

MINING

REVIEW AFRICA

AUSTRALIAN MINERS IN AFRICA RESILIENT, AS ALWAYS

P18

we are one
**Sibanye
Stillwater**

defining stakeholder
engagement with the Good
Neighbor Agreement in Montana P4

IN THE SPOTLIGHT P8

SPECIAL FEATURE P38



“If you mine responsibly, you can change the destiny of a whole town.”

Marna Cloete, President, Ivanhoe Mines

TRANSFORMATION IN MINING



↑ FRONT COVER

2020 marks a significant milestone achievement for Sibanye-Stillwater’s Montana, US-based PGM mining operations, the East Boulder and Stillwater mines and Columbus processing facility as it marks 20 years since the Good Neighbor Agreement was signed **P4**

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Conveyor service contracts

Reduce downtime and operating cost



Maintenance contracts can save a lot of downtime

By Daniel Marshall, Product Engineer, Martin Engineering

Mining operators are increasingly turning to outside contractors to take advantage of consistent maintenance schedules and expert service. Conducted by experienced and well-trained technicians, these contracts have been found to improve safety and control costs.

Specialty contracting may be a better choice for service than internal resources, since the providers are fully trained on the newest equipment designs and safety procedures. Also, in many cases, they may be able to secure replacement equipment much faster during unscheduled downtime due to their industry-wide contacts.

Performance problems with conveyor components and systems can frequently be traced to improper installation or insufficient maintenance. In addition, serious performance problems stem from a lack of proper maintenance. Using a specialty contractor results in less unscheduled downtime, which saves money and reduces injuries in the long run.

The time and resources required to train employees on equipment and certify them to conduct certain procedures can be a significant ongoing expense. In contrast, specialty contractors must be experienced, knowledgeable and certified to conduct the appointed maintenance and it's up to the contracted company to retain and train that staff.

Due to a greater emphasis on safety and the expensive consequences of unscheduled downtime, mining companies are being more meticulous about conveyor operation and maintenance. This increased

scrutiny includes regular cleaning of spillage, improved dust control, and additional monitoring and maintenance – exposing employees to a moving system more often.

An experienced maintenance contractor recognises these problems and may present solutions that internal resources have overlooked. The improvements are designed to reduce employee exposure, improve workplace safety and maximise productivity.

Maintenance programmes differ by provider and may be customisable to suit individual customers, but they generally fall into three categories: Inspection/report, cleaning/servicing and full service.

A scheduled inspection and report contract sends a specialty contractor to thoroughly examine a system and identify potential issues. A report is produced that presents findings and offers solutions.

A full service and maintenance contract sends in trained technicians who take accountability for monitoring, maintaining and reporting on every level of system function. This provides operators with cost certainty, making it easier to project and manage the cost of operation.

Maintenance service contracts deliver the best return on investment (ROI) through a series of factors including:

- Compliance: The contractor points

out compliance issues and offers solutions prior to expensive fines and violations.

- Efficiency: Maintenance service contracts focus on improving and sustaining uptime with the least capital investment possible.
- Cost of operation: With a defined scope of work on a set budget, along with clear reporting and recommendations on pending needs, operators can better forecast improvements and control labour costs, further improving ROI over time.

Remember, maintenance service contracts are not just a way of controlling and potentially reducing the cost of operation; they are also a safety mechanism. If the criteria of compliance, cost savings and efficiency are met, then a maintenance service contract has provided a tenable ongoing solution. **MRA**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Marshall joined Martin Engineering in 2000. He has been instrumental in the design and development of transfer point accessories, conveyor components and safety products.

