Software package provides lasting satisfaction

CMMS/EAM software combines comprehensive capabilities with strong support.

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By Paul Studebaker, CMRP, Editor in Chief

The CHAMPS CMMS/EAM package from CHAMPS Software (www.champsinc.com) has roots that extend back to 1980. We interviewed users of a variety of vintages, from a modified v. 2.40 to a current v. 9.0 upgrade. They say the software's strengths include a high level of integration, strong support and the functionality needed to meet myriad business requirements.

"The system is extremely integrated, so you can track your entire maintenance process from inventory, to purchasing, to planning/scheduling, to capital project tracking/reporting," says Judy Mittan, facilities maintenance planner, The Quaker Oats Company, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The system provides charting and graphing of key information, and data can be easily queried and exported to other software packages if needed.

"We especially like having an integrated system that encompasses all of the processes required for inventory control, procurement, maintenance and work management," says David Lavigne, general manager, organization effectiveness at the VC Summer Nuclear Station of South Carolina Electric and Gas Co. "Integration minimizes the need to write and maintain complicated interfaces."

Shering Plough's Memphis and Cleveland, Tenn., facilities have been running CHAMPS software since 1990. "This type of longevity with an application product speaks to itself about stability," says Billy G. Bailey, coordinator, site support in Memphis. "I have been with Schering Plough for 25 years and when we talk about customer support, no application system that we employ provides us with better technical support, period."

The software is helping to run facilities that have to meet demanding regulatory requirements. "Both of our sites have FDA-regulated GxP functions," says Bailey.

Washington TRU Solutions, an operating contractor for DOE, manages a Transuranic Waste Repository in southeastern New Mexico where 150 maintenance and engineering personnel use CHAMPS to manage the plant. "We have found the CHAMPS program to be reliable, user-friendly, easy to manage, and most importantly, information is easily retrieved for budgeting and maintenance schedules," says Happy Scheel, transportation project coordinator, Washington TRU Solutions, Carlsbad, N.M. "We have had no major problems with the program since we started using the VAX application in 1993."

Washington converted to Windows in 1996, and converted the engineering component indices into the program in 1999. "During the startup and conversions, when problems arose with converting data and training personnel, CHAMPS was there with the solutions we needed to be successful," Scheel says. "Due to the support and product reliability, we purchased a second Windows application for our Type B packaging program in 2000."

A.B. Hopkins Generating Station, Tallahassee, Fla., uses the software at two power plants generating 800 MW from three steam turbines, six gas turbines and a combined cycle unit. "CHAMPS has been very responsive to our needs," says Triveni Singh, plant manager. "We saw some issues during initial installation. We sent them our database, which they loaded on their system to troubleshoot our problems."

Where capabilities have been lacking, CHAMPS has helped out. "We sometimes encounter regulatory or industry-driven process changes that the software cannot support," says Lavigne. "In some cases we made the software changes with CHAMPS input; in others, CHAMPS provided a new release that would be available to all their customers. They have always been able to generate these releases expeditiously."

Bailey says Shering Plough has not had many issues with its system over the years. "However, anytime that I have needed technical support, CHAMPS has been there for me," he says. "We just made system changes to complete the full validation of our CMMS, and I have only good things to say about their commitment to support. They have stood strongly behind all of their products, old and new, with a level of technical support that surpasses most in the industry."

Asked what advice he would give to a fellow professional who is evaluating the package, Singh sums it up: "Like any other CMMS, it will take a serious commitment and good bit of training if you do not currently have a CMMS," he says. "Once it's running, there are not many issues."