FMBusinessDaily

Repair, Resilience and Responsibility: Why Decisions Around Rotating Equipment are Changing

2 months ago

Thomas Marks, Director General at The Association of Electrical and Mechanical Trades, outlines the changing drivers behind repair versus replace decisions and explains how the Association is evolving to meet them.

At the start of a new year, it's tempting to focus on plans and priorities. But as we move through 2026, it feels more useful to pause and look at what is actually changing around us – and how those changes are influencing everyday decisions about rotating electrical equipment.

If you are responsible for motors, generators, or driven assets, much of this will already sound familiar. Supply chains remain unpredictable. Lead times are longer than they used to be. Prices move around. Energy costs are still volatile. At the same time, sustainability expectations continue to rise, often without much practical guidance on how to balance environmental responsibility with reliability and performance.

What is striking is that many of these pressures are pushing in the same direction. The focus has shifted from optimisation to simply making sure existing assets keep running.

Not long ago, repair was often seen mainly as a cost-saving exercise. A sensible fallback when budgets were tight or replacement wasn't readily available. That view is changing. Increasingly, repair and overhaul are becoming strategic decisions – tied to resilience, availability, and long-term risk, not just cost.

Geopolitics plays a part in this, even if it feels far removed from the workshop floor. Trade tensions, regional instability and changing industrial policy all affect how quickly new equipment can be sourced,

and at what price. Motors that once arrived in weeks can now take months. Specifications change. Supply routes shift. In that context, keeping existing assets in good condition is often the most reliable option available.

Alongside this, the sustainability conversation is maturing. The emphasis is moving away from broad commitments and towards evidence. Engineers, asset managers and procurement teams are being asked to justify decisions more clearly – energy performance, lifecycle impact, carbon considerations. The question is no longer just “is this greener?”, but “can we show that this was the right decision?”

This is where repair, done properly, has a strong case. Extending the life of existing equipment avoids the emissions associated with manufacturing and transport. It preserves materials and embedded energy. But those benefits only hold if the repair itself is carried out to a high standard, with the right controls, testing, and documentation in place. That brings Standards, and how they are applied in the real World into sharper focus.

Over the past year, one thing has stood out to me when reviewing industry award entries and site-based case studies. The strongest examples are not the most complicated or the most expensive. They are the ones where good practice is embedded as part of everyday work – clear procedures, competent people, and a willingness to invest in doing the job properly.

This is exactly the area that the AEMT’s newly launched verification scheme is designed to address.

The AEMT Codes of Practice set out what good looks like across quality, expertise, integrity, sustainability, and safety. Verification goes a step further. It involves an independent, onsite review of a service facility to confirm that those principles are genuinely embedded – not just written down, but applied in day-to-day operations.

For users of rotating electrical equipment, this matters. Verification provides reassurance that a repair partner has been assessed against agreed industry expectations. It supports more informed decision-making. And it helps create a clearer distinction between facilities that are working towards good practice, those that are compliant, and those that have chosen to have that compliance independently verified.

Across the sector, I see a quiet shift taking place. Repair and overhaul are moving from being reactive responses to failure, to proactive tools within asset strategy. With that shift comes higher expectations – and rightly so. From the AEMT’s point of view, our role is to support that direction of travel. Verification is not about policing the industry. It is about raising confidence – for end-users, for engineers, and for those making long-term asset decisions.

Looking ahead, the organisations that will fare best are likely to be those that treat uncertainty as a prompt to make better, more considered choices, rather than something to react to at the last minute.

Repair, resilience and responsibility are becoming closely linked. For an industry built on practical engineering and long-term thinking, that feels like a sensible place to be.