

Modern Maintenance Management: A Guide to Success

As with any organization, operations make a huge impact on revenue stream. But what if an organization's building suddenly shuts down or all of its equipment breaks? How does it do business then? Consistent revenue isn't the only thing keeping the lights on.

Where once it was seen simply as the maintenance and restoration of equipment, **facility management is now a huge part of an organization's operations**, requiring greater resources and playing an important role in the overall success or failure. However, not all leaders recognize the importance of your maintenance department, so it's up to you to make the case for facility management as a top priority. Don't worry – we'll show you how.

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“We tend to spend money on the program, the activity, the community and let the facilities suffer because they assume the dollars are better spent elsewhere. Everyone needs to remember to maintain the foundation of all these programs and activities, because without our buildings and assets we have nothing – and if you don't maintain them, they will fail.”

SECTION 1: Effective Team Management

Facility management is not a one-man job by any means. Success is only achieved through the well-coordinated efforts of a strong team.

It may seem like there are plenty of things

competing for attention in your day-to-day work, but when it really comes down to it, as a facility manager, you have three primary responsibilities:

1. Finding talent
2. Developing talent
3. Deploying talent

1 HIRING: FINDING TALENT

Without the right team, your job is all but impossible. To make the most effective impact in all other areas of facility management, you first need to build a team of reliable, efficient workers with the right skills and experience. They are the ones who will be carrying out the day-to-day tasks under your leadership, so it is important that you select capable, self-motivated individuals.

Depending on your facility, you'll need to hire more highly qualified technicians and service operators to fill specific roles. **Determining the gaps in your existing team is essential; it's important to get hiring right on the first try, because you can't afford to waste time and resources on the wrong candidate.**

So, what are some qualities you should look for when adding to your team? While the specifics may vary from position to position, you'll always want to hire people who are:

- › More than just a good fit for the position – they're a good fit for your team and organization
- › Engaged in the work and ready to get involved in staff meetings and events
- › Recommended based on past performance and quality of work
- › Experienced in at least the basic requirements of the position, with a demonstrated aptitude for picking up new skills and technology
- › Effective communicators and problem solvers

2 TRAINING & RETAINING: DEVELOPING TALENT

No matter how experienced, every new hire needs at least some training to become familiar with how you operate. When training new employees, it's important to introduce them to the equipment and tools used in maintaining your facility, as those can differ from business to business. If, for example, your facility tends to stay current with the latest trends in tools and technology, you'll need to make sure your staff knows how to use them.

By training your team well, you help them complete their day-to-day tasks with confidence, as well as develop their skills and abilities. In this way, your employees experience growth and remain engaged, improving both performance and the bottom line. While you'll still be there to guide them, they'll work independently and efficiently with confidence.

Make sure that your new hires are well-versed in your computerized maintenance management system (CMMS). Many vendors offer client success services that include training and dedicated representatives to help you.

3 COMMUNICATING: DEPLOYING TALENT

Of course, your job isn't finished with training. As a good manager, you are responsible for regularly checking in with your team to see how you can help as a facilitator. What performance barriers can you eliminate? What tools could improve your team's efficiency? Do they need help understanding functions of your CMMS? These are just some of the questions that drive successful team management.

Effective communication can drastically reduce the amount of turnover that your department experiences. By paying attention to and tracking your team's progress and performance, you are better equipped to address potential issues directly, avoiding unnecessary confrontation with your team. Most importantly, being informed helps you communicate in a manner that encourages your team and fosters an environment of mutual respect and learning.

What are some additional ways to improve communication with your team? In defining a given task, you should provide specific expectations and explanations for the following:

IMPORTANCE OF THE TASK	Bolster each employee's confidence by telling them why they have been selected for this specific task, while outlining its importance in the greater facility management picture.
LEVEL OF QUALITY	Ensure your employees understand the expected quality level of the completed task, addressing it in terms of technical integrity and whether it is to be a lasting solution.
RESOURCES PROVIDED	Specify the resources your employees will have available to them while completing an assigned task. Will there be vendor involvement? Will they require training? Can they receive help from team members? Consider the answers to all of these questions in advance.
TIMEFRAME	It is very important that you be specific about how much time your employees have to finish a task, as delays can reflect poorly on your department and even the organization as a whole.

After delivering these clearly defined and quantifiable instructions, allow your staff to ask for clarification (if needed) and provide feedback. **Communication is two-way, so it's important that you listen as well as inform.** In doing so, you will empower your team to be even more efficient

and effective. Once a job is complete, make sure to praise the team members responsible for its success and publicly acknowledge their hard work and achievements. Just a little effort on your part can go a long way to strengthening your team's sense of unity and work ethic.

