A new approach to storage tank outages

DIGITAL DEPLOYMENT OF A STANDARDISED TANK OUTAGE WORK PROCESS COULD SPELL A NEW CHAPTER FOR STORAGE TANK MAINTENANCE, WRITES JOHN CAMP, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, EMEA, FOR AP-NETWORKS

Working with leading clients in the refining and petrochemical industries, Asset Performance Networks (AP-Networks) has witnessed a shift over the past 10 years toward a more structured approach to plant turnarounds and capital projects.

One area that has lagged, however, is tank outages, which are often seen by sites as a lesser priority. While this may seem to make sense economically, it has led to an industry-wide mismanagement of tank assets. For many tank outages, late engineering and material ordering, delays in permitting, and a general lack of urgency among team members are regular occurrences.

To close these gaps, AP-Networks has developed NaviTrack for Tank Outages, which pairs the company's industry-renowned work process deployment tool with a dedicated work process built for tank outages.

NaviTrack was developed by AP-Networks to turn a company's static work process into an interactive, daily-use tool. Since its introduction, NaviTrack has become the industry standard work process deployment tool, trusted at hundreds of facilities across the globe to strengthen planning, preparation, and performance. When a number of long-term AP-Networks clients realised the need for improved planning and structure in their storage tank outages, it was NaviTrack they hoped to employ.

CREATING A TANK OUTAGE PROCESS

A plan-to-plan work process, standard in turnarounds and capital projects, is used to govern and direct planning and preparation. These processes use a multi-phased approach and include milestones such as allocating resources to the turnaround team, developing scope, planning work packages, awarding contracts, and procuring materials.

Ultimately, these work processes lead plant teams through turnaround execution and any post-turnaround work or reports that must be filed. To help improve storage tank outage management, AP-Networks first needed to develop a standardised tank outage work process to be used on either a site or corporate basis.

While a traditional turnaround has a 3-5-year interval between events, tank outages are much more frequent. To address this, AP-Networks developed two complimentary work processes

An Annual Tank Process allows sites to manage the high-level strategies and long-range planning activities that govern the overall tank maintenance programme. To complement this, an Individual Tank Process includes approximately 100 activities to be completed beginning one year prior to a tank being out of service. This process ensures that work will be properly scoped, planned, resourced, and executed, allowing for more predictable and competitive outages.

Tank outage work processes

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ENSURING COMPLIANCE AND DRIVING PROGRESS

To ensure the successful implementation of this work process, AP-Networks added it to NaviTrack. This brought the tank outage work process into a digital environment, one where activities can be assigned to functional groups as well as individual team members. These team members are responsible for completing their activities in accordance with the work process and updating their progress within the NaviTrack tool, strengthening adherence to and compliance with the work process.

NaviTrack contains job aids and templates to guide team members, as well as built-in reports and benchmarking metrics that provide site and corporate leadership with an overall view of work process progress and compliance, updated in real time. Armed with this information, leadership can take corrective action in a timely manner.

NaviTrack for Tank Outages offers a path forward for tank maintenance.

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