

Maintenance Genetics

By Joel Levitt

I want to spend a few moments exploring some of the more elemental aspects of maintenance management life. There has been a tremendous amount of work done on human genetics. In fact in the last few years the entire Human Genome has been described. The effort took years and billions of computer steps.



All this research has been to good effect for we have solved the fundamental problem faced by managers of maintenance workers since the time of the pyramids. We finally have broken the mystery of what makes maintenance people tick.

It turns out, that as we suspected, the solution is in those small bits of life deep inside our bodies called genes. We don't know definitively if the plight of the maintenance manager is entirely due to genetics. More research is clearly needed. It is the eternal question of nature (genetics) verses nurture (upbringing). Many people believe that people with the maintenance anomalies coupled with the wrong upbringing end up as drifters or traveling salespeople and never realize their potential.

Genetics of maintenance workers

There are five genetic anomalies noticed in maintenance workers. In fact most maintenance workers have three or more anomalies and some people have all five. Of course people in other fields may have some of the anomalies too.

Pissing and Moaning gene: Maintenance people are never satisfied. They are perpetually looking around in the environment for examples to support their basic dissatisfaction. Of course, this makes them great maintenance people. How is this so? A maintenance person can walk by a row of pumps and detect to one with the burned bearing. Remember they are looking around in the environment for problems. They are dissatisfied and want some reasons. A maintenance career provides those reasons every day. A dissatisfied maintenance worker in a maintenance environment is happy!

Packrat gene: Maintenance people can't throw things away. It's bad enough that they have filled their garage (never room for the car), basement at home their collection is at risk of taking over the whole maintenance shop. If there is a question about this take a look around the shop. Are there rat holes with old stuff in them? Is the stockroom a mess? If so, then this gene is the culprit. Of course the contents of these rat holes have saved the manager's posterior more than once.

Toy gene: Oh I mean the tool gene. How silly of me to get mixed up. Do your maintenance people spend half their income with the Snap-on guy? Are their kids starving because they are saving for the newest and best toys, I mean tools? When they were kids did they always want the humongous Erector sets (pre Lego). If you notice this then they are plagued with the Toy gene. Of course, when you need the specific tool you're happy to have it since it might have saved a half a day! Some people think this is sex linked, it isn't. My wife has this gene and it shows up in sewing machine stuff, fabric and fashion magazines!

Independence gene: Getting maintenance folks going the same direction is a lot like herding cats. Each one has an opinion and is convinced theirs is the best. It makes great maintenance guys because they will say what's so about whatever you ask but boy is it difficult to deal with day to day. The really independent ones must have gotten a double shot of this gene.

Dirt gene: This gene is expressed in some maintenance people by them being dirty even right after they come in. Somehow their skin and clothes attracts dirt and grease from the atmosphere. Not every maintenance person has it but you can tell the ones that do. I thought everyone had it until I worked side by side with an electrician. We did the same work but at the end of the day I was covered with dirt and he wasn't. I must have a double shot of that one.

I hope this has given you some insight into the maintenance personality. As we have shown it's really not their fault. So give them a break to day and buy some cool tools.

Joel Levitt, Director International Projects JLEVITT@LCE.COM
Life Cycle Engineering | 4360 Corporate Road Office | Charleston, SC 29405
843.744.7110
Mobile +1-267-254-0061
www.LCE.com