



Reliability Center, Inc.
www.Reliability.com
804-458-0645
info@reliability.com

Living Reliability: Principles and Learning

By Robert J. Latino, CEO, RCI

Contributed Material from Charles J. Latino, President & Founder, RCI

Abstract: The key to Reliability is more a mind-set than the hard technologies that exist on the market today. When we travel to conferences and shows for Reliability we are inundated with vendors that supply technologies to execute Reliability strategies. Such technologies are integral to the ultimate success of a Reliability endeavor. However, if the organization does not have the foresight and vision needed at the executive level to set the stage, then the principles of Reliability will likely not take hold enough to change the culture. Does your organization practice the principle of Reliability?

Think about what a different mental state Reliability is as opposed to what we are used to. For decades we have battled the issue of dealing with a reactive state. In the 20th century we really started refining the technologies that would allow us to detect impending failure earlier. We continue to praise responders/fixers for minimizing the time to restore a failed situation.

However, Reliability brings a whole reversal of this thought process. True Reliability not only involves minimizing consequences, but also seeking to understand what caused the consequences to occur in the first place. We are not satisfied with being the mechanic who cut down a repair time from 4 hours to 30 minutes. A true Reliability practitioner will question why the mechanic is getting so much practice.

From a conceptual standpoint point, Reliability is responsible for tomorrow and Maintenance is responsible for today. This is why a Reliability group would not likely be successful if subordinate to a Maintenance department. In most cases when we see this, the Reliability Engineers (RE) inevitably end up doing maintenance engineering tasks and does little Reliability work. On the organizational chart, Reliability should be lateral to Maintenance, no subordinate. Instead of sharpening our skills to respond, we will strive to understand why a response is needed.

We can all relate to the hard technology tools like vibration monitoring, motor circuit testing, infrared thermography, ultrasonic thickness testing, rotor dynamic testing, finite element analysis, etc. All of these tools seek out a signal of some sort and try to “predict” when something will fail. This provides invaluable information to minimize the potential consequences of the impending event by taking corrective actions early. However, if the infrastructure is not there to provide the manpower, training, funding, policies, procedures, etc, then the value of the hard technologies cannot be realized.

Charles J. Latino recently received the first ever Summit Award (May 29, 2005) at the Maintenance and Reliability Technology Summit (MARTS) in Chicago. This award was to recognize his 50 year lifetime contribution to the field of Reliability. In conversations with Charles about what he really felt were the key principles of Reliability, he mentioned the following:

1. Beyond age 45 get a comprehensive physical every year and practice Preventive Maintenance (PM) principles on yourself by properly eating and exercising.
2. Assign subordinates to tasks that they have the training and desire to perform. People who WANT to do something are much more effective than people that HAVE to do something.

3. Develop a reputation for outstanding performance and then use that reputation as political capital to advance your larger ideas.
4. Find ways to exploit the successes of your group through available advertising and marketing channels (i.e. – newsletters, speaking at conferences, magazine articles, on-line articles, etc.)
5. Wrap big ideas in “bold and outrageous” packages to stimulate dialogue.
6. You will prosper by making important people look good. Recognize that others may take full or partial credit for your accomplishments but they themselves will know who is really making them look good.
7. Learn how to think like the people that you must gain acceptance from. Be smart and strategize how to move those who are stuck in their restraining paradigms.
8. Make training as realistic as possible. Present each idea in at least three different ways (i.e. – written, spoken, and practiced). Reinforce training with job aides provided to the students.
9. Don’t be afraid to learn. Never be embarrassed by people assuming that you are not up to par.
10. Surround yourself with smart people as your advisors. You should not be expected to know everything.
11. Think bigger than the immediate situation. Always look at what is possible from the big picture point-of-view.
12. Recognize that the small failures are the precursors to larger, catastrophic ones. It is proactive to analyze them with Root Cause Analysis and prevent their potential consequences.
13. Have faith in your abilities as you will often face hurdles that seem insurmountable. Your faith will carry you through these hard times.
14. Have fun and enjoy the experience! Reliability is truly a gratifying field when you are able to “challenge the limits”.

Thinking in a Reliability mind-set is not just what we do at work, it is a life lesson. If we live these principles we will start to view things differently in our personal lives. We will not accept normal undesirable outcomes at face value and start to understand why they happen and how to eliminate the risk of recurrence. Simple things like; why an electrical outlet doesn’t work, why the swing chain broke off, why a certain noise in car appeared, why there is low flow from a faucet, why the dryer is not drying properly, why the grass is dying in one area of the lawn, why the bulbs in the lamp post seem to burn out more frequently, will now spark our Reliability curiosity!

Is Reliability a way of life for you?

Robert J. Latino is Senior Vice-president of Strategic Development and a Senior Consultant for Reliability Center, Inc. Mr. Latino is a practitioner of root cause analysis in the field with his clientele as well as an educator. Mr. Latino is an author of RCI's Root Cause Analysis Methods© training and co-author of Problem Solving Methods© training. Mr. Latino has been published in numerous trade magazines on the topic of root cause analysis as well as a frequent speaker on the topic at trade shows and conferences. His most recent

publication is titled "Root Cause Analysis - Improving Performance for Bottom Line Results" He can be contacted at 804/458-0645 or blatino@reliability.com.

Charles J. Latino, (1929-2007) Founder of Reliability Center, Inc., was a chemical engineer with a background in psychology and human factors engineering. He was a leader in the development of an integrated approach to achieving greater reliability in manufacturing and industrial systems and processes. He served as consultant to many companies in the United States and abroad. He is the author of *Strive for Excellence...The Reliability Approach*. He has left his Reliability legacy to his wife and five children who continue to spread his visionary Reliability Approach to companies throughout the world.