

Delayed Calibration: A malaise or error?

Delayed Calibration: is a known but unattended pain in manufacturing sector

Most of the newspaper reported story around raids on retail and warehouses to check hoarding and correct measurement by legal metrology department highlighted that many organisations were caught napping when it comes to maintaining and keeping records of verification (Calibration) certificates.

I will start with few stories that have come across to me from various calibration lab managers, which may explain why concerns couldn't get calibration done on time.

1. Complex governance around cost/expenditure:

Legal Metrology department raided a manufacturing concern packaging department and found meters and weighing scale out of tolerance wrt product specification on packing's.

Result: Packaging department got sealed, an immediate cull on new batch manufacturing as it is likely to pile up processed product in front of packaging department, workers sitting without work.

Action: A order for calibration of instrument that has been going around through governance process had to be rushed now to whichever lab offer quickest turnover (obviously at much more cost).

2. Not well kept inventory of scales and measurement instruments

A manufacturing concern believes they have got all the instrument calibrated on time but during a surprise audit by ISO/Eggmark found few instrument in automated process flow with expired calibration certificate and to add to worse, the moisture and dirt around the installation has actually added more error then tolerance.

Result: A Warning issued, a timeline imposed, a report awaited, absence of which could lead to loss of certification thus bad publicity, reduced sales and at low prices.

Action: Plant manager who had taken over just few years back after retirement of earlier manager, was ignorant and felt that there may be many other such instruments, thus a survey across whole plant was conducted, all instruments used were collected and a list of these along with their location was prepared. All of these which were not calibrated were sent for calibration at shortest notice but at higher cost.

Another cause but before that let me clarify first, I am not questioning a premium on delayed calibration and believe laboratories are justified to take more charges as it may require overtime, overnight working and sacrificing other work priorities for this work. Although not told by anyone but a Nexus



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between corrupt customer stakeholders and calibration lab cannot be ruled out as well, since often on delayed calibration, lab charge more for the job thus laboratories earn more and may be sharing some from the extra earning with the customer stakeholders.

There may be many variant of these stories and many other different theme explaining the cause and reason for malaise of delayed calibration.

Delayed Calibration: A Curable sickness? How?

Solution is simple and one line: Keep your record updated and accessible to all from plant manager to machine supervisor.

Ideally an information system must be maintained centrally with access to all the departments, process functions. The information system must be accessible to all staff working in the plant, a simple work flow and reminder process should start prior to upcoming next calibration date.

Maintain a centralized repository of instrument inventory with key data elements

1. Purchased on,Purchased from
2. Make,Model,Serial Number
3. Location of installation
4. Least Count
5. Last Calibrated on,Next Calibration due date
6. Last Calibrated by,Latest Certificate
7. Optional
 - a. Possible history of certificates, Repair history
 - b. Keep a trend of Uncertainty Errors over the period from the date of purchase

SCC Asset management:

SCC can offer a smaller subset of its calibration LIMS (just instrument inventory) and its related workflow (with automatic reminder and supplier management, quotation matching) as hosted solution on software as service basis (depending upon number of instruments kept in inventory managed within the product).

Please ask for Quotation

SmartCalibration LIMS:

For manufacturing concerns with captive calibration laboratories, SCC offer more breadth around SmartCalibration LIMS which includes QMS and CAPA minus commercial module as hosted solution on software as service basis depending upon number of users (Please ask for quotation).



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Delayed Calibration in manufacturing: Partnering opportunities for calibration labs

Earlier I used a word Nexus in negative sense, but this subject is just opposite of it , how calibration laboratories can help manufacturing sector in ensuring that their customers are never short of ideas and prior notifications. This will help them in return as it increases the probability of customer retention.

The calibration laboratory that have serviced the manufacturing concern have all the record that has been documented in earlier section (they are required to keep these record as per ISO:17025). Thus if calibration laboratory extend the access to their internal information system with (some restrictions obviously), they would not require to spend money in maintaining and developing a information system for use within the plant. They would get information ready in hand any time they desire also a flexibility of retrieving calibration (verification) certificate quickly on demand from laboratory maintained information system (without any extra charge). Laboratory is not spending anything in addition to keep the record as they are required to maintain records for a period defined by ISO:17025. In return, they are assured of business from the customer next time which implies reduced cost of sale, trusted relationship, dependable allies.

SCC Solution: SmartCalibration LIMS

SCC offer Lab Information Management System for Calibration Laboratories (SmartCalibration LIMS) that not only assures paperless calibration laboratories but if they wish, they can extend access to their stakeholders in their customer organization (for read access only). Application is designed to restrict the view of customer login only to customer related modules ie. They won't be able to look beyond projects of theirs and calibration records of other customers; they would also not be able to access commercial module that is integrated within the SmartCalibration LIMS.

Trigger and Reference : <http://paper.hindustantimes.com/epaper/viewer.aspx>



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