

PROPRIETORSHIP AND THE ROLE OF THE PROPRIETOR (Part 2)



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PROPRIETOR'S DUTIES TOWARD MAINTENANCE

To facilitate the maintenance activity and therefore reduce its cost, the Proprietor undertakes a variety of specific activities which will be discussed in subsequent article. He has a number of other obligations as well. When fulfilled they prevent the maintenance activity from being more difficult than it otherwise need be and include:

1. The Proprietor should keep those downtime records which quantify the reliability of the equipment. A variety of reasons exist for equipment downtime – all of which adversely affect the time available for maintenance. Time lost for reasons other than the need for maintenance is also time lost from production. But only downtime for maintenance relates to equipment condition and only downtime for maintenance and production services relates to the direct activity of the Maintenance Department. The Proprietor, by keeping the detailed log of downtime can evaluate equipment condition. Moreover, he can determine what action should be taken to reduce the other types of downtime which reflect adversely on the time available for maintenance.

2. The Proprietor should use all his influence to compel his associates in the Operating Department to keep the equipment clean. Maintenance work performed in a dirty environment is work that is done in an inefficient manner. More importantly, machines that operate in damp and dirty surroundings require far more maintenance than those which operate where it is clean, cool and dry. Anything the Proprietor can do to keep the physical environment clean and dry will beneficially affect maintenance costs and equipment uptime.

3. The Proprietor must do all within his authority to preserve the most favourable schedule once it is established. Any deviations from the optimum increase both costs and downtime. When Maintenance moves on and off a job before completion, usually relatively little of what has been done can be recaptured when the job is resumed. Schedule interruptions and the reassignment of priorities has a costly impact on the maintenance effort.

4. The Proprietor can stop waste. His associates in Production will be cognizant of the waste of raw materials and supplies. But energy waste from a motor that runs too hot, from a drive system that is not in alignment, from a non-lubricated moving part, from a noisy unit, from leaks of oil, grease, steam, water or air or from a lack of insulation are all things the Proprietor can do something about. Careful attention to the correction of these and other situations which waste utilities or shorten the active useful life of equipment all reduce the need for and the cost of maintenance.

5. Abuse includes overloading equipment or otherwise using it in a manner for which it was not designed or intended to be used.

Abuse is usually illegal because of its unfavourable impact on the safety of personnel. Additionally, it causes half or more of the breakdowns which occur. Breakdowns – i.e., repair – usually cost some three times the cost of scheduled restoration – i.e., maintenance. The Proprietor should do all possible to minimize that which stems from abuse. This abuse elimination is generally a matter of operator training or else tightening down on Production supervision. In either event the Proprietor is in the best position to take those steps which will minimize abuse and its consequent unfavourable impact on the requirement for maintenance.

6. Finally, the Proprietor can control the incidence of false starts which occur in the maintenance activity. This may sound like a repeat of the comment on keeping the schedule and in a few instances it may be. Actually, however, control over false starts is achieved by controlling the communication channels. The Proprietor serves as the contact or interface with Maintenance. Only he transmits orders for work to Maintenance. He communicates the status of work to assure that all who should be informed are informed. Haphazard communication and communication without full knowledge of the facts drives costs upward. Control of costs requires that one and only one competent information source always be available to Maintenance. This same source, the Proprietor, must be certain that all communication needed by Production is timely, correct and adequate.

(End Part 2 – To be continued)