

Starting & Maintaining a Successful RCM Effort

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As a Manufacturing Reliability Consultant, I am often asked by clients “How do we make sure our RCM program doesn’t become the program of the month”? I always give the same answer a proven formula that has worked well for many clients, **Plan – Measure – Train – Perform – Implement and Communicate**. Follow this formula without skipping any steps and RCM will become a way of life for your business and not “The program of the month”.

Plan

The planning stage of RCM is an important one. It is at this stage where the program manager will know if there is up front commitment for starting the RCM process. Most people have the belief that if a manager approves the money for the RCM training then they are committed. I do not believe this, in fact all it means is they are committed to spend some money on training. Your **RCM Program Plan** should clearly state the people, resources, time, and money required to launch an RCM pilot program. It should clearly state the following:

- **We are planning on starting a pilot Reliability Centered Maintenance program in the following area...**
- **Reliability Centered Maintenance is a process that uses a cross functional team of key operations and maintenance people to develop a complete maintenance strategy to ensure functional reliability of a process or piece of equipment.**
- **The RCM process will be applied to a process in our pilot area that has been determined through the use of Reliability Measures to be a good candidate for return on our RCM investment.**
- **We will be selecting x candidates for RCM facilitators based on the following criteria....(Provide that criteria to those interested)**
- **RCM Facilitator training will be held on the following date....**
- **On the following dates....RCM facilitators will be gathering equipment information and working with people in your area to select an RCM team.**
- **On the following date RCM participant training will be held in your area. The people selected as participants are required to attend the training. You are encouraged to send other people from your area that are not on the team but may be selected as team members in the future. Up to 25 people can attend the RCM participant training.**

- **On the following dates, an RCM Blitz analysis will be held on this piece of equipment....**
- **On this date, a complete analysis report will be delivered that will include a detailed implementation strategy that states what tasks need to be implemented, who is responsible for their implementation, and when the implementation will be completed.**
- **The following clearly shows the estimated cost of performing this pilot analysis based on the cost of training, people's time, and resources.**
- **On the following date, a detailed report will be delivered that shows the return on our RCM investment.**

The **RCM Program Plan** lets your management know you are serious about Reliability Centered Maintenance as well as the time, resources and dollars required as an investment.

Measure

It is important to remember at this step that **Improved Manufacturing Reliability takes Structure and Discipline**. This is one of the steps most people want to leave out. They get excited to start and jump right into training and performing. Measure here refers to measuring the reliability of several key processes or pieces of equipment. I like to use Overall Equipment Effectiveness or Total Effective Equipment Performance measured in terms of good product produced over key manufacturing losses. This measure will clearly show which process or piece of equipment is a good candidate for an RCM analysis. Performing this step greatly increases the probability your pilot analyses will show a return on the RCM investment. By taking the time to set up and record the measure prior to the analysis, you now have a benchmark. Once the analysis has been completed and the tasks implemented and performed, one can now clearly show a marked improvement in reliability. The decision to continue training people and performing RCM analyses will now be based on results instead of emotion. **Structure** and **Discipline** are beginning to show pay offs!

Train

The training step is easy. Once your RCM facilitators have been identified, you can set up a date and location for the training. Some tips to make the training more effective:

- **The facilitator training session and your pilot analyses should be no more than one month apart. One week between the training and analysis is ideal.**
- **Use the lunch break in training sessions as an opportunity to have area managers and supervisors invited in to learn about RCM and to reinforce to the facilitators for getting involved in the process.**
- **Make sure the training location is large and comfortable.**

