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Leadership for Reliability

A Journey to Shape Reliability Excellence at

Bristol-Myers Squibb - Part 1

by  George Williams and  Robert Bishop





The journey of reliability at Bristol-Myers Squibb Company (BMS) is not unlike that of many other companies. We have seen great successes, missed opportunities, supported reliability efforts and a focus on various initiatives. Like others, our journey continues as it always has...or not. There is a changing atmosphere developing. A paradigm shift, if you will. The culmination of many small changes coming together to create something special. Our global community of reliability professionals, a talented and special group of people, were ready when the opportunity presented itself. Ready to take the next step in our journey to excellence. Ready to collaborate on our direction as a community. Ready to transform from reliability professionals into reliability leaders. Ready to provide a sufficient benefit to fellow employees, shareholders, the environment, our community and the patients we serve.

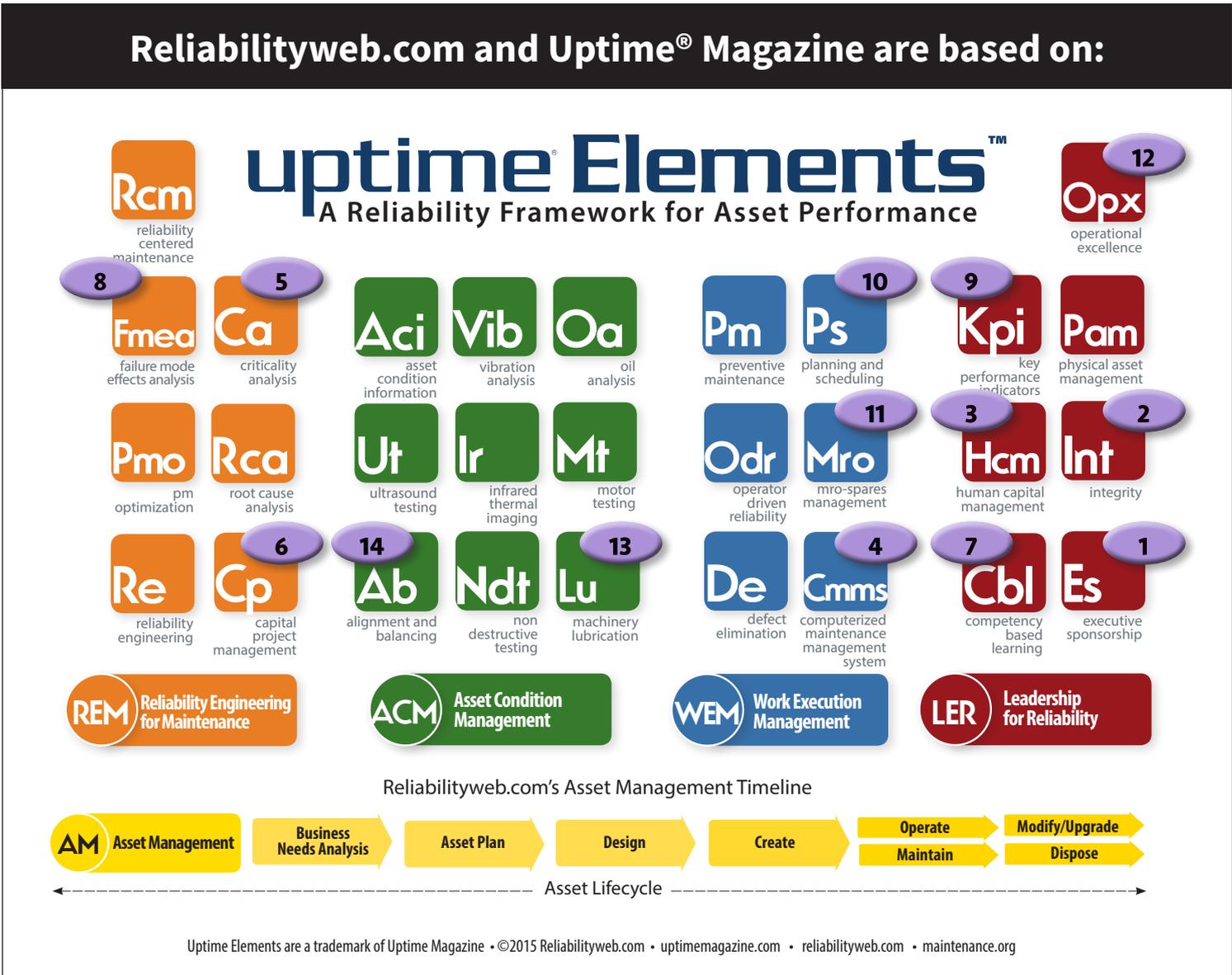
In October of 2014, BMS adopted Uptime Elements as our framework for asset management. At our first Global Reliability Excellence conference, over 50 employees and service partners came together to learn, network and set our direction. It was here that many were introduced to the Uptime Elements for the first time. On our first conference day, an introduction to the Uptime Elements was provided, along with the announcement that this would be our

