



New Case Study: TBM Helps Auto Parts Supplier Reduce Equipment Downtime

Two years without a full-time maintenance manager had contributed to equipment breakdowns, significant downtime and lost productivity. The maintenance department was mostly operating in “fire-fighting” mode. TBM assessed the plant’s maintenance practices and worked with employees to implement a robust preventative maintenance program. Our leadership solutions team found a temporary maintenance manager and supported the search for a permanent replacement.

In a newly released case study we highlight **TBM’s work helping an auto parts supplier revitalize its preventive maintenance practices** and set up a total productive maintenance (TPM) program. How we approached this engagement, which dramatically improved equipment uptime, could offer some guidance to other manufacturers needing to re-invigorate their plant maintenance programs.

As we describe in the case study, the plant had been without a permanent maintenance manager for several years. So it wasn't too hard to identify one of the root causes of their issues.

We began by finding an experienced temporary leader for the maintenance department, beginning the search for a permanent hire, and conducting an in-depth assessment of the plant's downtime issues. Our initial recommendations included:

- A thorough skills assessment and development plan for all maintenance personnel.
- Setting up a tracking system for planned and unplanned maintenance work.
- Analyzing downtime data and performing the necessary maintenance tasks for equipment at the highest risk of breakdown.
- Establishing a new priority system to ensure that safety- and quality-related issues are addressed immediately.
- Outsourcing of non-core tooling manufacturing and repair.
- Strategically hiring outside contractors to assess and repair critical equipment.

You can read the case study for more detail about [how we implemented these recommendations and established a TPM program](#) to sustain performance. I'd like emphasize two key points of this project. First, the data we analyzed didn't require a big data program or any fancy analytical tools. The downtime data was already being collected. It just needed someone to sit down, aggregate it and do some straightforward analysis.

Second, these efforts were successful and sustained because company and plant management was deeply involved. They allocated the resources necessary to address the outstanding issues and make organizational changes. Yes, they had good reason to do so because their OEM customers have very strict delivery deadlines, and the overtime costs to meet those deadlines were really adding up. But they found space in the budget to hire outside contractors and scheduled work teams over a number of weekends to eliminate the backlog of preventive maintenance tasks.

In maintenance, like many other areas, when a plant falls behind you sometimes

have to throw people at the problem. There's no way to get around it.



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David Hicks is a lean leader and long-time quality professional. He currently serves as Vice President, Consulting in addition to his client management responsibilities.