

ORGANIZATION OF THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

(Part 2)



Albert K. Fletcher
CEO/PM Consultant
(Dataman System Consultancy)

When it comes to developing the organization for optimum maintenance what must be recognized is that there are three levels of planning and scheduling. All three are fundamental to successful maintenance performance and, formally or informally, all three must be accomplished. The three types of planning are:

- a) The first or longest range plans those for the management level. Involved are the long term plan and the shorter or yearly plan. These are the plans of the Maintenance Manager. They establish the objectives of the Department, match them to the objectives of the Plant and define the means for accomplishment.
- b) The intermediate plan or the monthly plan is the plan of the Department's intermediate management. These plans reconcile the Plant's immediate and developing needs with those of approved in the long term plan. In large Plants they provide for redeployment of resources from area to area. In all Plants they adjust major projects to those periods when projects may best be accomplished in recognition of the non-postponable activities of the Department.
- c) The daily schedule and plan is the actual plan for the accomplishment of the work. It

relates to the first line foremen and the craftsmen who will accomplish the work. While no more essential than the other two types, this is the plan that most people associate with the words "planning and scheduling". Such planning and scheduling involves the recordkeeping, forms and control systems to a greater extent than do the other two levels simply because these plans are actual detailed expenditures of materials and manhours. However, the daily plan and schedule cannot be truly effective without first developing the longer range plans of (a) and (b) earlier stated.

THE ORGANIZATION CHART OR DIAGRAM

The organization plan when developed is conveniently expressed in the form of an organization chart. Charting is also the means of measuring the soundness of an organization. Any relationship therein which cannot be regularly charted is likely to be illogical. An organization which cannot be understood by those working under it will probably be ineffective. It is, therefore, essential to understand what the organization chart represents.

The conventional organization chart does not stipulate how each unit or individual should function. Rather, it concentrates on lines of authority, reporting relationship and relationships between individuals. The conventional organization chart must, therefore, be supplemented by job descriptions or written specifications defining respective functions and responsibilities if one is to avoid duplication of effort, friction, working cross purposes, gaps, and the other shortcomings which result from lack of organization clarification. Titles are generally insufficient to provide the needed specifications.

In construction, the organization chart consists of a

number of little boxes. The little boxes indicate functions and usually contain both the name and title or abbreviated title. Vertical lines indicate the direction of authority, responsibility and vertical communication. Horizontal lines indicate who talks to whom at the same level. This rigid format has relatively little to do with what actually happens. Innovative and creative forces within the organization and directed in particular toward what happens in the future, generate an informal organization structure which wields much of the power. That portion of the Maintenance Department which is concerned with the day-to-day work, however, pretty much follows the organization chart.

If, therefore, we can develop the functions which a Maintenance Department must perform and can further lay down certain rules with respect to authority and responsibility, the development of an organization and the ability to chart that organization to meet the established long range and shorter range plans becomes possible.

Maintenance is an organization whose primary function is to restore or maintain rather than to generate a plan, design, or an analysis. In this respect it is much like Production. But Maintenance has had to do its own staff work. Thus, another concept, that of the line/staff relationship must be developed if the Maintenance organization is to be understood, and developed, and function to its maximum.

THE LINE-STAFF RELATIONSHIP

Many of the rules and concepts for organization developed with the military. When translated to commercial activity and particularly in the maintenance function of a production Plant, organizational principles of the military undergo important modifications. The differences are designed to improve efficiency and reduce costs but at the risk of having to rely on individual initiative.

(End Part 2 – To be continued)