framework moving forward. The week progressed with tours of local businesses, as well as sessions from both internal employees and service providers on specific topics of learning. But it was on day four when things changed. We were scheduled to discuss our path forward as a global community. What would be our direction for the future? What would we focus on? How do we intend to add value to the company? All difficult questions, particularly when there are several sites, countries, languages and cultures involved.

How do you facilitate such a discussion and ensure the team leaves feeling inspired about the future, knows the direction and has a sense of ownership? Not an easy task, but certainly a critical one. So as the group of 50 gathered in anticipation, we were all a bit nervous. No one knew the agenda of the discussion or the approach to be taken except George Williams, Associate Director and Reliability Excellence Lead for BMS. We were about to embark on a four-hour journey to set our future with nothing more than the certainty that when a great group of dedicated people gather and are empowered to determine their own path, extraordinary things will happen.

The group was randomly divided into four working groups. Each group was provided markers, sticky notes, pens, scissors and the Uptime Elements poster before heading off to a private room. They were then asked one simple

Figure 1



question: "If you wanted to ensure that from this day forward reliability was embedded in our culture and regardless of leadership and employee changeover, BMS would always manage its assets effectively, which Uptime Elements, in order of priority, must be in place?"

The groups were given two hours and complete creative freedom to develop their priority of elements in any method they chose. Along with George, Terrence O'Hanlon, CEO of Reliabilityweb.com and publisher of *Uptime* magazine, was on hand to witness the exercise and provide guidance on Uptime Elements as a holistic framework for reliability. As the exercise began, the groups started to take form. Leaders emerged, strategies developed and posters were mutilated. Group 1 sat around a table and began a lengthy debate on each element, its importance and how it relates to other elements in the framework. Group 2 handed out sticky notes for use in a voting methodology where each team member was given three votes of priority one, two and three to stick on the poster for tallying. Group 3 cut each element out of the poster and began to rearrange the elements on the table, eliminating elements they felt were less critical based on the guiding question. Group 4 began writing on flip charts, having open discussions and debating priorities.

Amazingly, each team went on similar journeys during the exercise. The first half hour was extremely active as groups spent time understanding the framework in totality. This was followed by questions to better understand the task at hand. Groups questioned the facilitators to better understand the expectation and become grounded in the true meaning of the question. How do we embed a culture where proper asset management practices are simply how we do business? Regardless of personnel turnover, regardless of leadership changes, regardless of business changes.

When the exercise began, each person went into the team room with preconceived notions of which elements were important to his or her site. Which were needed, which were already in place and which did they need a better understanding of to truly appreciate? Initial discussions were focused on trying to convince peers of the importance of elements that were important locally. As the task became clearer, the groups began to evolve. The groups moved from individuals from independent sites into teams. The thought process of what my site needs moved to what does BMS need. This led to a shift from task-related elements, such as vibration analysis, to more culture-based elements, such as executive sponsorship. A shift from reliability improvement to reliability sustainability.

The teams began to restart the process. Re-voting, open dialogue discussions and focused efforts began to take shape. The next hour was full of feverous progress. As the facilitators traveled from team to team, they were amazed at the progression taking place. Things were taking shape and coming together for each team, but what would happen when the teams presented their findings? Would this simply lead to more debate? We were excited to see the results and digest the conclusions.

