



4 Big Things You Can Get from Maintenance Software

Dear reader,

This is the first PDF paper in a **series of 2**, which you will get by email. This document will give you a solid introduction to what is possible when you start using maintenance software at your maintenance operation.

We are a software company called Maintenance Assistant (<http://maintenanceassistant.com>), and we make maintenance software that costs just \$19 per user, per month. We have been serving maintenance people since 2008. This series was written to introduce maintenance professionals to the powerful tool that is maintenance software. The insights in this document came from the experience of the **hundreds** of maintenance teams we have worked with.

First off, a definition: maintenance software is officially known as “**CMMS**”. It stands for “Computerized Maintenance Management System”. This type of software is designed to make the lives of maintenance professionals easier by keeping records, scheduling maintenance and tracking work orders.

The 4 big benefits that CMMS software has for a business are:

1. Helps move the team from “panic fixes” on broken machinery, to **pre-planned maintenance** work.
2. Lets the maintenance team **do more with limited resources**.
3. Brings in more clients, by helping in **certification and audit** procedures.
4. Builds a **culture of accountability** – where work is tracked and people take responsibility.

Here are the details of how maintenance software can help your business. As you read, look out for scenarios that are similar to the ones in your maintenance team.

From fighting emergencies to pre-scheduled maintenance

CMMS software has the most impact at organizations that want to have a smoother, more predictable maintenance operation.

Many factories, facilities and vehicle fleets operate like this: the mechanics and maintenance people come to work in the morning, and don't have much to do. 2 hours into their workday, there is an emergency – a machine has something jammed in it, or is making a strange sound. The business has to stop their regular work, and the maintenance team goes into “fire-fighting” mode, running to fix the problem as quickly as possible. The maintenance specialists are either sitting around with little to do, or having to rush to fix an emergency.

Does this sound like the way your company does maintenance?

Most organizations prefer the maintenance team to work in an even-paced environment, rather than in spikes of activity. If you want work on machines to go on in a smooth, pre-scheduled way, the best way to accomplish this is to work towards a **preventive maintenance** approach. Preventive maintenance is simply the idea that it is better to work on a machine before it breaks, than to fix it in a panic after it breaks down. Computerized maintenance software can help you implement preventive maintenance in 2 main ways:

1. It **alerts you to upcoming maintenance tasks** after a specified time, or at a certain meter reading. For example, if you take care of an elevator and a furnace, then the system can schedule a team member to do maintenance on the furnace every 1.5 months, and on the elevator every additional 70km stretch that it travels in the shaft. This is more advanced and reliable than keeping track of maintenance on a paper calendar, or scheduling tasks in Microsoft Outlook.
2. It lets you **take work-requests from employees** working on equipment before it breaks. For example, if you are managing work for a factory, a machine operator can use a CMMS to let your team know that his machine is making a strange sound. You can then diagnose the problem and repair the machine before it actually breaks down.

Accomplishing more with the same team

Maintenance software is often the easiest performance boost that you can give to your maintenance operation. Managers are always interested in getting more maintenance work for less cost, and CMMS software can deliver on this magical formula. There are 2 ways in which successful maintenance teams get a boost from CMMS software:

1. **Reducing paperwork:** How much time do maintenance technicians spend dealing with *paperwork*? Make sure to include the time they use to write up work report (they *are* recording what work was done, right?), the time spent trying to find work-requests that are missing, time spent finding old records in filing cabinets, looking for service warranties, schematics.... This is quite a lot of time spent just **struggling with paper**. CMMS systems make it easy to enter all this information into a central database – finding this information in the future is as easy as using the “search” bar. By lowering the time your team spends on paperwork, you raise the time that they are actually maintaining and fixing assets.
2. **Prioritizing work:** When your upcoming work, work requests and in-progress work are visible in one place, it gets easy to prioritize work. Face it: you don’t always have the resources to get 100% of the work done. So you have to focus your energy on the most critical repairs and maintenance. A CMMS gives the maintenance manager a central view of all the work, so that he can make those prioritization decisions better.

