



What Would YOU Do?: Coming Truthful with a Client or Covering Up for a Loyal Employee?

Ross had been working for Gulf Stream Industries for 10 years. After going through a severe financial downturn the company was sold to a competitor that didn't have as much experience managing a firm of Gulf Stream's size. Ross had kept his job as supervisor but had to cut back on staffing after the company lost out on several contracts it had projected to win. In addition to reactive and preventive maintenance his team had always been responsible for predictive maintenance of the machinery, testing and monitoring all of the firm's machinery in order to predict and avert major system failures.

One of Ross' best workers, Charley, had been with the company for 24 years and was nearing retirement. Charley was a good, dependable worker. However after the change in ownership and cutbacks in staffing, Charley was taking on a lot more work than usual. Instead of regularly walking the floor and doing sight and sound analysis on conveyor and sorter systems he spent most of his time doing immediate repair work.

One afternoon the main conveyor system broke down in the middle of a critical order fulfillment. Gulf Stream had been fortunate to keep this client during the company's ownership change and in fact had been "put on notice" that nothing could go wrong with this fulfillment if it expected to keep the contract. Ross pulled several men from other parts of the warehouse to work on the conveyor repair which was far more extensive than he had anticipated when he first got the call from Charley. Walking over to check on the work team Ross noticed that a meter module attached to the system was off. The module was set so that if a meter reading was off – meaning its numbers were outside the desired range – Charley would know to issue a work order to do proactive maintenance.

It took Charley's team nearly one full day to complete the needed repair. When he met with Charley after the system was back up and running, Ross asked Charley about the meter. Charley looked a little surprised and embarrassed. He stumbled for a minute and then confessed that he turned it off. When Ross asked why, Charley said that he didn't have the crew or the time to keep up with all the reactive maintenance, much less predictive work. Ross had to decide – should he report and penalize Charley for contributing to the mechanical breakdown or just tell the client that it was unavoidable system failure? What do you think Ross should do? Why?

Source:

"Predictive and Preventive Maintenance Improve Asset Management." *Sprocket CMMS Blog*. Sprocket Dematic, n.d. 15 June 2014.