The next two hours were spent with presentations, discussions and deep thought. As the teams regrouped and the first team prepared to present their priorities, you could sense the anticipation in the room. Would this exercise prove valuable? Would we know our direction or simply be back at the beginning with an unsure direction? Team 1 took the front of the room and began to present its strategy, providing an explanation as to why the elements chosen were selected, how they relate to one another and how they ensure reliability sustainability. Each subsequent team provided similar explanations, detailing the chosen elements, providing justification for their selections and presenting an understanding of how the selections fit together. One team even developed a slide presentation. To everyone's amazement, there were incredible similarities in the content and conclusions of the presentations. Each team presented their priorities and spoke about culture, leadership and people and did not put much focus on the more technical elements.

After the four teams presented, we began the exercise of prioritizing elements based on those selected by multiple teams and how high a priority they were. Amazingly, there was very little variation between the teams. Think of it, four teams of roughly 12 people each from varying sites, countries and backgrounds came to dramatically similar results. Not just similar, nearly matching perfectly.

As we finalized the exercise, we decided we needed to account for elements that were currently being worked on or recently worked on by the global community. Taking the teams' prioritized elements and incorporating the elements already being addressed was a short exercise and then...there it was. In all its glory was our future. A vision of prioritization to strengthen our already successful reliability journey, developed by all of us. A framework to embed a culture of reliability excellence and ensure long-term reliability sustainability. As the event came to a close, the team was invigorated and energized to begin working on our new direction.

The actual prioritization developed by the team is shown in Figure 1. Considering the large and diverse group that participated in this exercise and the uncanny similarities of their prioritized elements, it begs one to consider if there is a linear approach to a successful reliability journey. Perhaps we will revisit this in a few years to determine if our approach results in sustainability.

For now, you are encouraged to do the same. Regardless of the directional outcome of the exercise, you and your team members will accomplish a sense of ownership. Moreover, the teams will provide confirmation of the direction by selecting the same elements, even if not to the extent we did. This event proved to be a huge success, even if it began with a vision and a lot of faith. Lead by getting out of the way and letting the self-motivated team create the future.

In our future installments, we will cover how this exercise translated at the site level, how the central team's efforts aligned with our strategy, how we obtained 100 certified reliability leaders (CRLs) and how to manage all these efforts.



George Williams, CRL, CMRP, is Associate Director, Asset Management, Global Services at Bristol-Myers Squibb Company (BMS). George has a MS in Reliability Engineering from Monash University and has worked at BMS for 15 years. He began his career at BMS as a maintenance technician and has held various roles of increasing responsibility.



Robert Bishop, CRL, CMRP, is a Maintenance Engineer at Bristol-Myers Squibb Company (BMS) in Syracuse, NY. Rob has an undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Rochester and a MS in Bioengineering from Syracuse University. Rob has worked for BMS for over nine years, supporting equipment in several roles. He is an early adopter and loves to improve systems and culture.



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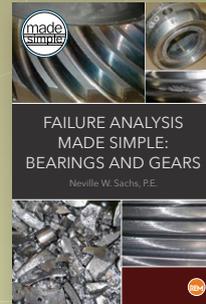
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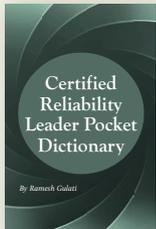
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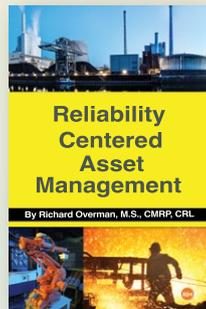
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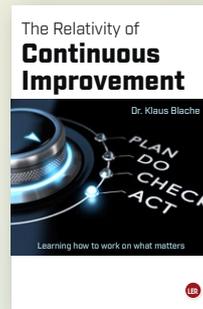
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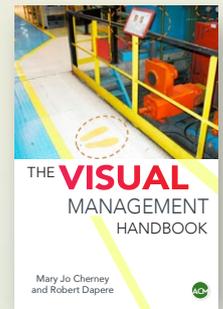
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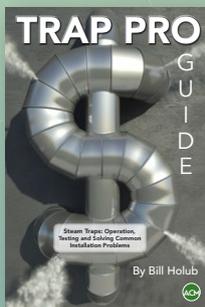


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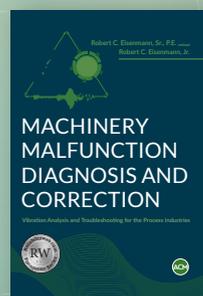


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