Audit, Certification and Compliance

By keeping a permanent record of maintenance activity, CMMS systems can help your business achieve certification, government compliance and even help with audits. This is a very special element of maintenance software: it **lets the maintenance team boost company sales** and operations. A CMMS system can turn the maintenance operation from a “money taker” to a “money maker”.

Here’s how:

Getting Industry Certification

Think of the prestige that comes with ISO certification and LEED certification (“green” buildings). Getting these kinds of certificates opens up new sales opportunities for a company’s product. For ISO, CMMS software helps keep a central database of assets and procedures. For LEED, the maintenance

improvement that CMMS can bring to HVAC systems can lower emissions and operating costs significantly.

Complying with Government Regulation

You may be in an industry that is regulated by the government. In that case, maintenance software can help you meet requirements and avoid liability. For example: the Irish Road Safety Authority made it mandatory for **commercial vehicle owners** to have a system for scheduling maintenance and tracking work history on their vehicles. Another example: if you work at a **food processing plant**, shoddy maintenance can result in bits of machinery detaching and falling into the food (an FDA survey from 2004 indicated that “no preventive maintenance” is the number 5 problem in food-processing plants in the USA.) CMMS software makes it easy to do proper maintenance and avoid product contamination.

RSA rule: <http://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Your-Vehicle/Commercial-Vehicle-Roadworthiness-Reform/CVR-Reform/HCV--PSV-Owners--Operators/Operator-Compliance--Enforcement/>

FDA survey URL: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/CGMP/ucm110914.htm>

Complying with Client Requirements for Maintenance

If your company desires to sell products or services to very large organizations (like Boeing), or the US Government, then these clients might require that you have a reliable preventive maintenance program in place. In this instance, there can be no deal without a CMMS in place – a direct way in which having maintenance software helps the company with new business.

See section 8 of this Boeing supplier contract:

<http://www.boeingsuppliers.com/tc0692/d26-807a.htm>

See section 45.509-1 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation:

http://www.acquisition.gov/far/0219/html/Subpart_45_5.html

Audit

For various reasons, your organization might find itself being audited. This can happen if another entity is interested in acquiring it and simply wants to know what machinery there is, and what condition it is in. An audit can also happen after a serious breakdown or accident. The right kind of CMMS system keeps a permanent, unchangeable record of maintenance and repair activities on machines – this makes the system very helpful in audits.

Insurance Policies

If you pay insurance on machinery, equipment or facilities, you could qualify for policy savings when you get a computerized maintenance solution. The regular use of a CMMS means that your facility and assets are more likely to be well maintained – this takes some of the risk off the insurer, and they may be willing to offer you a discount. Be sure to discuss this opportunity for savings with your insurance company when you purchase a CMMS.

Accountability for Work

One indicator of a strong maintenance team is **accountability**. This means that technicians and contractors take responsibility for finishing work on time and doing a quality job. When it isn't clear who is responsible for doing what work, and when the work is due, there can be no accountability – just confusion. CMMS systems allow you to implement a system of accountability. They do this in the following ways:

Tracking the Real-Time Status of Work

Computerized systems are great at showing you “all the information in one spot”. This is true for seeing the latest status of work orders that are assigned to your technicians and contractors. As a team leader, you can see immediately what work is overdue, and what work is in progress. You can follow up on work that is taking too long, and make sure it doesn't fall by the wayside or get forgotten.

Automatic Notifications

The great thing about maintenance software, compared to Excel or paper tracking, is that the software can send emails and notifications to the right workmen automatically. There is no forgetting, or losing track of paper, or miscommunication. The system makes sure that the right people get work assignments at the right time.

Operations Reporting

As a maintenance professional, you are under pressure to prove that preventive maintenance is something that's worth the investment. CMMS software often comes with special report-generating features that let you analyze the performance of the entire maintenance group, and gives you some hard data to show your manager. These reporting features make it easier to show improvement in your team's work, a reduction in downtime and, simply – the payoff for an investment in maintenance.

The result of these accountability features is that you get tighter control over 3rd party contractors, and a better relationship with your internal team. If someone is consistently falling behind, you will be aware of it and able to give them the support that they need. Finally, when talking to your boss, you will have some data to support your position.

