

# 6 WAYS TO HELP ELIMINATE UNSCHEDULED DOWNTIME



A surefire way to hurt a manufacturing company is through unscheduled downtime. Planned downtime is one thing, but unplanned disruptions in the production and delivery process can end up costing significant time and money — and that’s why finding ways to stop unscheduled downtime from happening is so important. Below, consider six of the top ways to prevent the delays and disruptions that slow processes down. To eliminate unscheduled downtime, here is what to do:

1. **Track Downtime Carefully:** It will be hard to do anything to prevent downtime when you don't even know when or how downtime is happening. So the first step toward reducing unexpected production stalls is carefully and accurately tracking what sort of downtime is occurring. Implement an automatic tracker that will detect downtime immediately and be able to alert you in real time to problems that have occurred. Then, figure out why each instance occurred. When you know that user errors are causing 70 percent of stalls, for example, you know what to prioritize in your efforts.
2. **Properly Train Employees:** User error is one of the top causes for problems in the production line. Someone might apply too much force to a component of the line or use some materials incorrectly, and that ends up making a machine break down. To prevent this from happening, it's imperative that companies properly train their employees to know how to use tools effectively. When you can rely on your team members to operate machines correctly, you can expect fewer operator-instigated slowdowns.
3. **Invite Employee Input:** Your employees work on the frontlines of production, so it is to your benefit to get them on the same page with you in reducing production stalls. Explain the problem with downtime and how it affects profits, and invite input on ways to better service machines, boost productivity, etc. Involving your staff members in the decision process helps them feel more

invested in your business and gives them an incentive to work toward the same goals.

4. **Implement a Regular Maintenance Schedule:** In busy factories, it's all too easy for regular maintenance to get neglected. The problem is that regular use takes a big toll on equipment, and so without proper maintenance, things are bound to shut down. To prevent this, practice regular, ongoing preventative maintenance strategies — everything from adding appropriate lubricants to clearing off dust accumulation is important for keeping machines from breaking down.
  
5. **Outsource Your Delivery/Shipment Service:** Nobody has to tell you that when disruptions occur, you need to react to them as quickly as possible in order to minimize the amount of time lost. Every hour without necessary replacement parts is an hour of productivity lost. Rather than wait on traditional shipping options to bring what you need, enlist the help of a local delivery service that can get replacement parts to the production floor quickly. Ideally you'll want a courier that has 24/7 availability, in order to minimize downtime as much as possible.

**6. Conduct Regular Evaluations and Set Specific Incentives:** Most companies conduct regular performance reviews, but you can make yours more powerful by including a discussion of downtime. Set specific company goals — daily and quarterly — for reducing errors and improving productivity. Then, offer incentives to employees who reach those goals. Motivated employees are much more productive employees, so offering real rewards benefits everybody.

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