



Finding customers with the desire to improve

Azima DLI

At Azima DLI we pride ourselves on being a diagnostic and information service company, powered by some powerful predictive technologies. The debate that rages on in our halls is about the information we think our customers should have versus the information they're used to seeing. I hope the debate rages on forever, and here's why. No two customers are the same, and no two customer sites alike.

What we know from observing hundreds of sites in dozens of industries, and performing hundreds of thousands of machine tests per year, is *failure* and *success* have patterns. We study and debate those patterns to understand what they mean, and how customers can apply them. How customers respond to new ways of seeing data reveals their propensities to learn.

At some level we're a predictive maintenance company offering services and products that inform maintenance planning, head off unplanned downtime and even the occasional catastrophe. The next step we take is one few others can, which is to aggregate data about past machine failures and current machine health across both plants and

enterprises to see what more it can tell us — about risk, planning, spending and maintenance practices. The assumption we make is customers will be interested, and that's not always so.

Production teams are proud. They face relentless pressure to do more with less. They don't like surprises and can't abide missed opportunities. The glass better look half full when you say maintenance could be better, cost-saving opportunities abound and the plant ranks below average when benchmarked against industry peers. It's not a popular message, but should it be withheld?

It's a level of engagement that's worlds apart from product and software vendors that sell tools, not results. The insights our customers expect from us as an information service are built on a legacy of shared experiences — good and bad. Knowledge acquired by collaborating over time, and trust that makes candid analysis possible, are vital to the introspection required to forge true partnerships and affect real change.

Our job description is fault detection, exposing the knowable unknowns, but our

franchise is knowledge — understanding our customers to help them better understand themselves. By mining reams of real world data that incorporates decades of failure mode experience, we discover patterns and prescriptions for success that place us on the frontier of knowledge looking out for new and more innovative practices. That frontier fuels our debates as we challenge tightly held assumptions and beliefs. And we know the cost of candor — change is always hard — but the source of our conviction is the real world observations our data represents. If egos aren't checked at the door, some insights can be bruising.

We recently instituted the practice of grading customers on their propensities for learning. What we know is organizations that score low will likely not be with us in 24 months because our value proposition disintegrates if we can't teach what we learn. We may even hasten the process if we can't engage the customer and address misdirected practices. It's not so much "firing the customer," in the glib parlance of strategy consultants, as finding customers with the desire to improve.

Sounds absurd, I know, but the number of production operations going through the predictive maintenance motions without clear objectives for value is surprising. They are bad for us, and we are bad for them. A meaningful part of the rewards for working at a shop like ours is engagement with the customer. We thrive on making a difference, and deplore missing opportunities, and asking professionals to give their best to indifferent customers is unsustainable. Customers with the desire to improve are the life blood of our company, and our enduring debates are the sure sign we've found them.

Azima DLI will soon release WATCHMAN™ Reliability Portal 3.0, the next generation of our dynamic customer facing Web portal. Its hallmark enterprise visibility will be enhanced by a library of user configurable reporting functions customers can use to learn in different ways from what we're learning about them. It reflects our commitment to knowledge sharing, the core value proposition of any information service company.

For more information, visit www.azimadli.com or call (781) 938-0707. ●

FOCUS YOUR MAINTENANCE RESOURCES

The WATCHMAN™ Reliability Portal gives you 24/7 web-based access to plants across your enterprise, to help ensure timely responses to the most critical needs.

WATCHMAN Solutions has the right program for you.



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