

SAFETY & SANITATION

Integrated Maintenance & Sanitation

If you are considering outsourcing, imagine one contractor that can offer both maintenance and sanitation functions. An integrated program can provide optimal support to your production team. BY JOHN MALIFF

THE \$500 BILLION FOOD- AND beverage-processing industries, which comprise almost 17% of US manufacturing, face the same asset life cycle optimization (maintenance) issues as most other industries. Yet food and beverage plants must meet unique sanitation requirements—performed by in-house staffs, either alone or combined with specialty contractors. The degree of specialization involved in sanitation and the desire to spread risk and liability to contractor firms prompt food manufacturers to outsource more sanitation than maintenance.

Incorporating outsourcing into a company's operating strategy is proving to be a successful global trend. James Brian Quinn, PhD of Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, calls outsourcing "one of the greatest organizational and industry structure shifts of the century." The Outsourcing Institute, a Jericho, NY-based professional association dedicated to outsourcing, also projects that global companies will spend more than 40% of their operating budgets through outsourcing by 2006. UNICCO Service Co., an Integrated Facilities Services company headquartered in Newton, MA, sees outsourcing not only as a viable option, but an absolute necessity to remain competitive.

The observations of companies that outsource maintenance include:

- A scarcity of skilled maintenance craft personnel.
- More sophisticated production and packaging equipment.
- Global competition that puts pressure on the bottom line.
- A need to focus on core competencies.
- The need to access technological innovation without investing capital.
- Demands for just-in-time deliveries, supplier-owned inventory and increased flexibility in production scheduling that make equipment availability critical.



Efficiency increases when the sanitation and maintenance crews are the same.

- Pressure to improve RONA (Return On Net Assets) by extending the working life of capital equipment.
- The need to generate return on investment in maintenance at least equal to return on invested capital earned by the company as a whole.
- The need to institutionalize knowledge of resident subject-matter experts.
- The uncertain availability of qualified service providers.

Food processors who outsource sanitation are motivated by a need to:

- Improve throughput by reducing sanitation non-compliance.
- Improve efficiency of the sanitation staff.
- Address the fact that more sanitation workers are low-skill/low-pay employees with a tendency toward high turnover and without good English skills.
- Reinforce the concept of sanitation as a science and to institutionalize SSOPs continually.
- Share risk and liability.
- Reduce costs.
- Link specific sanitation data—startups, bacteria counts, material use, dilution ratios—with incentives and conditions of a performance-based contract.
- Reduce worker's compensation and liability exposure.

The Customer Is Always?

If managers of in-house maintenance or sanitation were asked to name their "customer," the typical response would be production. If the in-house production managers in food processing and beverage plants were asked who is responsible for most delays, the answer would be maintenance or sanitation.

Considering these two groups have such a great impact on each other, there is very little effective communication or cooperation between them.

- Problems arise when:
- Sanitation is disconnected from the rest of the plant.
 - Casual workers don't know how their actions affect critical machine or line components.
 - Maintenance arrives "after the wreck."
 - Parts or tools are not available when needed.
 - Preventive maintenance is delayed.
 - Production can't predict when equipment may be available for maintenance.
 - Production workers abuse equipment and ignore first signs of problems.
 - Production workers neglect to perform pre-sanitation cleanups of their areas.

This lack of cooperation and coordination compromises the efficiency of three interdependent functions: Production, maintenance and sanitation.

The Solution

Outsourcing maintenance and sanitation to a single contractor means controlling service level, performance data and benchmarks.

Servicing the ultimate customer—production—focuses on improved throughput and lower costs. Positive results can be reinforced by a common management.

