Discovering the Missing Link:

Connecting “work” and “work order” language improves safety AND the bottom line.
SOMEONE’S GONNA GET HURT

**Imagine this recipe for disaster:**

Martin speaks and reads only German. Jose speaks and reads only Spanish. Their job is to replace the main bearing assembly in the biggest stamping mill at the Acme Widget plant. The printed work order and other documents are in English. Their mission is to complete the bearing replacement while minimizing downtime and maximizing safety.

**Let’s change the characters slightly:**

The language of Acme Widget’s Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) is associated with the assets identified in the facility and refers to the machine as the “Nelson 220 VMP Series 4.” The facility operator’s manual uses a legacy language and refers to the machine as “Stamping Mill #7.” The printed work order and other documents are in a hybrid *lingua franca* using a combination of CMMS and legacy terms.

While CMMS has matured greatly during the past decade, there is a lingering language barrier with operations that can severely impact safety and compliance as well as the bottom line.

WORK DRIVERS

Today, approximately 95% of all repairs and maintenance work is being tracked by CMMS. Key items usually include work management, preventative maintenance, procedure management, inventory management, purchasing, receiving and reporting.

Work drivers include:

- corrective maintenance
- planned/preventative maintenance
- planned repairs
- emergent repairs

THE MISSING LINK

Today, approximately 95% of all repairs and maintenance work is being planned, scheduled, accomplished, and tracked by the facility’s CMMS, but there may still be a “missing link” in terms of data migration. If CMMS cannot communicate easily with the LOTO system, for example, the risk increases.

“This is where the language barrier can be a real setback,” said Jim Tappen, President of Stilwell & Associates. “In order for the maintenance action to be completed, the electronic CMMS work order may have to be translated into an electronic or paper LOTO system and, as we all know, unless the translation is word-for-word perfect, the potential for problems is higher.”

**STANDARDIZATION BRINGS BOTTOM LINE RESULTS**

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While enterprise-wide process standardization is possible with CMMS, it may be a more difficult when applied to LOTO. Legacy language and processes may result in variations within the same facility, let alone across the system.

A facility or system electronic LOTO system that links seamlessly to CMMS asset information, connecting the work to the work orders, offers many benefits including the elimination of mis-
takes or miscommunication leading to unsafe conditions.
The reduced administrative workload from standardization allows more time for corrective and preventative maintenance. Control over the work is increased, allowing for multiple jobs or work orders to be tied to the same tagout event. Operators can easily and quickly know which specific jobs need to be completed before restoring energy.

Automating the LOTO process also increases consistency and reduces the risk of errors. Training becomes more effective by ensuring the consistency of standards within the facility or across the system. Typically, the LOTO software should be Microsoft compatible and SQL-based, have a small footprint on existing hardware and have the capacity to be customized by facility and across the system.

Overall, standardization through automated LOTO will mean improved safety and reduced risk which leads directly to increased productivity and a positive impact on the bottom line.

**WHAT IT MEANS**
Linking an automated LOTO system to CMMS can provide many benefits including:

- A safer workplace with minimized risk
- Greater efficiencies in time and materials
- More up time for equipment
- A healthier bottom line

**TIME IS MONEY**
Significant time savings is an additional bottom line benefit from the use of an automated LOTO system linked to CMMS.

Traditional LOTO processes are “one-off events” that require an investment of time, even though the event may have been repeated many times. Automated LOTO systems use a template that is created once and then can be repeated many times, generating savings of over 87%.

What used to take an hour might be completed in as little as three “clicks” of the computer mouse, taking as little as 3-5 minutes using an automated system. That includes information entry and tag printing.

Of course there may initially be a “gap” between having an automated LOTO system in place and getting operational and maintenance employees to actually use it. Overall the system must be easier, faster and provide a higher measure of functionality than the legacy system. The “look and feel” of the system is vital and should include an intuitive display that prompts users to the next steps. The initial set-up of templates and forms is an investment in saving time and effort in the immediate future.

**WHAT LOTO USERS WANT**
Stilwell excels in listening to a customers needs and developing a “solution set” to help each facility [customer] achieve the desired results. As part of Stilwell’s solution set lessons learned, best practices and bench marks are provided from industry to help maximize outcomes.

“We want an automated LOTO product that will grow as the company grows,” said SCANA’s Safety & Training Officer Charles Youngblood.

“We also look for a system that can be configured to fit the company’s needs and has customer support that is second to none.”

Mary E. Cable, Supply Chain Leader at AES, looks for great communication at every stage. “We want to feel that we are in the best of hands,” she said. “And we especially want our LOTO system vendor to partner with us to crack those difficult tasks involving complex processes.”

**AUDITS MADE EASY**
A must-have in an automated LOTO system is superior audit capability including multiple methods for auditing tags, tagouts or templates. Additionally the system should allow for detailed down select of prefixes.

By documenting and standardizing the process, a qualifying automated LOTO system assists users in joining Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) leading to OSHA certification. In addition, storing all of the LOTO data in one place means that it is searchable and reports can be easily generated.

**CONNECTING THE DOTS**
29 CFR 1910.147 mandates a safe work environment. The safest and most efficient way to achieve this is by linking the CMMS work orders to the LOTO work for lockout-tagout, hot work and confined space. Additional benefits include significant time savings, process standardization and consistency, increased compliance, simplified reporting, reduced risk and improved safety with a demonstrable bottom line impact.

**NEW TAGLINK 8.0 FROM STILWELL**
Along with a great look and “feel” including easy navigation and intuitive display, new TagLink® version 8.0 offers a number of additional benefits:

- Security: Significant security/permission tables and multiple levels of permission with up to 60 attributes per user
- Technology: SQL dB database utilization and security and “user” interface with intuitive capabilities
- Advanced search capability: Robust search and reporting capability with SQL dB
- Superior audit functionality and “zero” energy checks
- Additional forms: Authorized Employee Signatures, Confined Space Logs, Employee Qualifications and Temporary Isolation Releases