



## Keeping contract performance on track for Leading Infrastructure Company

This leading provider of Infrastructure services has a significant presence within the Rail sector, delivering a number of critical services across the industry for clients such as Network Rail, Crossrail, TfL and ElecLink.

Their rail offering includes plant business expertise covering specialist plant, road rail equipment and track geometry services, with one of their key contracts being based around the management of 15 machines that deliver track maintenance nationally. A team of around 50 maintainers, engineers and fitters are responsible for maintaining the fleet, split across a central base depot and the field.

With their contract renewal looming, tough reliability targets and SLAs to hit, the company had a strong desire to improve performance to ensure that they resecured the contract in 2023.

The proposed scope of Project Horizon covered both the depot and field-based maintenance of the contract which was encountering substantial issues causing machine reliability to be significantly below target.

As a first step, Managementors were invited by their Operations Director, to carry out an in-depth analysis of the maintenance operation.

### Case study

Name: Track Maintenance for Leading Infrastructure Company  
Sector: Infrastructure  
Location: Maintenance Depot based in Kent and National Field Engineers

#### Key challenges

- Quality and amount of maintenance delivered needed significantly enhancing to improve reliability of the fleet
- Lack of defined prioritisation, task allocation and risk rating of work leading to significant fines
- Lack of active management with spans of control too large to be able to effectively manage the workforce
- Limited short interval control of engineers and tasks resulting in constant fire fighting
- Poor performance reporting such as visibility of plan vs actual, backlogs, status of parts etc. resulting in a challenging relationship and loss of client trust

#### Key gains

- Annualised benefits of £344,178
- 34% reduction in the total FAMS (Fleet Asset Management System) backlog
- Enhanced tooling such as Machine Progress Trackers, Work Assignment Tool and a FAMS Dashboard to provide clear visibility of KPIs
- Significantly improved process and tools for overtime control and reduction in 'institutionalised' overtime
- Appropriate supervisory spans of control and clearer expectations around behaviours, responsibilities and accountabilities

## The Challenge

Managementors undertook a 2-week review which uncovered substantial opportunity for improvement, with poor planning, coordination and delivery of tasks across both planned and annual maintenance. One of the Supervisors reflected, “There was nothing to tell you how long jobs should take. It was just down to previous experience and what they’d find!”

Machine handovers from the field to the depot were often poor and machines were regularly being returned to service late. Crucially, the lessons learnt as a result of this were not being captured, reviewed and fed into future maintenance planning and delivery, making it particularly challenging to improve how the contract was performing.

Additionally, the lack of controls and meaningful performance reporting were causing excessive spend on overtime and prevented the required holistic visibility of key indicators contributing to performance, such as the status of parts, plan vs actual and FAMS backlog. “We were paying around £30k a week in abatement fines, something needed to change!” one of the managers highlighted.

There was recognition that the supervisory structure was unstable and suboptimal, with wide spans of control which were not conducive to supporting active management or to being able to effectively allocate and control the delivery of works. Another hindering factor was that the operation perceived the critical issues to be ‘external’ and therefore difficult to resolve. Examples of this included the age of the machines, the amount of maintenance required and a depot that wasn’t fit for purpose.

Collectively these issues were resulting in a substantial amount of financial abatement, inability to hit targets and a fundamentally strained relationship with the client.

Upon analysis of the findings, there was a recognition that the operation was in need of significant transformation driven by three core objectives:

- Tightened processes to deliver maintenance and service in a more controlled, timely and cost effective manner across depot and field-based maintenance teams
- Enable a shift in management behaviours and embed enhanced managerial roles through restructuring and strengthening key interfaces
- Introduce MOS elements to provide the foundations for continuous improvement, drive down abatement and overtime spend, as well as to reduce the backlog of outstanding FAMS

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*“It was always going to be difficult as we’ve got 15 teams dotted around the country, so we knew there would be challenges around engaging with all the teams simultaneously..”*

Head of Contract

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*“That was a really good session reviewing what went well, what issues we need to address and keep an eye on for next time. The whole team was positively involved and we have 15 lessons learned that we can action!”*

**Maintenance Manager**

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## Approach and Outcomes

Taking a facilitative and inclusive approach, it was important that the solutions were not prescribed but instead developed with the individuals working within the target areas to ensure that they provided a framework for continuous improvement once the Managementors team had stepped back. The engagement centred around the transformation of 3 key areas – Planning of Works, Delivery and Control of Works and Performance Reporting and Accountability.

### Planning, Delivery and Control of Works

For improved planning and coordination of works, Managementors worked with the teams to develop a Work Assignment Tool, enabling work to be appropriately prioritised and assigned to Field Service Engineers. In the Depot, a Progress Tracker was developed, initially on a whiteboard and later digitised, which allowed for daily tasks to be assigned and effectively followed up on to reduce any last-minute surprises and cherry-picking of tasks by engineers.

A comprehensive Training Plan was also developed to clarify existing engineering skillsets, and identify and start addressing gaps.

To address the excessive overtime spend and increase control, an overtime pre-authorisation process, tooling and targets were designed and installed that required solid justification ahead of approval. This helped to contribute to significant cost savings, particularly within the depot where average monthly spend was reduced by **74% within 5 months**.

With more robust planning tools in place, it offered the opportunity to implement pre and post maintenance reviews to ensure that vital lessons and issues were being effectively captured and fed into future machine maintenance.

Supervisor 'standard days' were also established to define what a good day looks like and provide clarification around roles, responsibilities and core tasks.

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### Performance Reporting and Accountability

A FAMS Dashboard was introduced, as well as risk rating of FAMS providing visibility of FAMS status along with KPIs by region and engineer. This enabled high risk FAMS to be better identified and actioned resulting in a **34% reduction in the FAMS backlog**.

Through the implementation of additional visual management tools such as digitised whiteboards that provided clear visibility of plan vs actual, managers were able to effectively review granular data and challenge performance. This, in combination with tailored coaching and the implementation of an effective Daily and Weekly Review Structure, instilled greater accountability for performance at Supervisory and Maintenance Manager level whilst enabling them to focus on key indicators, issue resolution and the active management of engineer time.

The approach taken not only enabled over **£340k of annualised benefits**, but has helped reinvigorate the relationship between the company and their client, giving them the increased confidence they needed in the run up to the contract rebid.

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*“The team from Managementors were great! If I asked any questions, they were on it straight away. I was too busy to spare my time as much as we would have liked to but they were always patient ”*

**Maintenance Manager**

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