



How to Plan and Schedule Work without a Full-Time Planner/Scheduler

As most of you know I am a tremendous proponent of the planning and scheduling function in any maintenance organization. If you want your maintenance organization to contribute to the company's bottom-line and be a key component to your financial success, you must have a well-managed, organized, and lead maintenance team.

Getting stuck in the 'reactive work ditch' and having little or no help or knowledge of how to get the maintenance process out of the mud is all too common no matter the size of the organization well-staffed or not. And, reaching the goal of having 80%+ of your work proactive leaving -20% reactive work ("Mike's World") can be daunting especially if you don't have a dedicated, full-time planner.

So, how do you accomplish the 'Mike's World' level of planning and scheduling without having a full-time planner/scheduler?

The most important thing to remember is if you cannot create and staff a full-time planner/scheduler you **must** figure out a way to have the function exist. This simply means someone **must** perform the planning/scheduling tasks.

So how do you pull this off and still keep all of the other work activities going along with beginning to plan and schedule maintenance work without adding another body to the team?

By carving out a little time each week or maybe even everyday to have someone begin to plan some of your future work. At first begin with just concentrating on finding the parts for upcoming work. Don't worry too much on the tools and procedures because most good seasoned technicians can handle that part pretty well. Just ensure your team always has the parts for all upcoming work.

Begin with your most important and complex jobs and all of your preventive work. If you do this for a period of time you will begin to see some of your reactive work decrease and more and more proactive work being completed.

What do I mean when I say try to carve out some time for someone to begin to do a little planning and scheduling?

Assign one of your senior technicians to spend time on Friday afternoons, or maybe Thursday and Friday afternoons, to develop a simple plan for upcoming work for the following week. I am suggesting 2 - 4 hours to start out with. Remember they should just concentrate on parts at first and then, as you see success, add procedures and special tools as the job warrants.

Keep in mind again; the planning and scheduling function **must** exist so if a technician is not available to begin the part-time planning/scheduling function find a *supervisor, lead*



technician, or a *manager*, to begin the basic planning and scheduling tasks. I have even see companies be successful by using Saturdays and overtime to begin the process. Even with the extra labor costs the planning and scheduling improvements will have a pretty short Return-on-Investment.

Reactive work costs you **4-6 times** that of planned and scheduled so in time, with a constant effort to plan your most important work, you will begin to see some changes in your manpower requirements and you should be able to reassign your part-time planner to a full-time position.

Note: For those of you who haven't lived or at least experienced "*Mike's World*". In "*Mike's World*" life is good with 80% of all maintenance work having a great work plan which looks like a cooking recipe. All of the parts (ingredients), tools (utensils), and tasks (procedures) are clearly spelled out so in theory anyone can bake a cake that won't send your customers to the hospital to have their stomachs pumped.

All work, except for the routine and mundane tasks, should have some level of planning and scheduling in order to make the work successful. I define successful as a maintenance job that is completed with few of the common maintenance efficiency losses like: excess travel, time spent looking for parts, waiting for direction, waiting for equipment to be down, looking for special tools, and time spent trying to figure how and what to fix to in order to make your customer happy.

Again, the planning and scheduling function must exist in order for your too be successful. So get out the cook books and begin to develop a highly functioning and profitable maintenance organization.

Good luck and remember to wear your apron!