



Parts Kitting Saves Time and Money

This month I want to talk about parts kitting or as some call it work order kitting. Those of you who have taken a trip to *Mike's World* and drunk some of my Kool-Aid know it is critical to have a well-managed and user-friendly parts and supply system which is supported by a purchasing system whose goal in life is to support the maintenance organization. Parts Kitting is one of the components of a successful work order management process and can assist in saving a considerable amount of money and also improve work efficiency, quality, and customer satisfaction. You may think you need to put all of the keys to 'World Class' maintenance organization in place before you can successfully complete the parts kitting piece of the maintenance puzzle but, that is not necessarily true.

The basic definition of parts kitting or work order kits is whenever non-reactive work is assigned to a technician, the technician goes to the kitted parts storage location (or sometimes called work order bins) finds the bin number on the work order, opens the bin location, and retrieves all of the parts and supplies to complete the assigned work. Then they travel to the job site, complete the work, and then travel back to the shop area to return any unused parts or supplies. To explain it another way I will use a personal experience about kitted parts. Several months ago when I was home for a week and my wife Barbara asked me to make a casserole so we could take it to church for a covered dish supper. I had never made it before and it required about 10 different ingredients. When I got up the morning of the church supper and walked into the kitchen for my morning coffee there on the counter in a neat little pile was:

- the recipe (work order with parts and job steps listed),
- the pan I was supposed to use (special tools-these can be kitted as well),
- a yellow post-it note reminding me how to grease the pan (unique job steps I might screw up if not reminded),
- the time it had to be at church (again another special job step),
- and, in a big pile all of the ingredients I would need (parts kitting).

So what you have is a perfectly developed and kitted work order. Imagine how long it would have taken me to complete the casserole task, or what it would have tasted like, or how many trips to the store it would have taken to buy all of the ingredients I could not find in the kitchen cabinets if I had not had the well-kitted work order!

So now the questions you may be asking yourself, how do I pull this off and how much detail do I need as I am gathering the parts and supplies for the job and the biggest question is who is going to do it?

The questions are:

1. Where do I keep the parts?

I always recommend room or caged in area that can be locked. I like to lock it so I have a high level of confidence the parts I kitted will be there when I schedule or assign the work. If you don't have a space like that many organizations use a roped off area in the maintenance department you just need to hope the parts aren't used for other work without your knowledge. Another method is to house the work order bins in your supply room which is hopefully secured and maybe even staffed with an attendant. The supply room method is my favorite and possibly you have just found



the person who can assemble the parts! Where ever you keep the kitted parts make sure you label them well with the work order number and the work description.

2. What Jobs do I try to kit first?

The easiest place to start is with your preventive maintenance work orders. You have performed these hundreds of times and should have an excellent idea of the parts and supplies needed. The next type of work I would begin kitting parts for would be your special work like the very unusual, the very complex, and or the jobs which are very critical to the operation or facility. Remember it is the types of jobs like the casserole dish that need to be completed right the first time (on time and eatable).

3. Who has time to do the kitting?

There are lots of ways to skin this cat but let's assume you do not have the luxury to use a full-time attendant in the supply room like I mentioned above you can consider some of these:

- Pay someone to come in early or stay late to kit upcoming work orders
- Have someone kit work orders on Saturdays
- Have the lead person or foreman kit for tomorrows work
- Assign a technician each afternoon to kit parts for upcoming work
- Have the attendant in the tool room kit parts

All of these look like they will cost money to pay someone who already has a full-time job to spend time kitting parts and you are right. But ask yourself what is it costing me now to have all of my technicians and my management team walking around hunting for parts before the work begins or even worse, in the company truck driving to the supply house to see if they can buy them with the dreaded purchasing card. I assure you whatever it costs you to kit parts for upcoming work orders will be returned to the bottom-line three to four times over.

PS - I added extra garlic to the casserole and everyone loved it. I even cleaned up the kitchen afterwards!!