

Modern software solutions

by **Christa Thoma,**
Mespas AG, Switzerland

Particularly now, when the world still suffers from one of its most painful economic crises, many companies are focusing their energy and resources not only on how to get through the hard times, but equally on how to prepare for the eventual upswing. A great number of enterprises are forced to optimise the cost structure, while at the same time the demands in terms of efficiency, downtime and quality have risen. They have recognised that optimising routine, recurring tasks can make a big difference in the efficiency of operations. One area that offers true potential for differentiation, as well as cost and efficiency improvements, is the area of maintenance of equipment and technical installations. This comes as no surprise since these costs assume up to 20 to 25 per cent of total production costs, exceeded only by costs for energy.

It thus makes sense to invest into a cost-efficient, state-of-the-art system, i.e. a computerised maintenance management systems (CMMS) which sustainably improves capacity utilisation, equipment availability and consequently enhances competitiveness.

A new solution

Computerised maintenance management systems have a long tradition in the building materials and cement industry. There are literally dozens of solutions available in the market which all focus on cost and efficiency control. However, this is simply not enough! Modern and new solutions are needed; solutions that make use of state-of-the-art information technology and the best in computerised maintenance management. Managers and business owners call for a system that not only tackles the growing proportion that is expended on maintenance management, but at the same time reduces expenditures for tasks that are non-core, such as IT, data management, sourcing suppliers, managing manuals and OEM data.

As in other capital-intensive industries, the need for proper equipment maintenance is one of the constants in the building materials and cement industry. Without proper maintenance, production volume and efficiency suffer and operating costs escalate. The good news is that the new generation of Computerised Maintenance Management System (CMMS), based on a multi-tenant architecture, can play a deciding role in containing costs, improving efficiency and availability of business data.



One of the benefits of using the Mespas system is that staff can efficiently plan and carry out their work and communication flows are optimised

One company that has recognised this issue and is leading the way in offering a solution is Switzerland-based Mespas. The Mespas R5 all-in-one system covers all major components of modern CMMS such as maintenance, procurement, and quality management.

The uniqueness of the Mespas solution, however, lies in its centralised database that makes use of a multi-tenant architecture. Apart from the obvious cost savings thanks to using a computerised maintenance management system, a CMMS based on a multi-tenant architecture offers substantial cost savings in the area of outsourcing IT-related tasks such as hosting servers, providing security, implementing software updates, entering master data and performing regular back-ups. More and more enterprises decide to go for such a system because it offers a drastically more efficient way of managing technical installations. It allows their owners and operators to allocate resources away from non-core tasks and

to concentrate on what they do best: manage their operations.

How does it work?

So what is special about this new generation of CMMS. How exactly does a traditional system and one based on a multi-tenant architecture differ?

Firstly, there is the multiple tenant architecture, which is distinguished by a server infrastructure for a large user base – managed centrally and in parallel, instead of separately for each user. Furthermore, the application/software is not stored locally. Instead, it is accessed remotely as with other SaaS models (software as a service). This means, in terms of cost optimisation, no software maintenance is required. There is no need for investments in application and data servers and the costs for server operation and maintenance fall away.

Secondly, as opposed to software offered by traditional software providers, the centralised Mespas database is preset

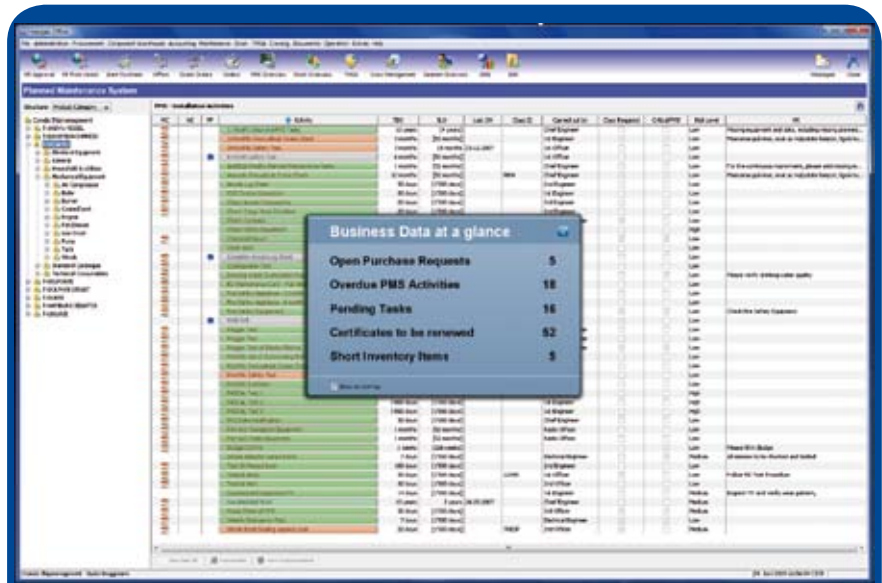
with two types of data:

- a comprehensive range of up-to-date master data (such as OEM data, supplier information, documents published by OEMs or certification authorities, etc) and equipment specific data. This first type is accessible by all users of the system
- company/installation specific data. This second type of data is customer specific and only available to the particular client.

The data provided in the Mespas server is of highest quality, its source being OEM data. In addition, every single technical part or product has been entered once only, regardless of how often this information (eg a part or a manual) is used across the whole customer base.

In terms of efficiency, this means operators and management are able to focus on their jobs. There is no more time spent on verifying and implementing data, or maintaining several parallel systems because of missing data. Also, the quality of data allows to compare and analyse within the plant as well as across multiple plants.

Software modules and features are another important component of choosing the right CMMS. With Mespas, a comprehensive set of modules is directly linked to the central database. This includes, among others, tools for planned maintenance, stock control, procurement, budgeting, and document management. Some of the modules are designed to work together; others can, if desired, be operated stand-alone. All Mespas R5 software modules are directly linked to the parts and products within the database. When, for example, placing an order for



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spare parts, operators simply choose the relevant products and the correct parts from the drop-down menu. The software modules are developed such as they are easy in their handling and require very little training.

Reporting made easy

One of the outstanding benefits of using the approach with the multi-tenant architecture is the system's reporting ability. Thanks to unambiguous data in the centralised database, reporting and benchmarking across the plant, or even the company, is designed to be very straightforward. Furthermore, Mespas has paid considerable attention to making the process as intuitive and straightforward

as possible in order to minimise training. For example, as soon as tasks have been carried out (eg tasks prompted by the company's pre-defined and inbuilt maintenance cards) and recorded in the system, the data is synchronised as part of the standard synchronisation procedure. This allows operators and management to have an immediate, accurate and real-time overview of activities across their operations or enterprise. Also, an interface with the customer's own business applications (such as an accounting system) is available.

In short, more and more companies from various industries shift away from simple software sourcing for their maintenance management needs. Instead, they are moving towards a solutions and services-oriented approach and are implementing a system based on a multi-tenant architecture.

This approach, followed by Mespas, offers significant advantages in the area of equipment maintenance, but also in the field of IT and reporting. Such system based on a multi-tenant approach facilitates thanks to its ease-of-use a shift from a 'fix it after it breaks' culture to one in which equipment and assets are actively managed. The benefits of this are obvious: reduced downtime, more efficient and cost-optimised operations, and, last but not least, staff motivation is positively affected since staff can efficiently plan and carry out their work, and work and communication flows are optimised.



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