



# NEWSLETTER

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## Sharpen your Ax!

By Coy Stepro

At a seminar last fall, I heard a “new to me” quote from Abraham Lincoln -- *“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I’ll spend the first four sharpening the ax”*. Wow, talk about saying a lot by saying little.

At SAS we often have tight timelines for projects and service jobs. When a customer calls needing quick response, we don’t always have time to “sharpen the ax” before leaving on a job. So, we take the approach to stay ready, so you don’t have to get ready. That means equipment issues are addressed pro-actively, and well before the call. Our service truck is stocked and always on standby. Tools cannot be taken from



the truck to be used in the shop because inevitably someone will forget to put it back and we will be onsite, empty handed. We advise our customers in general industry and those in the airline sector to have this same “stay ready” approach. The stand pictured above is primarily used to unload large bulky items into and out of the aircraft (like seats).

Integrated into this stand are several mechanical systems -- cables, sheaves, winch, screw jacks, air limit switches, sliding gates, casters, jacks, gear boxes, bumpers, safety decals, operational decals, hinges, air hoses, and more. Now, which one of those items listed do you consider not that important? Which one of those can be at 50% and still function okay? **(continued on next page)**

## Reasons MROs lose efficiency

One major factor is **poor planning and scheduling**. Aircraft often arrive with additional discrepancies beyond the original work scope. When labor, tooling, and materials are not aligned with updated findings, turnaround times quickly expand.

**Parts availability** is critical. Supply chain disruptions, backordered components, or poor inventory visibility can halt work entirely. In Aircraft-on-Ground (AOG) situations, even minor parts delays significantly impact productivity .

**Workforce shortages and skill gaps** continue to strain the industry. A limited pool of licensed technicians and inspectors, combined with aging fleets that require more intensive maintenance, reduces throughput.

**Facility layout and tool control** also affect performance. Long walking distances, congested hangar space, and poorly organized tooling waste valuable labor hours.

Finally, **regulatory and documentation requirements** under authorities such as the Federal Aviation Administration add complexity. While compliance is essential, manual processes and poorly integrated digital systems can create bottlenecks and duplicate work.

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# Sharpen your ax for efficiency

Like people, these systems can endure some overwork, abuse, damage and exposure to the elements. But left ongoing, with no restoration or recharging, you eventually end up with a stand that is unreliable, or mediocre at best.

Why is this acceptable? “You know, we can’t get the money to fix things, we just replace them.” We’ve all heard similar statements. And that may be acceptable on smaller cost items. Often, it’s not worth the labor expense to try to install new parts. Just replace the whole thing. But using a mediocre piece of equipment on a daily basis becomes “pulling teeth” at the cost of efficiency and the morale of your crew. Everyone knows more output is attained when we enjoy what we are doing versus fighting tooth and nail to get a piece of equipment to work.

GSE managers have thin crews and talent is retiring every day. Keeping up with the demand for equipment maintenance involves a never-ending set of smaller scale jobs, like replacing bumpers as they harden from sunlight damage, or replacing casters with missing tread or locks.

Fixing a jammed slider or two can be a pain, but it is achievable. However, fixing 6 sliders, 18 bumpers, and 4 casters basically puts that stand out of service, and now you have a big task requiring several days and several technicians’ undivided attention. More than likely, their reality is they can’t just focus on that one large task so it will drag on for a month as they put out other daily fires.

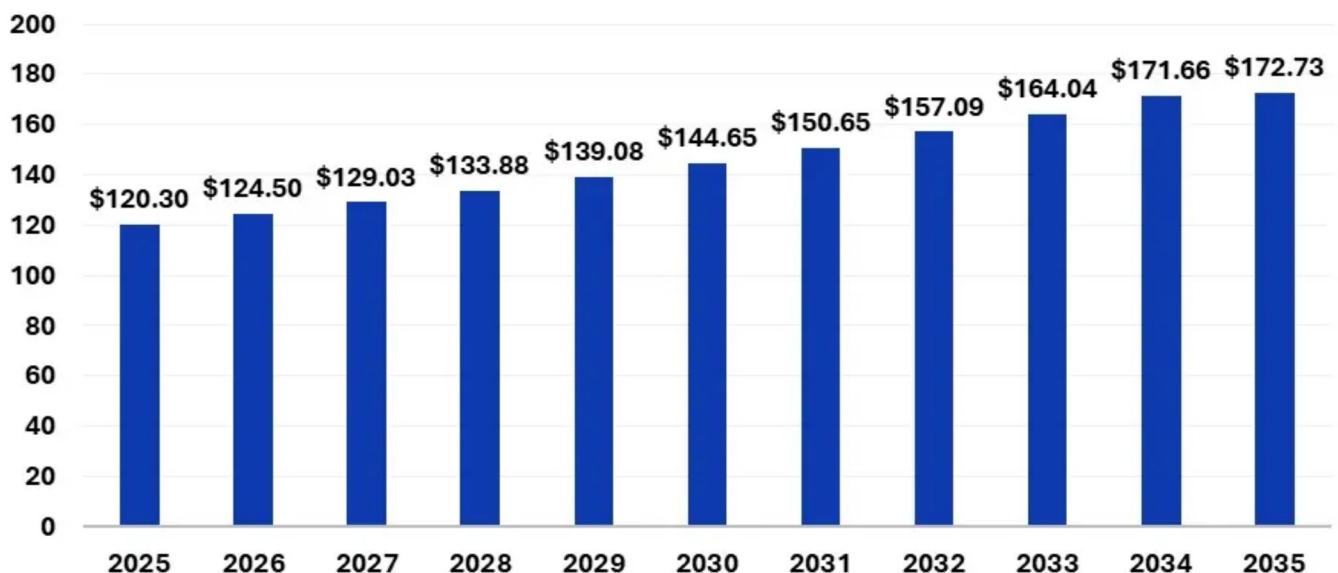
## More Narrowbody planes are populating the skies

According to Oliver Wyman, a leading industry consultant, Narrowbody aircraft will continue to dominate the future fleet, with their share increasing from 62% to 68% by 2035. North America will remain the largest market, but emerging regions like China, India, and the Middle East are expected to capture a larger share, highlighting shifting global aviation dynamics.

Wyman projects annual production rates to approach nearly 2,200 by 2029, and just above 2,400 by 2035. These projections include flagship models from both manufacturers, such as the Boeing 737 MAX and the Airbus A320neo series, alongside Airbus’ smaller A220 and China’s COMAC C919.



### Aircraft MRO Market Size 2025 to 2035 (USD Billion)



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