Case Study: BRL Hardy

Mainpac helps satisfy a pressing need for more wine

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You would have to have been totally incommunicado for the last decade not to be aware of the growing demand for quality wine in Australia and overseas. Equally, most people would be aware that tougher economic conditions, global markets and increased competition are demanding that most manufacturers, including wine makers, do more with their existing resources.

Above: Maintenance planner Andrew Fores knows how to get more out of BRL Hardy's production facilities with Mainpac to meet the growing demand for the company's wines.

It was this demand - to get more out of production facilities to meet an ever-expanding taste for its wines - which led BRL Hardy to undertake a major project, centred on the use of the Australian-developed asset and maintenance management solution, Mainpac.

Through improved maintenance planning and scheduling, some 15 more semi trailers a year now leave the main BRL Hardy plant at Reynella, South Australia, with wine for local and global markets. That's 235,000 more bottles of quality red, white or sparkling wine or more than 306 pallets.

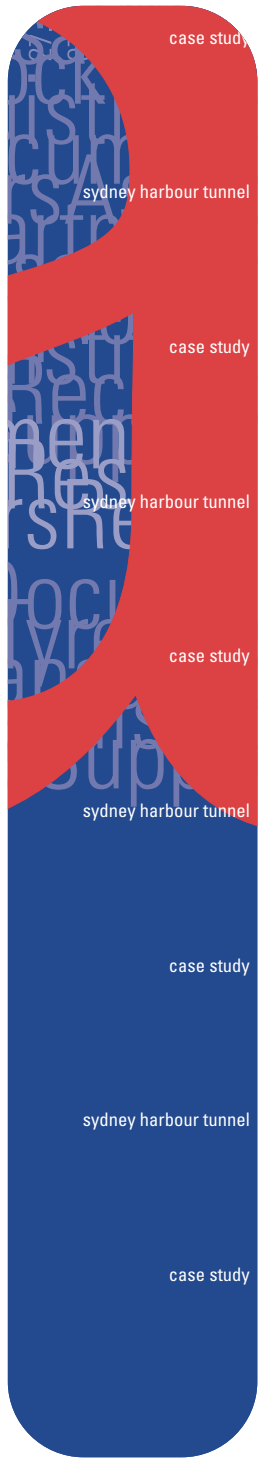
And, while that may not sound much, it had a significant bottom line impact, even for a large organisation like BRL Hardy said maintenance planner, Andrew Fores.

BRL Hardy is one of Australia's leading wine companies and one of the 10 largest wine groups in the world. The company crushes some 250,000 tonnes of grapes annually and exports to 60 countries. In Australia BRL Hardy enjoys a 20 percent market share. The company's main production facility at Reynella has seven different bottling lines which range from high speed - at 350 bottles a minute - to lower speeds able to address different bottle types and boutique or smaller volume needs.

Mr Fores is responsible for planning normal preventive maintenance and the minor overhauls and replacement of parts and electrical components that are required of production in the food and beverage industry.

"In the past we arbitrarily scheduled a certain amount of maintenance time for each production line and we hoped all jobs could be done when the line was down," Mr Fores said.

"Now, we look at the requirements of each job and adjust the amount of time required to suit the job."The result of improving our use of Mainpac meant that in the first year we returned to the production department a total of 78.4 hours of production time on one line alone. Across all production lines during the year, we returned a total of 215 hours. This is the equivalent of about two weeks of operating on a 24x7 basis,"Mr Fores said.



Above: Improved maintenance planning and scheduling BRL Hardy has helped lift annual production by 235,000 bottles of wine - the equivalent of 15 semi trailer loads. Maintenance planner Andrew Fores reviews maintenance schedules with fitter Peter Marshal.

Today, Mainpac advises what jobs are scheduled, analyses job histories and is helping ensure greater accuracy in terms of the time required to complete jobs. Accounting for nearly all of the time of the company's maintenance staff Mainpac also helps deliver optimal allocation of parts and maintenance staff to jobs.

"Our maintenance plan today is much more flexible, taking into account lead times for spare parts. By no longer being hard and fast in our allocation of time to maintenance jobs, we are now able to share a common goal with our production department while accommodating the often short lead times coming from the sales function," Mr Fores said.

"If production is experiencing problems, we try and assist by picking the least disruptive time for a shutdown."

To get more out of Mainpac, Mr Fores first examined the tasks performed and how long each task required. He then used Crystal Reporting to determine the number of times tasks were performed and the times required to perform each one, ending up with an average time. With this data he was able to allocate more accurate times to each task.

"Times taken to complete tasks are progressively dropping as we get better at performing them, leading to ongoing streamlining of the maintenance process. Some of our shut down times have now been cut by half. And, we have had strong support and feedback from the factory floor for what we have been doing," Mr Fores said.

A good illustration is the case of an electrician assigned a particular task that was scheduled to take three hours. The electrician reported back that the task actually took just a quarter of an hour.

Originally, the timings associated for many maintenance tasks came direct from the manufacturer's manual for a particular machine said Mr Fores.

"We decided to look at our own procedures and split some jobs into more bite-sized modules. Some tasks for example, which involve a fitter and an electrician, may be capable of being split and undertaken during two different shutdowns.

"In the medium term I set myself the goal of getting all preventive maintenance up to date, so as to highlight any problems of a major reoccurring nature which may warrant an engineering re-design," Mr Fores said.

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