4 RETAINING TALENT (AND KNOWLEDGE)

Naturally, turnover is bound to happen. As you train and develop members of your team, they will grow and move into other positions. Being a great manager, you will wish them well, but you can also be prepared for it. If you pay close attention to the progression of your employees, you'll know when to expect the news that they're moving on. Avoid this from becoming an issue for your team's productivity by having existing employees trained and ready to step into that role, including subcontractors who are dependable.

The good news is that the employees are staying in your organization – but the challenge lies in how you retain all that valuable knowledge. When a member of your team moves on, they take a wealth of facility information with them. You can continue to gain insights and data from their knowledge with a CMMS that utilizes historical data.

SECTION 2: Managing Safety & Risk

Crises happen, both big and small. It's your job to minimize the damage – or better yet, avoid it altogether. All it takes is some careful planning.

While there are many moving parts in an organization's risk management strategy, facility management provides a foundation of both information and preventive maintenance. As a facility manager, you're already responsible for conducting life safety inspections and ensuring the buildings and infrastructure are regulatory compliant.

Here are some additional ways for you to successfully manage risk:

- › Perform [facility audits](#) to identify weak points and potential hazards
- › Know where your money is being spent
- › Assess potential hazards
- › Implement and communicate a crisis plan
- › Consider a CMMS to track assets, work orders and preventive maintenance schedules

The key to an effective risk management plan is a well-established facility management team supported by all the necessary tools. An internal audit is the best way to identify weak points and potential hazards in your facility. On top of that, you can determine exactly where your money is being spent, informing your overall budget planning and increasing efficiency in your risk management process. Of course, that brings us to the next question:

How compliant is your facility with the latest hazard safety codes?

TIPS FOR MANAGING RISK

- › Perform facility audits to identify weak points and potential hazards
- › Know where your money is being spent
- › Assess potential hazards
- › Implement and communicate a crisis plan
- › Consider a CMMS to track assets, work orders and preventive maintenance schedules

As a necessary step in any risk management strategy, a thorough hazard assessment keeps you up to date on changing regulations from relevant organizations, such as LEED, OSHA and ADA. You'll also create the best chance of avoiding a crisis and any compliance issues. A well-designed CMMS can add a layer of protection to your facility management program, automatically implementing updated regulations and notifying you of potential risks to safety. While convenient, it is no replacement for maintaining a diligent risk management plan.

CRISIS PLAN MOBILIZATION

Binders and clipboards just don't cut it anymore. **To successfully prepare for a potential disaster or operational issue, you need to have a [mobilized crisis plan](#).** With a mobile-optimized crisis planning tool, you can improve your facility's emergency preparedness by publishing and updating your emergency response system online, where it is instantly accessible to all of your team members, no matter where they are. Mobility also provides accountability, allowing you to notify your staff and other stakeholders of content updates and emergency directives when necessary.

Although nobody wants to think about their facility facing a crisis, it's always better to be prepared. By taking adequate precautions, staying up to date with industry regulations and performing regular internal audits, you will be well equipped to handle such a situation.

SECTION 3: The Power of Preventive Maintenance

As any facility manager knows, budgets are tight. Make the most of your equipment with regular monitoring and maintenance.

When it comes to equipment maintenance, there is a costly way to do it and a cost-effective way to do it. In the short term, it may seem cheaper to spend no time or energy servicing your facility's equipment. However, only relying on reactive maintenance – or running your facilities to failure – can cost much more in the long run. Those losses can be decreased ROI, lost revenue and overtime labor costs.

Actively performing preventive maintenance (PM) will create the best return on investment for your organization. With PM, you can make informed decisions on which systems need repairing or replacing, when they will most likely break down in the future and more. Pairing a PM program with your CMMS also provides you with solid numbers to show the executive management team when it comes time to project budgets and justify new resources.

In case you or your financial team still needs convincing, here are some of the top benefits of preventive maintenance:

- › Cuts maintenance costs by 12-18 percent
- › Decreases equipment failures, which increases revenue
- › Extends equipment lifetime, resulting in greater ROI
- › 80 percent of a facility's maintenance issues can be addressed simply by performing preventive maintenance on only 20 percent of the facility's systems

In addition to getting more out of your equipment, preventive maintenance maximizes your staff's manpower hours. Rather than spending the bulk of their time responding to crises and reactive maintenance, your technicians can make room in their days for other projects with greater efficacy.

In a more structured environment, you, as the manager, are better able to anticipate upcoming work. Preventive maintenance also reduces liability exposure and ultimately improves customer service. **By catching potential problems before they turn into catastrophes, you limit the amount of harm that can come to both your employees and others in the building.** This kind of foresight and proactive care can account for hundreds of thousands of dollars your organization saves in entirely avoidable equipment replacements, building repairs and medical payments or worker's compensation.

