency might be a reduction in the typical coordination delays that would be handled between departments via a published schedule. Remember that emergency work is still going to be immediately responded to so these should not be put on a schedule. If there are pressures to put these jobs on the schedule, they are not emergency jobs in the first place and should go through your normal planned work process with priorities dictating which jobs are planned first and ultimately end up on the ready backlog first.

Total backlog is defined as all of the work orders in your CMMS (or paper system) that have not finished the planning process, but do have at least a SWAG estimate on time and resource requirements. Most CMMS systems have a work request status that is reviewed before determining whether the work requested is an emergency job or a job that can proceed to the planning process. Total backlog does not include work requests because by definition they have not been reviewed, turned into a work order, or have a SWAG completed. Four to six weeks is considered best practice for total backlog. This is a subject for another article, but please be aware that after you have successfully transformed your culture from a reactive to proactive one with significant efficiency improvements in wrench time, then and only then can you properly estimate the actual labor capacity requirements for your department. Many companies find that their OT requirements are drastically reduced and their need for outside contractors is drastically reduced or even eliminated after becoming a proactive maintenance organization.

By insisting on the criteria that only ready backlog jobs are on your schedule, you will soon find that you have created additional work capacity within your organization, which will in time allow you to address issues before they become an emergency. This will trigger even further destruction of that old self-fulfilling prophecy of not enough people! And don't forget that some of this new capacity should be applied to activities such as root cause failure analysis, PM/PdM optimization, and failure modes and effects analysis. So if you want to take a giant step toward a proactive state and win another significant battle in the war against *Not Enough People*, build your ready backlog and insist that only jobs from this list are placed on next week's schedule!

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