CASE STUDY

Graceland Fruit Cultivates Efficiency and Data-Driven Decisions with Asset Essentials, Boosting Work Order Completion by 14% and Inventory Accuracy by 20%

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Graceland Fruit, a global leader in infused dried fruit processing with approximately $100 million in annual revenue, operates two large facilities in Michigan. For years, the company faced the common challenge of managing maintenance operations with a system not designed for technicians. Their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, while robust for financial and inventory control, proved cumbersome and inefficient for the maintenance team, resulting in low adoption, data inaccuracies, and a predominantly reactive maintenance approach. This created significant operational bottlenecks and financial discrepancies, particularly concerning MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Operations) inventory.

CHALLENGE

Overcoming an ERP-Centric Maintenance System

Max Swanson, Maintenance and Repair Operations Manager at Graceland Fruit, recounts that before implementing Asset Essentials, the company "previously operated under the ERP." Swanson explains, "We were able to use it. However, it didn't provide any fast action on data reporting. It was very cumbersome for the maintenance technicians to manage." Technicians who "don't want to deal with software" found themselves queued up at desktop computers to enter data, resulting in lost productivity and frustration.

John Murray, Graceland's fractional CIO, elaborated on the ERP's limitations: "The ERP system has a little functionality for Maintenance, Repair & Operations (MRO). It's more for accounting, not for actually fixing things and running repair programs." This disconnect led to discrepancies in inventory. Swanson further explained that the finance team would question why ERP inventory levels continued to grow without corresponding consumption.

The company's maintenance philosophy was largely reactive, with minimal preventive measures. Max's goal was to shift towards an 80% preventive to a 20% reactive split, but the existing ERP system made this difficult to achieve. Moreover, extracting data for industry-standard maintenance KPIs required manual calculation via Excel pivot tables, a time-consuming and inefficient process.

Graceland Fruit
EXCEPTIONAL INGREDIENTS

Customer: Graceland Fruit
Max Swanson, Maintenance and Repair Operations Manager

Vitals: A producer and global distributor of dried fruit ingredients with two plants.

- Total facility size: Approximately 200,000 square feet (100,000 sq ft per plant).
- Operations: Runs 24/7, 360 days a year for primary production lines.
- Revenue: Approximately $100 million annually.
- Maintenance team: 26 individuals

Results: Leveraging Asset Essentials, Graceland Fruit has:

- Realized a 14% increase in work order completion rate YoY.
- Increased preventive maintenance (PM) by 17%.
- Enhanced inventory accuracy by 20% YoY.
- Optimized labor by saving over 80 hours per week in administrative duties for technicians.
- Achieved universal adoption of mobile devices for work orders and inventory, eliminating queues at desktop computers.
- Accomplished smooth implementation and integration with the existing ERP system (DECOM) within six months.

SOLUTION

Finding the Right Partners

Recognizing the need for a specialized solution, Swanson and Murray embarked on a search for dedicated maintenance software. They evaluated three vendors, ultimately choosing Asset Essentials. A key deciding factor was Asset Essentials' user-friendliness and mobile capabilities. Max emphasized the need for a system that could be successfully used by "an old soul technician, with big buttons and an intuitive layout." Swanson found that the mobile-friendly solution, which allowed technicians to use tablets or mobile phones, was a godsend.

The implementation process was lauded by both Swanson and Murray. With 25 years of CIO experience, Murray noted that "the implementation team was first class all the way," understanding their requirements and handling complex integration needs.

A critical step was addressing Graceland's poor historical data. Murray, foreseeing a potential heart attack for the sales team, insisted on a robust data gathering plan. Our team quickly provided a solution: partnering with Bureau Veritas North America (BVNA) for a comprehensive Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) and data scrubbing.

Swanson described the BVNA process as a "learning event." Although initially unprepared for the intensity, his team worked side by side with BVNA around the clock for four days on-site to document every piece of equipment. This meticulous process allowed them to establish consistent naming conventions and to determine what they wanted to capture and how they wanted it to look. This effort not only streamlined maintenance data but also provided the finance organization with a well-organized, categorized, and ranked set of assets, simplifying depreciation schedules.

Mobile Improves Efficiency for Technicians and Production Staff

Mobile functionality, including barcode scanning for parts and QR codes for equipment, revolutionized the technician's workflow. "Everybody was queued up at desktop computers before; now, each one of those guys has their own device, eliminating bottlenecks," says Murray. With mobile, technicians can pull up the camera app, scan the barcode, and complete their work order.

Production staff and other requesters can now easily submit work orders via the mobile app, scan QR codes on equipment, take pictures, and write quick descriptions. This ease of use led to an initial surge in incoming jobs, which Murray viewed as a good thing — a clear indication that previously unaddressed issues were now being captured.

