

Manual Control, Process Automation – or Operational Performance Excellence? What is the difference?

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The mining industry uses many types of mineral and metallurgical plants to produce saleable product from ore mined. Plant design history has left current operations with a mixture of manual operation and various forms of automated process controls. Consequently, we typically see high variability in the continuous operations together with a shortfall in the attainment of full capacity, or higher utilization of consumables.

At a level of best practice, 'Operational Performance Excellence' focuses on *process control*, using automation and control systems to deliver process optimisation. This more sophisticated delivery is a great deal more difficult than the first stage of equipment selection / installation. It includes the appropriate selection of the right instrumentation, control system, key process knowledge, individuals with a solid control engineering background / experience, and the essential backing / support of the operations management team together leading to higher value delivery. Robust solutions can be realised, considerably minimising process variation, thus leading to process optimisation. This approach results in an easier, efficient and safer process while providing considerable returns for the plant owners.

How variable are your processes, and do you maintain optimised process performance with dedicated resources, modern instrumentation, 'best practice' control systems and performance monitoring tools? In this lecture, these questions and their possible answers are discussed.

* XPS (www.xps.ca) is an autonomous, consulting and testwork business providing specialist technical services to the global mining and minerals industry through five key discipline areas: 1) Process Mineralogy; 2) Extractive Metallurgy; 3) Process Control; 4) Materials Technology and 5) Plant Support. Contact XPS through: info@xps.ca

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