



The Undercover Maintenance Boss

Many organizations tell me they don't have the time, knowledge, or resources to make the changes in the culture or environment which will enable them to move toward "Best in Class" status in maintenance management. They ask, "If we can only do one thing, what is it?" The answer always surprises them, *Enable average (not great) supervisors to be on the floor or in the field with their employees at least 50-60% of their day.* Do this and you will see a dramatic [I mean dramatic] change in the quality, quantity, and efficiency in the performance of the maintenance team.

In the TV show the 'Undercover Boss' has to assume a false identity to work in the field to discover what their employees and company are doing and how it affects the company's performance, and ultimately their profitability. I don't suggest the undercover part but find a way to free-up supervisor responsibilities so they can spend at least 50-60% of their time with the employees and customers. I know that sounds like a lot of time, so sit back and ask yourself a simple question, "What did you hire an experienced, trained, and knowledgeable supervisor or manager to do; paperwork, purchase orders, sitting in meetings, or to be on the floor or in the field with their people?" I know the paperwork and meetings must be satisfied but we must find the time for them to perform their primary function; leading, guiding, and directing their employees.

One way is to review and manage the meeting requests your maintenance supervisors are invited to attend. Always ask the question, "Do they really need to attend?" It was my practice for my supervisors to get my approval for all new or reoccurring meetings. By monitoring this one thing, it will increase their availability by as much as 25% in some cases.

Next month we will get into more detail and discuss other things we can do to allow our managers and supervisors the time to get out on the floor and into the field to really see what is happening in the maintenance world.