

ORGANIZATION OF THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

(Part 1)



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Introduction

To organize is to develop the framework by which human energies are channeled into desired productive patterns. Thus, to design the proper organization structure for a Maintenance Department, one must first understand what it is that the department is assigned to accomplish. Then apply established principles and performance norms to structure the relationships and assignments that make up the organization.

Organizations in a constant state of change may reflect poor management or may be in other trouble. There is a widely held belief that a manager reorganizes to solve problems. What is more nearly true of a good manager is that he readjusts his organization to accommodate differences in the capabilities of his people or changes in the activities assigned to his Department. Whatever may be his motivation, for making changes, a good manager must always have available, a sound long term organization plan for his Department. Moreover, that long term plan must support the long term plan for the Plant as a whole. This also means that at any given time the maintenance organization must match the needs of the then current stage of the long term plan for the Plant.

The existence of a long term organization plan permit changes to be made in the right direction as opportunities arise. In the absence of such a plan, changes

are made without proper analysis and on the basis of expediency; errors are perpetuated and fundamental improvements are seldom realized.

Thus, to develop the appropriate and optimum organization plan for Maintenance, one must first establish the Department's long term objectives, develop a plan for achieving those objectives, analyze the means for plan accomplishment, and then match the present organization to the current stage in the achievement of the long term plan.

THE FIRST STEP – DEVELOP THE LONG RANGE PLAN

To establish the long term plan for the Maintenance Department, one must first define its goals. What is the purpose(s) it must accomplish?

The Maintenance Department provides the means by which the Plant's physical assets are kept in their most economic condition. But the *responsibility* and *accountability* for that condition resides with the Plant Manager and his designated "equipment owners". The owner is generally the operating superintendent or production manager, although a few facilities may be "owned" by Maintenance. The Maintenance Manager then has the responsibility to provide the personnel, the training, the tools and the techniques to accomplish that maintenance which is the more economic restoration to that defined condition.

Oversimplified, the long term plan of the Maintenance Department must provide for efficiently maintaining increasingly complex and automated equipment to an unknown extent and at uncertain future intervals because of unknown and uneven production loads and the uncertain abuse damage the equipment will face. The Maintenance Department must accomplish its Repair and Maintenance (R & M) work safely and efficiently. At the same time, because of its skills and tools, Maintenance will in addition to its work on existing equipment, acquire added responsibilities and duties of a production services nature. Furthermore, Maintenance will

construct capital goods and some which will be expensed in the form of facilities' improvements. None of these activities will occur at an individually uniform or regular rate, but to some extent the total effort can be predicted. Maintenance must balance its work increments to accomplish the total overall effort with a force of optimum size.

The Maintenance Department must develop its organization plan, both immediate and long term, around the immediate and long term manufacturing or production plans of the Plant. It must also include plans for Plant expansion and modernization in the analyses of its effort. These plans must be translated to an expenditure of manpower after which the effort to supervise, control, train, administer and provide technical needs is added. The size of organization, the type of work it will do, the tools and materials it will need and the rate and timing of personnel additions and departures are integrated into plans for the long range and for the immediate future.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

There will be continuing reference herein to planning which compels an early definition of that activity. The mechanics of planning are described elsewhere in subsequent write-ups of this article. The interest now is only in understanding the concepts. Since scheduling is the timely implementation of a plan, planning and scheduling will be treated as a unity.

Planning and Scheduling may be described as the identification of these six:

- WHAT (Exactly is to be done)
- WHERE (Exactly is to be done)
- HOW (Are the objectives to be accomplished – what are the methods)
- WHEN (The major activity in Scheduling)
- With WHAT (What manpower, machines, tools and materials are to be used)

- With WHOM (The summation of which when structured for all activities and assigned as to responsibility constitutes the organization for that plan)

(End Part 1 – To be continued)