

WORST PRACTICE Planning & Scheduling

A Visual Guide to Driving Your Maintenance Organization Right into the Ground While Accomplishing Nothing

Everyone wants best practice maintenance planning and scheduling, but too often organizations fall into the trap of what we might call “worst practice.” Your organization is better off using these than simply not having any planning and scheduling, but the presence of one or more of these practices means you aren’t accomplishing everything you could be. In this infographic, we’ve identified practices that may look like good ideas but turn out to be detrimental to your planning and scheduling.

01

Put your maintenance planners on tools

The duty of the planner is to plan. Putting your planners on tools is an almost guaranteed way to lower the overall effectiveness of your department.

- Planners who pick up tools are not concentrating on planning.
- Accurate, well-developed job plans are fundamental to maintenance best practice.
- Planners who can’t keep their hands off tools might be happier as craftspeople.



02

Tie your planners to their desks

Planning involves a lot of desk work, but it is not a desk job. Visiting the job site is essential in some cases to create the best possible job plan.

- Planners should visit the job site to accurately assess the situation.
- Some safety and access issues require an on-site visit to truly understand.
- There may be other factors occurring at the site of which the planner is unaware.

03

Don’t solicit feedback on job plans (or ignore it)

Well-developed job plans are often complicated. This level of complexity means that a “perfect” job plan is often the result of a long process of evolution and refinement.

- Planners should solicit feedback from craftspeople on a regular basis.
- Your culture must support this as well.
- Planners must follow through and update the plans or feedback will stop coming.

04

Plan the same job over and over and over again

Previously planned jobs should be saved for future reference and refinement. Planners should always consult the job library when planning.

- Build or modify existing plans whenever possible.
- This leaves more time to refine and perfect the plan.
- Don’t repeat work that has already been done!



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05

Never or rarely review your preventive maintenance plans

Preventive maintenance can be a best practice when it's properly planned, managed, and executed. However, there is a tendency in many organizations to just keep adding to the pile of preventive maintenance plans.

- Periodically review every PM and make sure the task still has value.
- The value of a task may increase or decrease over time as background and marketplace changes.
- Remove any PM tasks that are no longer adding value.



06

Schedule with low expectations

One way to deal with break-in work is to schedule each technician or crew to about 80 percent capacity. This will give better results than not preparing at all, but we have a different option.

- Schedule every crew to full capacity with a mix of low and high priority work.
- Examine each instance of break-in work to determine if it's high-priority.
- Replace existing low-priority work with the new high-priority break-in work.

Another option is to have a special crew dedicated to break-ins. This team is only given low-priority work on the schedule and easily shifts to high-priority break-in work as required.



07

Publish the schedule first thing Monday morning

This is actually pretty good, but there's still room for improvement! Publishing the schedule by early Friday afternoon gives the supervisors and craftspeople extra time to think about the work.

- Craftspeople will mentally review potential challenges and the best way to overcome them.
- Establish a firm cut-off time for work requests.
- Balance priorities to ensure there's time to schedule and still get critical work requests in.

08

Schedule maintenance work just one week in advance

Scheduling a full week of maintenance in advance is better than no schedule, but it's much better if you can schedule for three or four weeks. You don't know all the small jobs coming up in that time, but you probably know most of the big ones.

- Schedule the biggest, longest jobs first, as far in advance as possible.
- The biggest jobs show you the landscape of the next three to four weeks.
- As smaller work orders become ready to schedule, use them to fill the space between larger jobs.

Starting with big jobs and filling in with smaller ones ensures the schedule is as full as possible, as far in advance as possible.

[Click here](#) for more information on how you can avoid the "worst practice" traps in maintenance planning and scheduling.



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