Sustainable Work Practices Fuel Success for Worldwide Food Manufacturer

The Need

A worldwide food manufacturing plant was experiencing a substantial rise in maintenance-related costs due in large part to an inconsistent planning and scheduling system for maintenance repairs. They needed to revise their processes to focus on planned, proactive maintenance that would extend the life of their assets while reducing their high overtime rates.

The Solution

Life Cycle Engineering teamed up with plant leaders to create cross-functional teams to develop new work processes consisting of a planned weekly maintenance schedule, new training modules, and performance-measuring metrics.

The Benefit

As a result of newly formed interdepartmental communication within the business, eight new workflow processes of repeatable and sustainable activities were implemented. Plant staff now had clearly defined roles and a set weekly schedule that increased maintenance efficiency and ultimately increased plant production as a whole.

Even for a successful food manufacturer, asset maintenance and reliability must be closely monitored to ensure the business is maximizing production capabilities. For one worldwide company, opportunities to improve overall maintenance effectiveness were being missed due in large part to the lack of a planned weekly schedule, a lack of fundamental training, and a breakdown in communication between the operations and maintenance departments. These flaws were fostering a reactive maintenance environment, which was inflating maintenance budgets and causing high overtime rates. Maintenance technicians were reaching just over 51 percent in overtime work, while the maintenance staff as a whole was operating at just over 30 percent.

Plant leaders recognized that their maintenance strategy needed to be re-structured so that their maintenance staff was working proactively to reduce the risk of operational failures and to improve the overall lifespan of their assets. To help them in this transition, Life Cycle Engineering (LCE) experts were tasked with managing this effort through the development, training and implementation of new work management processes.

Pinpointing flaws within the maintenance strategy

Before new processes could be developed, the company and LCE set out to identify the areas that needed immediate improvements and were the biggest challengers against change. LCE's project manager conducted a thorough assessment of the plant's current work processes, revealing the following deficiencies in their work management framework:

- Inconsistent work-order notification system to alert staff of needed repairs
- Workflows were either unknown to maintenance personnel or were not being followed as designed
- Personnel were often unclear of their roles within the maintenance work process
- No formal template for maintenance schedules
- Plant leaders had no metrics to review maintenance performance

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Implementing sustainable work practices

Utilizing the findings from the assessment, LCE and the plant's management team quickly began developing, training and implementing new sustainable work practices. Using a cross-functional team consisting of members from production and maintenance, they **developed eight new workflow processes, which included RASI charts and step definitions**. Updated processes were being rolled out through newly developed training modules as well as an implementation tracker to help the plant understand where they were in the process.

LCE helped the plant team create a formal scheduling template that included tracking capabilities to gather and report on key metrics regarding maintenance performance. The number and quality of notifications regarding maintenance work improved significantly.The staff began receiving and acting upon work order notifications more quickly, which helped boost their effectiveness as a team. As a result of the joint effort, the maintenance staff now had a defined strategy of repeatable processes as they continued to transition their maintenance work practices from reactive to proactive.

For more information about improving operational and financial performance, please email LCE at info@LCE.com or visit www.LCE.com.

About LCE

Life Cycle Engineering (LCE) (www.LCE.com) provides consulting, engineering, applied technology and education solutions that deliver lasting results for private industry, the Department of Defense and other government organizations. The quality, expertise and dedication of our employees enable Life Cycle Engineering to serve as a trusted resource that helps people and organizations to achieve their full potential. Founded in 1976, LCE is headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina with offices across North America and experience around the globe.

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