Maintenance Department Maturity
How mature are you now and How mature do you want to be in 5 years?

I have used the term “Mature Maintenance” to describe organizations for years as a synonym for titles like World Class, Best in Class, and Leading Class organizations. I came up with the Mature Maintenance term because everyone was using the world class moniker and many organizations were scared of the term. They thought being perfect and the best in the world are almost unachievable by most standards. I believe it is in the Japanese culture that they have a saying called “Mastery of Life.” I believe that is the point in your life (mine came around 45 years old although some of you reading this may disagree) where you know who you are, what’s important in life, what you believe is true, what is good, and what is evil. You know you are there when you feel comfortable in a public or business meeting raising you hand and saying “I don’t think that is right, this is why and this is my solution to the problem or how to make things better.

So how do you define a mature maintenance organization? I would say it is when your boss tells you he has invited another organization or customer to come and tour your maintenance organization and review your processes. If you don’t have a stroke or chest pains on the spot then you probably have a pretty good or mature organization and all you do is ask when are they coming to visit?

An easy example to explain Maintenance Maturity is to use your preventive maintenance program (PM) as an example.

- At the left end of a maturity scale of 1-10 you have a 1 which means you don’t have a program at all, no inspections, no walk-by reviews, no data on performance, no nothing.
- On the right side of the scale with a 10 rating you have a world class perfect program. 100% of all significant assets are entered into you CMMS, all of them are labeled and bar coded, with logical identifiers, there is a complete repair and parts history, comments from all previous PMs are documented in detail, pictures are in the file, all past performance data is captured in charts and graphs, you are using advanced predictive maintenance techniques (PdM), you have less than 1% late PMs, and you audit the PM process and results on a continuous basis. Now that’s a 10 if I have ever seen one, sounds great doesn’t it?

But where is a mature PM program in that scale? Everyone is different, everyone has a different maintenance structure, employees, and oh yea don’t forget different bosses! That means you have to find where your best maturity level is that matches your organization. I would say most people would be happy with a maturity level in the 5-7 range.
Most people develop their maintenance maturity happy place based on the “consequences of failure” for their system or process. Another way to look at it is; are you maintaining airplanes or an office building? As Cameron mentioned to me not all maintenance departments are created equal.

Anne Copeland has created a link here for you to be able to download a tool I call the *Maintenance Maturity Grid* which will allow you to assess where you are along the maturity journey. There is one for facilities and one for manufacturing as well as a sample one which will demonstrate how to use the tool and understand the color coding.

- Maturity Grid_Facilities
- Maturity Grid_Manufacturing
- Maturity Grid_Completed Sample

Good luck to everyone!