The Three C's of CMMS/EAM
(Customizing Creates Costs)

The debate rages on about customization of Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) or Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) software. Some feel there business, processes, or circumstances are so unique customization is necessary since there is no "off the shelf" solution available. Others feel it adds capabilities that the software vendor didn't think of, while some feel these "tweaks" or enhancements simplify the system for the end user.
As one who spends a majority of his working life within these systems, rarely have I stumbled across the need to "customize" a system. Being "unique" is more often the exception. The processes necessary for proactive maintenance, materials management, purchasing, etc. are fundamental the same across most organizations. What makes it unique could be who, when, where, and the execution steps.

Adding additional or missed capabilities could be a possibility, however, if you find a need for these enhancements wouldn't other organizations? The best time and place to address enhanced system capabilities is the software vendor's user conference. Spread the cost around to all the system users not just your organization.

Many times I have witnessed system customization under the disguise of making it "user friendly". Most times the same capabilities were contained within the system, just not where the users felt it should be. The key to making a system "user friendly" is train the users of the system on the system. Unfortunately, training is the last activity to be accomplished and the first to be canceled when the budget gets tight.

I have always subscribed that if during implementation the customization discussion occurs, stop and reevaluate. Are we that unique? Did needed system capabilities not get identified during system selection? Are we trying to make the new system look like the old one we are replacing?

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