

How a Leading Hospital Avoided a Catastrophic Shutdown of Operations



The current market disruption caused by tariffs and supply chain uncertainties underscores the need for preventive maintenance, business continuity planning, and sourcing innovation. This 2022 case study illustrates how a leading healthcare institution prevented a catastrophic shutdown of operations and realized 36% savings over a bid from the equipment manufacturer (OEM).

The Challenge



- A routine winter preventive maintenance check on chiller plant equipment revealed that the controls and frequency drive were not working and needed replacement.
- The equipment was obsolete and no longer supported by the OEM, which submitted a replacement estimate of \$150,000.
- The manufacturer estimated a six-to eight-month lead time due to pandemic-era supply chain delays, without a guaranteed delivery date.
- The second backup chiller was undersized and would not handle the full cooling load.
- As a result, the hospital was in dire straits to get the chiller fixed and running before the cooling season. Failure to do so could result in the need to reschedule or reroute surgeries and relocate patients when outside temperatures reach 80 degrees or higher.

In Search of a Solution



- PremiStar's senior sales engineer, Chuck Caporale, had developed close ties with the hospital's facilities management team over a 20-year relationship. In March, he quickly sprang into action.
- Chuck and his team identified an alternative solution for removing the OEM controls and retrofitting the chiller with a custom solution from a manufacturer in Florida. Unfortunately, four weeks after the order was placed, the vendor could not source the frequency drive in time, and the order was canceled.
- With the clock running, PremiStar found an alternative supplier for the frequency drive in Montana and got the machine completely retrofitted and up and running for the hospital ahead of the cooling season.

The Solution



- The final solution, delivered in six weeks instead of the uncertain six-to-eight-month delivery time by the OEM, enabled the hospital to avoid putting patients at risk.
- The total cost was 36% less expensive than the OEM estimate.
- PremiStar teams take great pride in partnering with customers to build long-term relationships by delivering responsive service and cost-effective solutions.

Key Takeaways



Caporale summarized lessons learned for facilities managers concerned about preventing downtime in the current environment, where tariffs and other factors are causing supply chain delays and cost escalations. He cited three key takeaways:

- This underscores the need for a trusted partner to perform comprehensive preventive maintenance on critical facilities' assets.
- Many facilities rely on HVAC equipment that is beyond end-of-life. If the equipment is maintained correctly and in good running condition, you can delay replacement and avoid unexpected capital expense. Ensuring you have an inventory of spare parts and controls for backup is critical.
- It is essential to work with an HVAC service provider with a depth of technical expertise, extensive supply chain relationships, and a proven track record of responsive support.

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