

# CHANGE — THE DRIVER OF COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Paul Major identifies the dangers to businesses that are unable to control change, and suggests some technology solutions



Paul Major, industry commentator and CEO of Program Framework, has over 20 years of experience in managing performance and strategic change, primarily in multinational corporations. He has gained a unique insight into the challenges of deploying change in complex organisations

Change is a constant in modern business, and certainly in manufacturing. How companies manage change, indeed control change, influences whether they are successful or not. The rate of change is increasing as is the scale and that puts pressure on the systems that an enterprise uses to control change.

An inability to control change can directly impact profit when product development goes awry and an end product is either not produced at all or is produced at a loss. Managing change also significantly affects non-financial performance in areas such as health and safety. It is now a reality that the ability to create visibility over and manage change has become critical to an organisation's ability to operate, as commerciality and compliance combine.

**“An inability to control change can directly impact profit when product development goes awry and an end product is either not produced at all or is produced at a loss”**

Change is present in many areas of our business and managing it effectively is often regarded solely as a strategic concern being relevant at budget time or for managing new product development. However, managing change also has a significant relevance to operations, and nowhere is this seen more clearly than in executing planned and reactive maintenance on high value, 24/7 operational assets such as oil and gas production facilities or energy generation plants.

If we consider how we have historically managed our maintenance activities, it has typically been through viewing lists of activities that are required to be undertaken

by a specific time. These are usually captured in solutions based on manufacturing requirements' planning approaches. As compliance and cost drivers become increasingly important, chief information officers and chief operating officers now require a more robust approach to planning the use of resources, whether people or machinery, to maximise uptime, minimise cost and at the same time ensure a safe working environment.

This requires a more structured approach to creating a maintenance schedule, an approach that takes the list of activities and turns them into a formal schedule where jobs can be resourced, tracked and reported on. It is this requirement that has led Program Framework to create its Capital Asset Maintenance Streamliner (CAMS). This solution takes the lists of maintenance activities from ERP solutions such as SAP's PM module and combines these with the scheduling capabilities of Microsoft's Project Server 2007.

This approach especially pays dividends when applied to the maintenance of large capital-intensive plant, when downtime or overrunning shutdowns can be very painful financially. CAMS provides additional insight by analysing metadata associated with the machinery to be maintained in order to identify materials requirements and schedule skilled labour. It can also highlight where the same job requirements exist across different operations in multiple plans – for example isolation of an electrical sub-system – allowing planners to group these jobs together and undertake the work in a far more effective manner.

Whilst managing change is definitely difficult, when lives and livelihoods are dependent on doing it correctly, a robust structured and planned approach is imperative. 