

An Outsourcer's Software Solution

FM giant UNICCO streamlined its data among its varied customers through MRO's Maximo system which also put vital updated information into the technician's hands at all times

By Mark A. Newman

From its humble beginning as a janitorial service for the Boston area's many universities in 1949, UNICCO has become one of the largest integrated facilities outsourcers in North America with \$600 million in annual revenue. Over the last half century, the company has steadily grown with over 1,000 customers nationwide that are aided by a 20,000-person workforce. UNICCO boasts 25 percent of the Fortune 100 as its customers, and 20 of its largest clients have been with the company for an average of 10 years.

The company has a 95 percent client retention rate and owes much of its success to the ability to provide efficient tracking, reporting, and prioritizing of maintenance, repair, and operations procedures. In order to track the various costs and labor associated with its practice, UNICCO implemented Maximo, an asset tracking system produced by MRO Software, Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1998. Prior to this, the company used a plethora of different applications to track work orders, labor, general ledger costs, and so on. Customer requirements for UNICCO were becoming more and more complex dictating the need for a more efficient tracking process.

"We had a hodgepodge of (asset tracking software) systems in place, and there were hundreds of systems out there," says Bill Jenkins, IT director, UNICCO. "So when we could standardize to one system we chose Maximo."

Customers demand that UNICCO use a tool like this, Jenkins says. "Their

facility may be worth millions of dollars so they want to make sure that it retains its value as well as getting the service we provide. The system also lets the customer know that we are doing our work so they're getting their money's worth."

Maximo has also been instrumental in setting up failure and cost analyses which measures a building's performance as they adhere to BOMA standards, as well as to other similar businesses. The software also sets up a facilities cost index (FCI), which tracks every time a UNICCO employee works on a particular piece of equipment. The FCI indicates whether it would be cheaper to keep repairing the equipment or replace it.

VARIED CUSTOMERS

UNICCO implemented Maximo with 23 of its customers, each of whom had different expectations from the system. For example, one customer is a college with a substantial research facility. The tracking system is used to monitor the life systems of the research animals in the vivarium. Another customer is Weyerhaeuser, Federal Way, Washington, an international forest products company that has 20 buildings maintained by UNICCO. Aside from providing total facilities management services, there is also an on-site call center. Maximo is



A UNICCO technician conducts an inspection of UPS backup equipment. The data can be entered on the spot and then uploaded into Maximo for processing.

used to prioritize and dispatch the calls from the client's customers.

Then there is Federal Express: UNICCO manages 800 of the international overnight shipper's locations, all with similar as well as unique requirements. From maintaining conveyor belts and garage doors to processing the payroll, Maximo tracks a variety of functions. For example, most of the jobs are performed at a fixed rate; however, often the workers repair equipment that is beyond the scope of the service contract. Maximo captures that information and not only keeps track of the cost, it tracks the piece of equipment and keeps a history for the FCI.

Maintaining such a diverse group of facilities is labor intensive and Maximo's labor-tracking capability has proven valuable. The system tracks each customer's labor requirements for a given property and allows UNICCO to measure a worker's "wrench time," i.e., the actual time spent on a task rather than the time getting to the site. As UNICCO tracks employees' productivity, it discovers best practices and establishes benchmark data. The tool ensures that the customer is not paying for time when no work is being performed.

SETTING PRIORITIES

Considering the sheer size and scope of some of the facilities UNICCO maintains—from healthcare institutions to massive universities—maintenance requests must be prioritized in order to give customers realistic timing and cost expectations. Maximo is on the scene to establish the parameters that UNICCO has set up with customers when the contract begins.

The various customer cultures obviously require very different priorities. UNICCO sets up nine levels of priorities and then establishes codes for each level within Maximo. A work order placed into Maximo with a Level 1 priority code indicates that the request is an emergency—a flood, fire, or worse—and that the technician must get to the facility post haste. A Level 2 priority code must be responded to within a couple of hours. Lower priority codes are then based on completion time rather than urgency. For example, a Level 5 code signifies that the respective project will be completed within one week. These parameters help keep UNICCO's technicians in step with customers' expectations.

Although the priority codes are not strictly for use with the software, Maximo makes it much easier, according to Jenkins. "With Maximo handling our work order process, we set up the parameters at the onset of the assignment, share it with the customer, and plug the codes into Maximo," he says. "From then on we know exactly what is expected of us

How Maximo Aided UNICCO's Success

Goals:	Results:
Maintain 95% customer retention rate	UNICCO prioritizes work orders and sets realistic expectations, resulting in satisfied customers
Adhere to government safety regulations	MAXIMO's historical data makes it easy for UNICCO to adhere to regulations administered by OSHA, EPA and other agencies
Streamline and provide more accurate contract management	MAXIMO's standard, efficient business processes help UNICCO maintain current contracts and quickly implement new contracts
Reduce data entry time	The MAXIMO Mobile Suite helped UNICCO reduce administrative time by eliminating data entry backlogs and double entry
Enhance reporting and analysis capabilities	MAXIMO 5's reporting and analysis solution provides high-level reports with easy access to the necessary information, including the underlying details

when the work order is placed. We are realistic about the time we will be able to respond to a request and we don't disappoint our customers."

GOING MOBILE

The most recent trend has been keeping all the facility data in the worker's hands at all times through the use of handheld devices. "This has been a way for us to save time and get the most up-to-date information possible," Jenkins says. "Instead of having to chase down the right person to get information about a specific piece of equipment, the worker can just pull up the info on a handheld. The technicians input the data in real time so it's always accurate."

The handhelds also help the workers oversee a customer's preventative maintenance program. "A technician can be in the area of another facility and see that the building needs a repair that is not normally on his route," Jenkins says. "He makes the repair then looks up the facility data on the handheld and actually does all the preventative maintenance sched-

uled for the month. This makes the worker much more productive and the customer is pleased."

Another instance is meter reading. Rather than having a technician travel from site to site and returning to UNICCO to input the data, the technicians can use the handhelds to make the process more efficient since the system identifies a predefined route. At each site, the worker is able to call up the data from the previous readings and then inputs the new data, thus saving not only administrative time, but eliminating backlogs, and double entry.

Jenkins explained that Maximo is not wireless; it connects via a phone line and synchronizes with the database every day. "It provides a snapshot of his entire day's work," he says.

The move to handheld devices was not based on keeping up with the latest technology trends; it was a necessity in order to stay competitive. According to Jenkins, UNICCO's customers have become so tech-savvy that they expect nothing less. "If you want to be a player, you need the technology in your tool box." ■

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