

How a Modern CMMS Digitally Transformed Facilities Management for Wisconsin State Fair



Migrating from spreadsheets to a comprehensive technology platform can seem like a daunting task. When you've been operating the same way for decades, it's easy to view potential changes as too difficult to navigate and too costly to even think about.

But what about the cost of *not* making that change? How much are you losing by needing to replace assets sooner than necessary, or calling in emergency repairs, when those assets could be flagged earlier for preventative maintenance? How about wasted labor hours from inefficient prioritization and doing things manually on pen and paper?

The Wisconsin State Fair (WSF) made this transition, significantly improving its facilities management by implementing a modern, cloud-based Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) to streamline asset tracking and maintenance planning. Previously relying on spreadsheets and physical binders, WSF faced challenges managing preventive maintenance schedules across its large, seasonal property, especially during peak periods when uptime is critical. The new CMMS solution provided a centralized database, enabling proactive maintenance and greater asset inventory visibility. With this CMMS, WSF has gained real-time oversight of asset conditions. This centralized approach has allowed the facilities team to address issues before they escalate, enhancing overall operational efficiency. Automated maintenance schedules have replaced reactive, manual processes, which reduce maintenance costs and downtime.

The Value of CMMS in Modern Facilities Management

Among the most significant benefits of transitioning to a CMMS is cost savings through preventive maintenance, which enables a **shift from reactive to proactive upkeep**. Research from Forrester indicates that preventive maintenance via CMMS can lead to **savings of up to \$1.6 million over three years by reducing equipment failures, extending asset lifespans, and cutting down on emergency**

repairs. These strategies help organizations avoid the costly cycle of reactive fixes, offering both financial and operational stability.

A CMMS also extends asset lifespans, thereby lowering capital replacement costs. By ensuring regular, proactive maintenance, a CMMS maximizes equipment utility and ROI, according to maintenance industry experts. Beyond prolonging equipment life, CMMS platforms improve labor productivity by optimizing task scheduling, and automating time-consuming processes like work orders and inventory tracking. These efficiencies can reduce overtime costs and administrative burdens, helping facilities teams focus on high-value tasks while lowering operational expenses.

Additionally, CMMS platforms enhance inventory and warranty management, energy savings, and data-driven decision-making. Improved inventory tracking and warranty oversight help avoid unnecessary expenses and keep stock at optimal levels, while automated controls of systems like HVAC and lighting reduce energy costs. Together, these features make a CMMS a powerful tool for facilities management, driving both operational efficiency and financial savings.

Facilities Management Challenges Before CMMS Implementation

The WSF facilities team faced a unique challenge: managing a large real estate footprint with hundreds of assets while operating in a high-stakes, seasonal environment. Each year, the park must prepare itself for significant foot traffic, ensuring all facilities, assets, and amenities are in optimal condition.

For years, WSF's facilities management depended on spreadsheet-based tracking for maintenance requests, asset lists, and work order management. However, as the size of the real estate footprint grew and the volume of assets increased, this manual approach revealed its limitations:

1. **Fragmented Maintenance Tracking**
2. **Difficulty Adapting to Seasonal Demands**
3. **Challenges in Managing Large Asset Inventories**
4. **Revenue Loss from Unplanned Downtime**

These inefficiencies resulted in a reactive rather than a proactive approach to maintenance, which ultimately limited WSF's operational efficiency and revenue potential.

The Solution: Partnering with Vytal Assets for Digital Transformation

To overcome these obstacles, WSF partnered with Vytal Assets to make the transition to a CMMS platform. The partnership centered on a phased onboarding process to move WSF's extensive inventory of assets and maintenance records from spreadsheets and physical binders to a digital, centralized system. The goal was to simplify data organization, improve tracking, and enable a preventive maintenance model.

The Onboarding Process

The onboarding process, designed in collaboration with Vytal Assets, focused on organizing WSF's disparate data sources for a smooth transition to digital asset management:

- **Data Consolidation:** WSF's data was scattered across spreadsheets, physical binders, and legacy databases. The Vytal onboarding team worked closely with WSF to clean, organize, and import all existing asset and maintenance data into the new CMMS.
- **User-Friendly Training and Support:** Vytal Assets provided comprehensive training for the WSF facilities team, ensuring they were equipped to use the CMMS effectively for tracking assets, scheduling maintenance, and generating real-time reports.

Over the course of just a few weeks, Wisconsin State Fair was able to effectively navigate the learning curve of digital transformation, positioning itself to be fully prepared heading into its high-revenue season.

Expanding Digital Transformation Across Facilities Management

Wisconsin State Fair's experience underscores the value of transitioning from manual to digital facilities management, proving that CMMS can turn a once-fragmented system into a cohesive, organized platform that drives efficiency, cost savings, and improved asset performance. As WSF looks forward to future fair seasons, it is equipped with the tools and insights needed to optimize its operations.

Facilities management leaders facing similar challenges can draw valuable lessons from WSF's approach, underscoring that the upfront investment in a CMMS platform yields long-term returns by extending asset life, improving operations, and streamlining workflows. Vytal Assets' CMMS solution empowers organizations like the Wisconsin State Fair to move from "nothing to something," enabling a future where facility management becomes an essential driver of strategic success.

About Wisconsin State Fair Park

Wisconsin State Fair Park, located in West Allis, Wisconsin, has hosted the state fair since 1892, becoming a key cultural hub in the Midwest. Originally purchased by the Wisconsin Agricultural Society, the site spans nearly 100 acres and has a rich history as a gathering point for both agricultural showcases and national events. Beyond the fair, Wisconsin State Fair Park has contributed to various sports and entertainment events. It is home to the historic Milwaukee Mile, recognized as the world's oldest operating motor speedway, and the Pettit National Ice Center, an Olympic training facility. Today, the park remains central to Wisconsin's cultural and community life. Its facilities include exhibition spaces, an RV park, and various pavilions