The Challenges of CMMS

Implementing CMMS software in your organization has great benefits, but it doesn't come without **some difficulties**. The main drawbacks of maintenance software (vs. Excel, or pen and paper) are:

Cost: many CMMS programs cost quite a bit to get started, and even more on an ongoing basis. It is common for an initial implementation to cost \$2,000 - \$3,000. Pen and paper are almost free, in comparison, but would cost much more in the long term. (for an affordable CMMS, with no start-up costs, see the bottom of this document).

IT Complexity: depending on the vendor, CMMS software might need to be installed on its own powerful server, with a special network setup and frequent software updates. This makes the maintenance department **dependent on the tech guy**, or the IT department. If the IT department is too busy to "maintain the maintenance software", then the CMMS will get slow and out of date. One of the biggest risks in that kind of environment is that data backups will not happen when needed.

Training: most maintenance technicians are used to doing things a certain way, and a new piece of software forces them to learn a new approach to doing things – and the learning time is time they can't spend working on machinery. It is very important to choose a CMMS program that comes with a lot of clear educational materials for your team, and makes it easy to start working on the system.

The Next Step

Would you like to get a free guide that speeds up your research by showing you the big differences between CMMS programs?

If yes, then keep an eye on your email inbox **next week: you will receive the second PDF document in the series completely free**. That email will contain:

1. A list of things to look out for when selecting CMMS software
2. A personal password for you to try out our CMMS Software online for free.

If you are using Gmail, Yahoo! Mail, Hotmail or Outlook, please add the email don.scrapers@maintenanceassistant.com to your Address Book – this will guarantee that your PDF arrives safely.

Can't Wait Until Next Week?

If you want more information right now about the possibilities of computerized maintenance software in your company, then follow the following steps:

1. Open Microsoft Word or another text editor program.
2. List the 2 big maintenance problems in your company that you'd like help with.
3. Write down the company name and the industry you are in.
4. Paste those notes into an email to your dedicated product specialist, Don Scrapper at don.scrapper@maintenanceassistant.com
5. Send the email!

Every month, Don speaks with dozens of maintenance specialists – he will email you back with some practical advice that will help your team tackle those 2 big maintenance challenges.

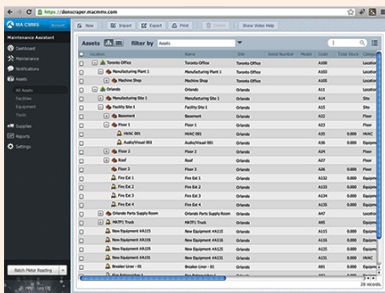


About Maintenance Assistant CMMS

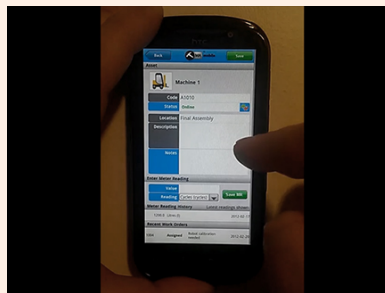
Maintenance Assistant is web-based maintenance software priced at **\$19 /month** per user. It has the features you would expect from an industrial-grade CMMS, with no contracts or setup fees. Our team takes care of backups and updates, so you can focus on maintenance.

Learn More Here:

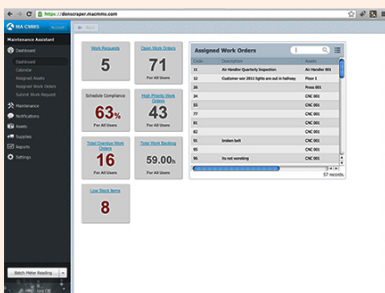
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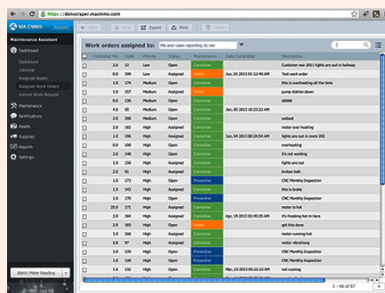
Asset hierarchy



The CMMS on a mobile device



Main dashboard



Open work orders list