

Industrial Manufacturing

Reactive to Proactive

BetterGround Advisory | Case Study

AT A GLANCE

A Fortune 200 manufacturer transforms asset management strategy across eleven facilities, shifting from reactive maintenance to proactive operations with a 46% internal rate of return.

The Challenge

A Fortune 200 industrial manufacturer operated eleven facilities around the clock, three shifts a day, 365 days a year. Equipment downtime meant lost production, safety incidents, and significant financial impact. But the company had no reliable way to see problems coming.

The existing maintenance approach relied on scheduled inspections and reactive response—what one plant manager called "finding out something is broken when it stops working." Technicians walked routes, checked gauges, and documented what they saw. But the data lived in spreadsheets and clipboards, disconnected from the systems that could have turned observations into predictions.

The costs were substantial: morale among teams was low; catastrophic equipment failures had become the norm; maintenance teams were often staffed for worst-case scenarios rather than need and led to low productivity; and busted budgets exposed the day-to-day reality that running these facilities was stressful and unsustainable on the current path.

The Approach

We started with observations and questions. Was the team closer to a mindset of compliance and checking boxes or did it lean towards commitment and being proactive? What were the identifiable patterns (good or bad) by shift, line, leader, and facility? Did the team take pride in little things like ensuring equipment was organized and the lubrication rooms were clean?

Before offering solutions or thinking about modernizing facilities, we spent time with the people closest to the equipment—maintenance technicians, plant engineers, operations supervisors. We didn't assume technology could solve all the ills. What we learned about the data wasn't surprising: knowledge needed to be organized, digitized, made actionable, and connected to the company's asset management strategy. More importantly, we discovered the front-line employees wanted to be successful. They were tired of the patterns of whack-a-mole in their daily lives. They just needed help (and a

small investment in training, tools, and technology) understanding where to start, how to prioritize and organize the work, and that there were more efficient ways of working that would save them time, money, and frustration.

Any changes we were going to implement needed to ensure the teams were confident in the new systems, routes, and schedules. They had to trust the data and know that their judgement was still required when coming across the inevitable grey areas. We were moving the maintenance teams from being reactive to proactive. Daily work would no longer be about checking boxes because the clipboard needed to be complete, but carefully listening, looking around, and making detailed notes that could help inform a system that was also capturing data in real time. After all, if the data they were capturing was “pencil whipped” it risked compromising the effectiveness of the new system’s recommendations and *their* workflows.

The solution we developed together was a network of IoT sensors—Bluetooth and WiFi-enabled devices that could monitor temperature, vibration, lubricant condition, and other performance indicators on rotating equipment, hydraulic systems, and other critical assets. The goal was not to replace human judgment with algorithms. It was to give experienced technicians better information, earlier. A dashboard that said “Pump 7 shows elevated temperature and vibration—schedule inspection within 48 hours” was more useful than a spreadsheet of sensor readings that required expertise to interpret.

We rolled the system out across all eleven sites over two years, adjusting based on what we learned at each facility. The technology was consistent; the implementation was tailored to local conditions and workflows.

The Results

The transformation showed up in the numbers: a **46% internal rate of return** on the investment, driven by reduced emergency repairs, optimized maintenance staffing, and avoided downtime. Catastrophic failures—the kind that shut down production lines—dropped significantly across all facilities. The plants were cleaner, safer, and technology helped people make better decisions, faster.

The digital training tools and resource library we built to support the rollout had an unexpected benefit: a 147% increase in utilization of internal consulting services, as teams across the organization began applying the same data-driven approach to other operational challenges.

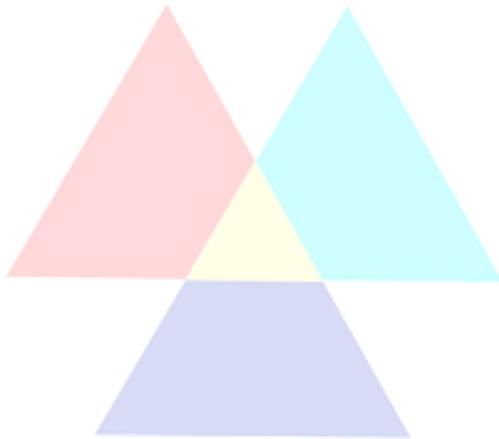
The Takeaway: The people closest to the work often know what's failing. The job is to organize that knowledge, make it actionable, and connect it to decisions that matter.

Engagement Overview

Client: Industrial Manufacturing (Fortune 200, 11 facilities)
Duration: 2+ years
Capabilities: IoT & Remote Monitoring | Predictive Analytics | Technology Integration | Change Management

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