GETTING STARTED

Before you get started revamping your maintenance program, it's important to remember that you don't have to do it all at once. Here are two tips to get started on your PM plan:

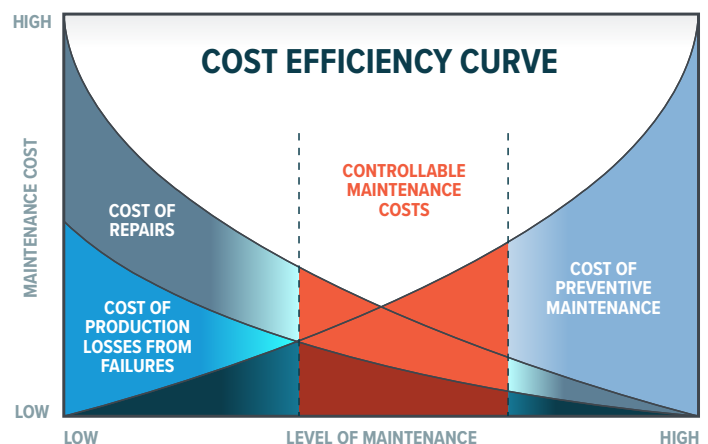
- 1. Address the biggest and most problematic systems first** – Tackling large systems, such as HVAC, that create the most return on investment first can clear the way for other, smaller projects
- 2. Track maintenance management** – Determine the percentage of your time and resources spent on PM versus reactive maintenance. Over time, you'll see less labor and money going toward reactive maintenance and equipment replacements. Organizations using a CMMS reported an [average 17.8 percent](#) reduction in maintenance, repairs and operation inventory

EVEN A SMALL AMOUNT OF INSPECTING AND CLEANING YOUR FACILITY'S HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEMS CAN REDUCE ENERGY COSTS BY

UP TO 50%!

It's important to remember that not all benefits can easily be measured in numbers. A well-maintained facility can lead to fewer complaints and a better experience for everyone in the building, including visitors. This can influence the organization's reputation and lead to more business opportunities, while less downtime for employees contributes to enhanced productivity and greater conversion on those business opportunities.

Of course, every facility is different, and you'll need to balance the right amount of PM with the right amount of benefits without sacrificing labor or money. Looking at the cost efficiency curve, there is an optimal level of preventive maintenance to minimize repair costs and downtime while maximizing benefits.



Check out more facts and figures in ["Showing Your Work Matters: Rethinking Your Reporting."](#)

SECTION 4: Taking Ownership of Your Budget

Your knowledge and experience are highly valuable to the growth and development of your facility – which is why you can take on a greater role in the decision-making process.

As a facility manager, you have key insights into the effective operation of your building – insights

that aren't always recognized or acknowledged. With your expertise, you see the facilities in a way that others may overlook. From new construction to renovations, your extensive knowledge of the facilities has a direct impact on your organization's budget. For key stakeholders, communicating the efficacy of your team in terms of numbers and data can also help translate your worth into their language.

When taking ownership of your budget, lend your expertise in two key areas: maintenance labor and forecasting.

MAINTENANCE LABOR

When it comes to repair labor, there are many factors that influence the decision between an outside vendor and in-house staff, and the choice isn't always obvious or apparent. However, there are three main factors you should keep in mind:

1. COST	With a CMMS, you have historical data on how long a particular work order may take to complete and how much maintenance has been performed on a specific asset. You can better gauge if it's worth it to invest in a full-time employee, or if an issue is a short-term project that may only require the help of a contract worker.
2. QUALITY	Quality of work is harder to gauge, but here you have to weigh the potential for added experience and expertise from a contractor against your own staff's willingness and incentive to do a great job. In the end, it's your team that has to live with the result, so when equipped with the necessary tools, they're more likely to do an impressive job. The only remaining challenge is time.
3. TIME	Time is a resource all on its own. For a contractor, the more time a project takes, the more he gets paid, provided the job doesn't cut into other contracts he has made elsewhere. In the case of your staff, the time your employees spend on repairs could be taking manpower away from other important tasks.

Ultimately, it's up to you and your organization's unique needs to determine whether in-house or contract labor is right for you. Hiring for value over price will help you find a true professional who self-evaluates, provides a written contract of what they can and cannot do, and doesn't require coaching throughout the project. You may also want to

consider developing a relationship with a trusted vendor who is an expert in a particular area that you feel your team can't manage. With historical data for work orders on your side, you can ultimately make a more informed decision.

BUDGET FORECASTING

One of the more time-consuming tasks of a facility manager is staying on top of work orders and maintenance requests. With so many jobs that need to be completed as soon as possible, there's little time left to think about what developments, expansions or purchases will need to take place in the future. However, with your facility expertise, you are the most qualified to determine your budget needs.

