



3 Questions Every Maintenance Manager Should Ask Their CMMS Data This Month

Most maintenance managers look at total breakdowns, backlog size, or MTTR. Those numbers describe what already happened. Three simpler questions, answered directly from CMMS work-order history, reveal whether the system is producing usable information and where the next improvements should focus. They take less than an hour to pull and immediately suggest concrete actions.

1. Which assets generated the most unplanned work?

Filter reactive (unplanned) work orders for the last 30 or 60 days and rank assets by number of jobs, labor hours, or downtime—whichever measure matters most in your plant. Limit the result to the top five or ten.

The list shows where firefighting is concentrated. If the same assets appear month after month, the current strategy is not working. Pick the top one or two and assign a short review: confirm the failure modes, check whether a procedure or PM already exists, and decide on one change. Repeating this question monthly keeps improvement effort on the assets that actually drive the reactive workload.

2. What percentage of reactive jobs had a documented root cause?

Count reactive work orders closed in the last 30 days that contain a failure code plus a brief cause note versus those that only say “fixed” or “replaced part.” Divide to get the percentage.

A low percentage means future Pareto analyses and RCM decisions will rest on incomplete history. Set a short-term target (for example, 80 percent) and return any job missing the cause note to the technician the same day for completion. Within a few weeks the habit forms, and the data becomes trustworthy enough to identify recurring causes.

3. Which technicians or crews are consistently completing work orders with complete data?

Pull recently closed work orders and check for the presence of required fields: failure code, labor hours, parts, root-cause note, and photo where expected. Group the results by technician or crew and note who meets the standard most often.

This is not a ranking for discipline. It identifies where the process is already working so you can learn from it, and where light coaching is needed. Share the best examples in the next huddle and clarify the minimum fields for everyone else.

Turn the Answers into One Action Each

Answer the three questions from live CMMS data, not from a side spreadsheet. For each answer, write down one specific next step. Review the same three questions next month. The trends matter more than any single snapshot.

These questions work because they are narrow, repeatable, and tied directly to actions that improve data quality and focus.

Which of the three questions would surface the most useful insight in your plant right now?