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Leveraging Your Asset & Facilities Data

Part 2 – Successful Implementation of an Asset Management System

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The previous article discussed the issues to consider when deciding to invest in an Asset Management System (AMS). This article continues this discussion looking at the implementation of the AMS.

Once a decision has been made to purchase an AMS, you need to determine what type of relationship and contract you want to have with the vendor. This frames the ongoing relationship and the level of service that will be provided. Most software vendors have a standard purchase contract, but it is advisable to procure advice to ensure the contract protects your needs as well as the Supplier. To achieve success it is crucial to establish a good relationship with the software vendor and if there is a third party involved with the sales and /or implementation and support then ensure that good relationships are established between all parties. A formal partnering agreement and commitment to the partnering methodology can ensure a smoother road with the implementation.

You will also need to identify how you want the system implemented as this will help define the style of contract that you will require – A key questions to ask of the organisation is what are the critical drivers of the contract? Is it the implementation timeframe, project cost or getting the right solution or a mix will work for you?
Any project needs a project leader who will take responsibility for negotiations and implementation. If is it a partnering relationship, is the vendor taking the lead or your organisation?
If you are project managing the implementation programme yourself, there are a number of key steps required for success.

- Review the business processes. This then gives you a steer on how processes may have to change once the automated system is in place. Even replacing one automated system with another, requires a review of processes.
- Ensure everyone involved understands the new processes by documenting and presenting the business processes under review. It may not be possible to have all the business processes documented prior to "go live" but this is one task that should not be forgotten as you get caught up in the day to day operation of the system. Without the processes it is easy for the direction of the system to be pushed off course.
- Data structure. It is important to get the right level of detail in the asset hierarchy, remembering that all the information needs to be maintained it is better to start at a higher level and then break it down further than to maintain at a level that is not appropriate.
- User and Management buy-in. Users can make or break an implementation so it is prudent to ensure that they are fully behind the project and have input into the set up and business processes.
- Training – ensure all users are trained to meet their individual needs. Determine how ongoing training will be managed and funded.

There are various ways of implementing software. Dependent on the size and complexity of the project and the work environment you will have to determine which way is right for you. Types of implementations include:

- By business process i.e. Inventory management across all asset groups
- All business processes across a limited asset scope i.e. purchasing, job requests, customer services condition history for one production/maintenance area.

Each methodology has its 'pros and cons' dependent on the type of organisation. Our preference implementing all processes across a limited scope as it seems easier to initiate a whole new sector into using the system than try to get users to utilise further functionality at a later date. The vendor or implementation consultants will be able to advise you which is best for your situation.

Before the AMS is fully implemented is it important that the criteria for measuring its success are identified and processes developed. A weakness in most major CMMS implementation projects is the lack of real information to determine if they have been a success. Often the success is based on the statistics generated from the system such as number of requests completed within specified timeframes, accurate measurements on the number of requests or complaints generated etc.

Once the system is implemented keep using the metrics; including procedure compliance audits on data entry and management, as it is a great way to provide incentives to the system users. It also allows you to identify where the high use activities are occurring and take you towards the ultimate goal of better management of the assets and facilities by resourcing where most required and reducing the amount of planned maintenance to a minimum.

By conducting periodic compliance audits, you will ensure that the procedures are correct and that they are being followed. These audits can be conducted by self-assessment, by peer review, or through independent consultants. For the audit process to be successful, the audit procedure must be documented, with each audit element being able to be verified.

Once the system is up and running what next?

- Monitor the information.
- Ensure the system and processes have a 'owner' within the business.
- Ensure ongoing training is available.
- Use the information. Develop skills to extract information to meet your specific needs.

Information is a powerful commodity for the facility; maintenance and asset manager, however its full benefit can only be maximised if it is effectively managed. This requires applicable systems that need to be scoped, developed and implemented to capture the correct data.
To protect the investment in time and money the AMS needs to be kept up to date and the quality, integrity and accuracy of information is maintained – failure to achieve this will result in a system which is a liability not an asset

Author

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