Responsible for **more than \$10 billion in lost revenue** among US companies each year, improperly managed and unused inventory provides an additional drain on resources – both time and money.

Some key things to keep in mind are:

- › **Maintenance needs** – By tracking the historical maintenance and work order data on all of your assets, you can determine your repair versus replacement needs for the upcoming years
- › **Inventory** – Without [inventory management](#), you can quickly create a disorganized and overcrowded storeroom. To truly save money and avoid your inventory falling into disarray, you need to invest in a tool that manages supplies for you and prevent making unnecessary purchases
- › **Upcoming objectives** – If your organization is planning new construction or renovations, you need to ensure that you have enough resources to accommodate those projects

SECTION 5: Enabling & Empowering Change

To keep up with shifting industry trends, companies have to adapt or be left behind. It's your job to communicate and facilitate those changes for employees.

When it comes to [managing change](#) in your facility, there are some key principles that will help you achieve a successful, lasting impact. As a facility manager attempting to enact change, both big and small, remember the following:

- › Change is a process, not an event
- › Make employees part of the discussion
- › Integrate and align change with the existing organizational culture
- › Encourage technology/change buy-in
- › Take action, lead by example and engage everyone influenced by the change

While there are many necessary steps to undergo during the process of change, first and foremost, you should have a plan with concrete goals and a vision. When it comes to communicating this vision to your staff, it's important that you not only allow, but also encourage, input from them. People do not react well to change being imposed upon them; when you make them agents of that change, they are much more likely to support and drive the initiative.

For change to be lasting, however, it must become a central part of the team culture. Team members must fully adopt any new policies and technological changes. As the facility manager and leader of your team, it's your job to watch, listen to and assist your team in adapting to the new policies, procedures or tools. Show them that you support these changes, and enlist the help of other advocates and influencers to make the change an exciting and enjoyable process. By remaining engaged and in tune with your staff's concerns, you can address issues before they become problematic.

SECTION 6: Customer Satisfaction

One way to measure performance success is through customer satisfaction surveys. Engage this untapped resource to improve your facility management services.

The goal of any successful facility management plan is to not only adapt to change, but to keep improving. Customer feedback is extremely beneficial as it provides you with an objective look at the efficacy of your team. If you do not currently have a way to gauge customer satisfaction, you should look into a CMMS that offers customer feedback and communication. Having this information built into your work order platform makes it a natural part of your operations, and you can access this information from a central dashboard.

While the primary purpose of a customer satisfaction survey is to learn how you can make and/or keep clients happy, you can also embed questions that drive at the quality and efficiency of your facility management services. Examples of these kinds of questions include:

- › How would you rate response time to your service request relative to your expectations?
- › How well was your service request completed?
- › Did you experience service delays? How well informed were you of such delays?

By asking these questions in a way that allows customers to indicate their level of satisfaction on a numbered (or Likert) scale, you establish quantitative data, as well as qualitative responses. This will provide a useful foundation of information against which to measure your progress when conducting future customer satisfaction surveys.

The final step is taking what you've learned from your survey results, implementing it in your facility management services and monitoring

improvement. Whether you're trying to lower the frequency of service calls by doing more preventive maintenance or improve work order response times, you now have a concrete means of tracking your team's growth, as well as the success of your facility management operations.

CONCLUSION

In today's digital age, the expectations placed on responsiveness are at an all-time high. There is no such thing as "downtime," and delays are considered unacceptable. Facility managers face the unique challenge of having to accommodate modern-day demands with the often-outdated tools and methods necessitated by budget constraints. Isn't it time that changed?

Dude Solutions has a full suite of solutions that can help you and your team work smarter. With applications that include everything from [work order management](#) to [energy, safety](#) and [technology](#), our powerful software is [cloud-based](#) and accessible from wherever you are. Whether you're out working in the field or on-site working in your facility, you can get the information you need at your fingertips.

Whatever you choose to do, it's important to protect your most valuable resource: your people. Manpower is the most precious resource, and your team has a huge part to play in the success of your operations. Giving them the tools to properly manage their work and gain insights helps you justify your requests and prove your worth, ensuring your team gets the resources they need to be successful. Best of all, you'll have a strong foundation for success that will bolster you from hiring new employees to continuous improvement for the future.

ABOUT DUDE SOLUTIONS

Dude Solutions is a leading software-as-a-service (SaaS) provider of operations management solutions to education, government, healthcare, senior living, manufacturing and membership-based organizations. For nearly two decades, Dude Solutions has inspired clients to create better work and better lives. We combine innovative, user-friendly technology with the world's smartest operations engine, empowering operations leaders to transform the most important places in our lives. Today, more than 11,000 organizations use our award-winning software to manage maintenance, assets, energy, safety, IT, events and more. For more information, visit dudesolutions.com.