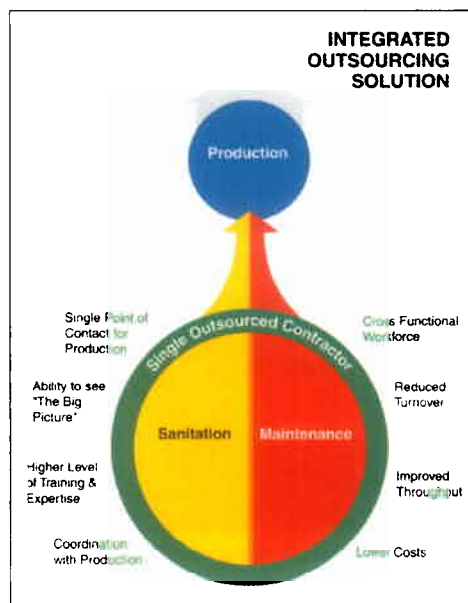
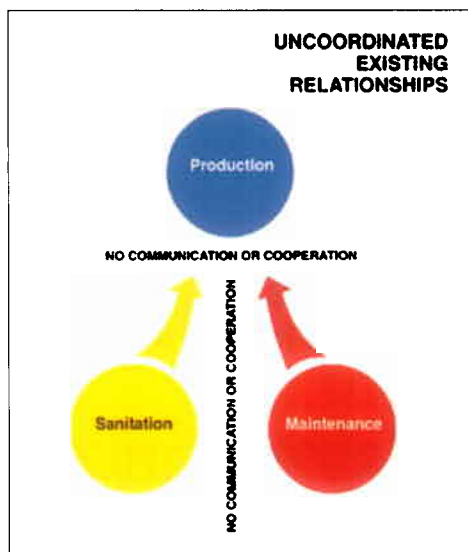
For example, if maintenance upkeep sanitation equipment and systems, cleaning can proceed without equipment or hardware failure. Maintenance personnel can pre-mix and pre-spot sanitation chemicals. Quality assurance can be assured of regulatory-compliant, accurate, timely documentation of amounts, ratios and types of chemical consumed in specific areas.

A sanitation workforce trained to perform some preventive maintenance tasks can avoid startup delays. Overaggressive use of high-pressure water, for example, affects lubrication, motors, electronic circuitry and condensation level; leaving components disassembled after sanitation also slows operations.

A maintenance/sanitation team that backs production earns the support of production personnel in the form of end-of-shift cleanup. Improved relations prompt earlier communication about indicators of potential problems: Vibration, noise, temperature or amperage draw and speed anomalies. A cooperative production/maintenance/sanitation team can initiate basic total productive maintenance (TPM) techniques in any plant environment.

What if?

Executives considering outsourcing do express concerns about expertise of in-house staff or current contractor personnel leaving the site. Most in-house and contractor personnel move to new



contractors because they see no financial downside and do see more career opportunities with a firm that specializes in their scope of experience. A contractor can offer education and training. While some managers feel they can't invest aggressively in training, contractors realized they can't afford not to invest. To meet continuous improvement commitments to clients, contractors must improve workforce efficiency, and know that sanitation is not a "necessary evil," but contributes to improved productivity and margin with aggressive training.

Although sanitation is perceived as an entry-level activity, more attractive wages can draw higher-caliber candidates. This will not necessarily raise overall compensation costs, but reduces overstaffing to address high turnover rates. A small work force can be extremely productive.

A progressive contractor can train a work force with poor English skills using technical school video facilities to develop machine and process-specific training aids.

Sanitation certification programs can be put in place to provide advancement opportunities and pay for knowledge compensation plans. An efficient sanitation manager needn't worry about layoffs if the maintenance/sanitation

contractor has the option to move employees into the maintenance area or to another site location.

The maintenance/sanitation contractor can implement a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) to develop SSOPs on the contractor's server so the knowledge and expertise required to sustain optimal production performance is accessible to all.

Just as plant personnel lack time and resources to devote to personnel development, line workers also don't have time to produce SSOPs. Contractor staffs can perform these functions without distracting on-site staff engaged in day-to-day responsibilities. The right contractor can perform to the most demanding standards—ISO 9000/ISO 10011—and use HACCP to improve sanitation performance.

Imagine maintenance and sanitation as one team working to drive continuous improvement in both areas without accepting status quo. Maintenance and sanitation practices are either improving or deteriorating.

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