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**Don’t Live With a Maintenance Backlog**

**Keys to Staying Ahead of Maintenance Needs**

**Breaking Your Maintenance Backlog**

**Stay Ahead of Your Maintenance Needs**

**[Callout:** Think ahead regarding the expected life of each major piece of equipment and build replacement or upgrade costs into your budgets]

Unless you are a rare exception, you face a long list of pending maintenance requests at your facility. Your list probably includes some preventive maintenance tasks as well as routine inspections and adjustments. In many facilities, those preventive items languish at the bottom of the list, pushed down there by the urgent needs to repair breakdowns on critical production equipment.

There are some things that utilities, manufacturers and process-industry maintenance managers can do to reduce that backlog and decrease the number of right-now repairs that keep you from taking a more proactive approach.

“One thing you can do is take a lifecycle planning approach to your equipment,” explained Andrew Kovach, vice president, US lifecycle services. “Think ahead regarding the expected life of each major piece of equipment and build replacement or upgrade costs into your budgets, reviewing them each planning cycle. That way you are less likely to find yourself making constant repairs to an aging asset.”

Kovach said that part of an effective lifecycle approach and a valuable tool in reducing backlogs, is to make use of full-featured planning and scheduling tools to track work orders, manage technical resources and ensure you have the right spare parts. He also suggested contacting the OEM regarding software updates and hardware retrofits or refurbishments that could reduce equipment problems and extend its life.

Andre Steinberg, the ABB general manager - transformer remanufacturing and engineering services, Canada, agreed with relying on the OEM and other partners for help. “The equipment supplier, as well as service or consulting outfits you work with, can share best practices for your maintenance services, parts management, training, testing and other services,” Steinberg said. “The more of a partnership you can develop through planning and communication, the more you can be sure that everything you need will be available throughout an outage when the clock is running.”

“They also may have software updates, hardware retrofits or refurbishments that can reduce equipment problems and extend its life,” Kovach said.

Keeping your techs in the know is also critical.

“As a way both to prevent maintenance problems and to better deal with them as they come up, utilities should ensure their techs have the training and resources they need, “Steinberg recommended. “You don’t need to make every tech an expert, but each tech needs to be able to understand what’s going on with the equipment, be able to deal with it themselves, if they can, or know when to call in the experts.”

As a final piece of advice, Kovach said organizations should look internally and learn from their best performers.

“For organizations with multiple locations or facilities,” he advised, “look at how you can standardize your maintenance practices. Track KPIs to see which areas excel in equipment reliability. Share their best maintenance practices with all areas, and you will see the number of repair dispatches begin to decline.”

Being proactive can be difficult when faced with never-ending demands for urgent repairs. But, according to these ABB experts, taking a lifecycle approach and relying on your equipment suppliers and service organizations could give you the opportunity to care for your equipment, not just repair it.