Perform

Performing your first RCM analysis will not be an easy task especially if *structure* and *discipline* have been missing in your plant. The structure of the RCM process and the discipline it requires to stick to that process is often a test of wills. First time RCM teams have been known to storm for the first couple of days. It is at this stage you will learn if your facilitator selections were correct because the team may encourage them to rush the process, skip steps or questions. We ask that key people be involved as participants in the RCM analyses. Key people often take for granted the skills and experience they have acquired through out their careers. They will want to know “Why do we have to go to such detail, everyone should know this”? The fact is, everyone doesn’t know and this is one of the key benefits of RCM. The RCM process brings information about your process from a key few to the masses. When performing your first analysis, it is important that the people involved in the analysis understand why your company is making this investment, why they are involved in the process and the benefits to the company. This will cut back the storming and accelerate performing. RCM helps to deliver the *Structure* and *Discipline* required in order to improve manufacturing reliability, **and**, it takes **key people** to deliver a good analysis. Key things to remember in the perform stage of the RCM process:

- **Involve key people as RCM analysis participants**
- **The analysis room should be large and comfortable**
- **The team should take five minute stretch breaks each hour**
- **Use lunch breaks to bring managers and supervisors in and update them on the progress of the analysis and to get feedback from analysis participants**
- **Encourage the team and facilitator to stick to the RCM process and reinforce them for doing so**
- **Remember the RCM analysis is not complete until the implementation strategy has been completed**

Implement

In my seven years as an RCM facilitator, manager, instructor and consultant I have learned one absolute fact; any business or department that takes the time and resources to train and perform an RCM analysis and does not implement the tasks from that analysis has just made RCM the program of the month. This I guarantee! I once trained several RCM facilitators for a company who wanted to start an RCM program. I mentored the facilitators through several analyses and before long they were performing analyses on their own calling me from time to time to ask a question about the analysis process and expressing their excitement on how well their analyses we’re going. When I

would ask them, “How is implementation coming along?” I got the same reply from each. “Were not implementing yet, we want to get the process down first”. Six months later their RCM program was over having failed to show results. The tasks that come out of an analysis drive the actions required to make a process reliable. Without implementing these tasks you have done nothing but waste money and precious resources. Some ways to help guarantee implementation takes place following your analysis.

- **As the RCM program manager YOU should be responsible as the implementation manager of your pilot analyses.**
- **When the RCM team completes the implementation phase of the analysis it is important that specific people (not positions) are assigned for implementing tasks. (John Doe is responsible person *not* “planner”)**
- **Set a realistic and achievable implementation schedule.**
- **Track and report the progress of implementation on a monthly basis.**

Communicate

Communication is an important step of the RCM process and it should be utilized as often as possible if you’re looking to make RCM an every day part of your business. An RCM program requires a circle of communication between the RCM Program Manager, the RCM Facilitators, Implementation Managers, and management.

Should you follow the RCM process and this plan for success, there will be **wins** in each and every analysis. It is important the RCM Facilitators communicate the wins that come out of each analysis. Wins are often easy redesigns or potential HSE risks exposed by the RCM process, things that can quickly show the benefits of performing an RCM analysis.

The implementation managers should communicate on a monthly basis the progress of implementation. They should communicate the number of tasks that have been implemented and the number of tasks remaining.

The RCM program manager should communicate the RCM program schedule, report implementation progress and results of the RCM program including Overall Equipment Effectiveness and direct savings to company attributed to RCM.

This communication keeps people informed. Informed people make good decisions. Several tips for effective RCM communication:

- **Communicate your RCM Program Plan.**
- **Announce the people who have been selected as RCM Facilitators.**
- **Create an RCM new letter to communicate important events.**
- **Set up monthly communication meetings with set agendas to communicate RCM progress.**
- **Post RCM program results including progress on implementation, OEE and TEEP charts, and program savings.**
- **Set and celebrate key goals such as completing the implementation of your first analysis.**

- **Reinforce or thank those involved in the RCM process including participants, facilitators, implementers and managers who committed resources.**

The companies who have followed this plan for success each have well established and successful RCM programs. While they no longer have to worry about RCM being the program of the month, they still communicate the progress and success of their programs.

To learn more about RCM Blitz™ contact

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