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Transformative Impact: Numbers and Outcomes

The implementation of Asset Essentials, completed within six months across its two production operations sites, brought about significant quantitative and qualitative improvements:

- Graceland Fruit saw an average **0.6% improvement in unplanned downtime.** While seemingly small, this is a critical gain in a 24/7 production environment where every minute counts.
- The work order completion rate dramatically increased by **14% in just one year, from 43% in 2025 to 57% in 2026.** This indicates a more responsive and effective maintenance operation.
- The ratio of preventive to reactive maintenance improved by **17% in one year.** This shift demonstrates a successful transition towards a more strategic and cost-effective maintenance strategy.
- Inventory accuracy surged from approximately **75% in 2025 to 95%** in 2026, eliminating financial surprises and ensuring technicians have the right parts when needed.
- Technicians gained more than **80 hours per week** by eliminating manual data entry and waiting times at computers. This time is now reallocated to PM and repair tasks, which directly contribute to increased productivity.

Looking Forward

Graceland Fruit is still scratching the surface of Asset Essentials' capabilities, but the foundation for continuous improvement is firmly in place. The company aims to move towards predictive maintenance to further optimize its operations. John Murray and Max Swanson both emphasized the quality of the Asset Management Software and, equally important, the first-class support team. As Swanson succinctly put it, "I haven't seen a better one out there for what we do. I would tell everybody to get on board."

Graceland Fruit's journey with Asset Essentials exemplifies how a strategic investment in specialized maintenance software can transform operations, empower teams, and drive significant, measurable improvements across an organization.

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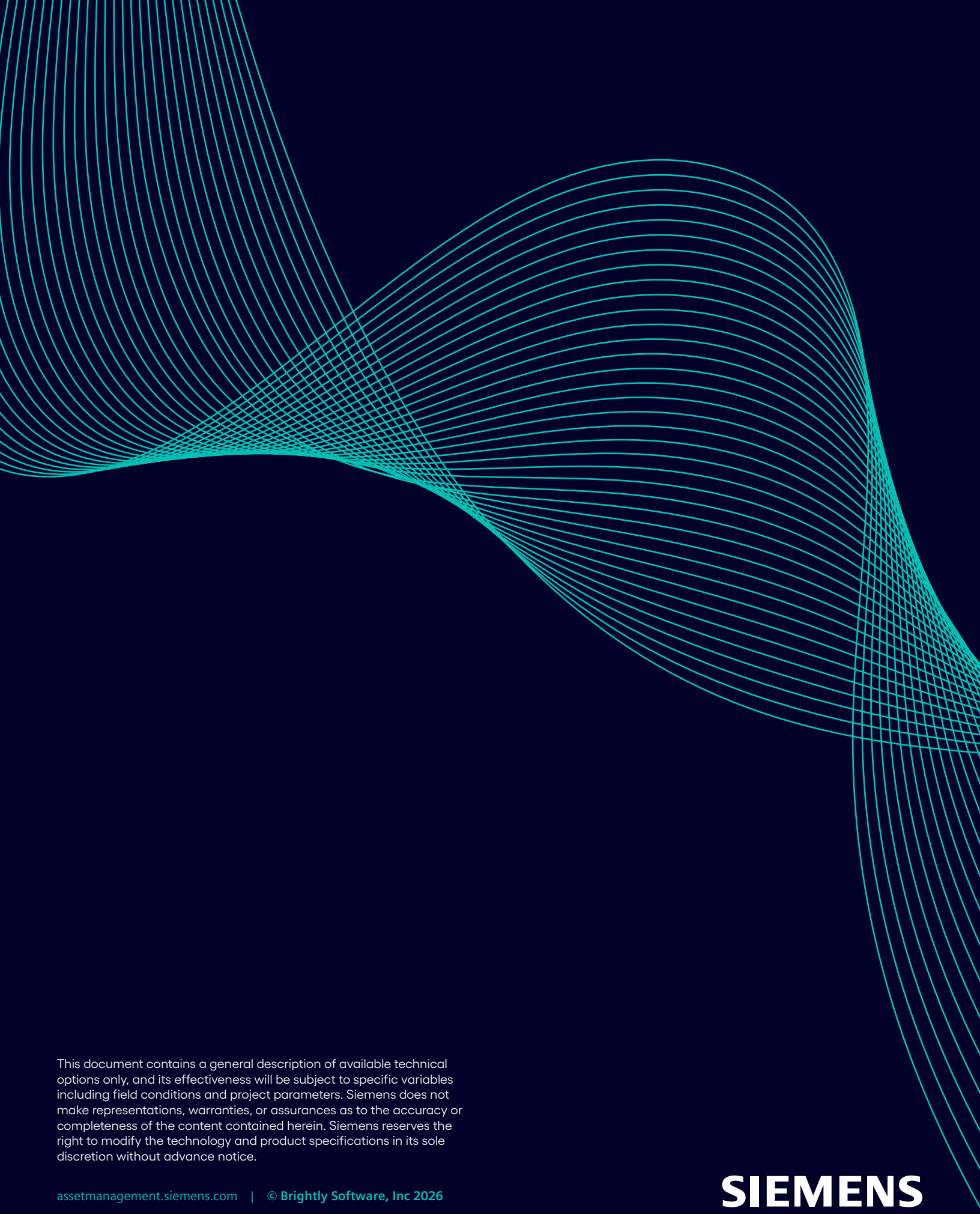
> — **Max Swanson,** Maintenance and Repair Operations Manager at Graceland Fruit



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