

The electromechanical repair sector has never been more important

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As a year marked by severe supply chain pressures draws to a close, and with few signs of relief as 2026 approaches, Thomas Marks, General Manager of the [Association of Electrical and Mechanical Trades](#), argues that the electromechanical repair sector is more vital than ever.

Today, perhaps more than ever, the smartest way to keep industry moving is to fix more and replace less. Trade tensions, political uncertainty, limited materials and unpredictable freight costs have made new equipment harder to source, slower to arrive and more expensive. In this climate, electromechanical repair is not a short-term fix; it is the essential infrastructure that keeps factories, utilities and transport systems running when supply chains falter.

The pressures are wide-ranging and persistent. Shipping routes through the Red Sea remain disrupted, with freight rates and delivery times fluctuating sharply. Tariffs add further complications, driving up costs and delaying orders for motors, drives, pumps and gearboxes. At the same time, supply of key materials such as copper, electrical steels and rare-earth magnets remains tight, with China still dominating refining and magnet production. For asset managers, that means relying entirely on new equipment has become a risky strategy.

Meanwhile, uncertain economic conditions and stretched capital budgets make new investment slower and more complex. The practical alternative is to get more life and performance from what already exists - by restoring, upgrading and recommissioning assets rather than replacing them outright.

This is where the electromechanical repair sector comes into its own. Skilled repair engineers can return failed equipment to service quickly through motor rewinds, gearbox rebuilds, pump refurbishments, on-site

machining and drive retrofits that recover efficiency and improve process control. These interventions remove the delays and costs tied to international shipping or component availability.

The financial argument is strong. Siemens' True Cost of Downtime study found large manufacturers now lose around 11% of annual revenue to unplanned stoppages – worth millions of dollars per hour in some sectors. A rapid repair that cuts downtime by even a few hours protects revenue, output and customer commitments.

But the case for repair goes beyond money. Unplanned stoppages disrupt supply, strain workforces and carry environmental costs. Scrapping and replacing large assets consumes materials and energy, while a well-executed repair restores efficiency and reliability with a far smaller footprint.

Repair has also become more strategic. The best repair houses do not simply return equipment to its original state; they engineer out weaknesses, upgrade components and adapt assets for their actual operating conditions. Improved insulation, higher-grade alloys and variable-speed drive retrofits all reduce future failures and lessen dependence on long global supply chains.

A high-quality repair can also buy valuable time. When a critical pump or motor fails, the ideal new unit may have a months-long lead time. Repairing the existing unit allows production to continue while a replacement is specified correctly and scheduled for installation during planned maintenance, rather than in crisis.

Transport unpredictability reinforces the point. With shipping capacity and routes still uncertain, local repair that is supported by nearby workshops and test facilities puts control back in the operator's hands and avoids costly logistics delays.

New equipment will always have its place when efficiency gains or safety requirements demand it. But with tariffs, material shortages and freight disruption distorting costs and schedules, the return on repair and retrofit is stronger than ever.

The benefits extend well beyond individual sites. Keeping water pumping stations, rail networks and energy systems running protects communities and economies alike. When engineering teams restore critical assets quickly, they deliver resilience in its most practical form.

For asset owners, the lesson is straightforward: build repair into resilience planning, pre-qualify partners, and treat every repair as a chance to upgrade. Combine this with good monitoring to catch problems early and track the results in hours saved, waste avoided, and emissions reduced.

In a year when global supply remained uncertain, electromechanical repair turned unpredictability into uptime. It strengthened resilience, protected budgets and supported sustainability. Repair has always mattered, but I believe that today it matters more than ever.