

Factory Maintenance Solution

ATS Nails Drywall Factory Maintenance Issues, Turns Texas Plant into Top Producer

Customer Challenge

In the gypsum industry, the difference between profit and loss can sometimes be measured in grease fittings and worn parts. Essentially one long, continuous production line, wallboard manufacturing is particularly subject to machine failure. If one piece of equipment goes down, all work stops—sometimes for a day or more.

One company's facility in Texas, was particularly plagued by such conditions. The plant was capable of significant output—but inadequate maintenance practices caused the 24/7 facility to suffer downtime as high as two to three days per week. Ranked near the bottom of the manufacturer's drywall manufacturing operations across the U.S., the plant was considered high-risk and underperforming. Increasingly, customer orders were being sent to other company facilities due to the factory's unreliable production record.

ATS Solution

Seeking a solution for its maintenance concerns, corporate and plant leadership chose to implement a factory maintenance services program from Advanced Technology Services. ATS specialists assessed the situation and set about making changes.

“Our analysis showed a need for structure. Preventive maintenance practices were pretty vague, if they existed at all. There was no defined schedule for thermography, vibration measurement, or lubrication. Critical spare parts were not stocked properly, and very little, if any, weekly or monthly planning being done,” stated the ATS site manager.

ATS instituted routines and best practices to alleviate many of the company's concerns. Maintenance tasks and repairs were tied to the factory's Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS); technicians, employed and trained by ATS, were assigned to jobs by managers according to established priorities.

“Preventive maintenance, when properly and scientifically applied, can yield huge efficiencies in a continuous production operation,” noted the ATS manager. “Through our analysis we were able to lengthen equipment service times from once per week to once every three weeks, with no loss in performance.”

Bottom-Line Success

After a slow 2014, things started to improve. By 2015, production availability was accelerating and by 2016, the plant was setting new records for uptime. Soon the plant was ranked number one in OEE (Operating Equipment Effectiveness) for the company's entire gypsum organization.

AT A GLANCE

- Factory maintenance and reliability services provided by ATS
- Planned maintenance schedule reduced by as much as 75%
- Board line availability improved 6% (2015 vs. 2016)
- Board line utilization improved 26% (2015 vs. 2016)
- Output increased 21% in output (2015 vs. 2016)
- Scheduled run-hours increased 15% (2015 vs. 2016)

“At the end of Q3 of 2016, our plant had equaled its entire output for 2015,” noted the company's production manager. “There was a time when our plant shut down for maintenance eight hours out of every week. ATS has improved our reliability to the point that we now go as long as an entire month without a scheduled maintenance shutdown.”

The effectiveness of the ATS team at the facility has been evidenced by a new long-term contract extension. “We're pleased to have made such a major impact at a facility that had huge potential for improvement,” said the ATS manager. “This plant is proof that skilled maintenance can have a transformative effect.”

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—Gypsum products plant production manager

To learn how ATS can impact your bottom line visit www.advancedtech.com

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