

Are transformers failing at a high rate today?

If we look at insurance company data, the answer is a resounding yes. This was one of the reasons we chose to focus our December edition on the theme of transformer failures. Hopefully, we have been able to shed a little light on why and how to prevent failures, and how to recover from them. Another reason is the age of the installed fleet, which is over 38 years old for power transformers - it is a testimony to the design and manufacturing capability of past generations that they have lasted as long as they have.

I think we owe a lot of their robustness to a problem that the "Greatest Generation" left us - prime-time newsman gave us that moniker, the greatest generation. It refers to the generation who fought World War II and who laid the foundation as the dominating world force for innovation, manufacturing and ultimately craftsmanship. Most of what that generation designed and built was

done with a level of robustness and durability that has been unmatched since. Transformers were no exception.

Then my generation came along - the "Boomers", and we created Just-In-Time, Lean, Six Sigma and globalization. We were so busy making more from less that we depended on transformers without thinking about them. Then along came CAD systems and competition, where manufacturers could not afford to overbuild their transformers because doing so would mean that you would not get the bid. Bid specs ruled the day, so we designed and built to spec.

And now, older transformers are failing simply because of their age, and middle-aged transformers are failing because they were never intended to last 40 years, nor could we afford to build them to last that long.



As a result, we have the December issue of Transformer Technology. From bushings to insulation breakdown, to aging, to LTCs, to moisture and even to complacency; we have covered a lot of the issues related to transformer failure, how to prevent it or what to do to remediate after a failure.

I especially enjoyed the Chuck Baker article (or is it a screen play?) that reads like a scene I have heard played out so many times - a scene where a transformer could have been saved from an unplanned or catastrophic failure if we had only done the basic maintenance required to keep it healthy. I think you will enjoy it too, and if you need to get your boss's attention, maybe forward a link to her/him. Or if you are the boss, ask if this is similar to your situation.



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Thanks again to our incredible and talented team who work with some of the most gifted and giving authors, who share their very best with you.

Whenever you enjoy or learn from an article, drop us a line to let us know and we'll share that with the authors. They love feedback. And so do we.

A blue ink handwritten signature of Alan M Ross, featuring a stylized 'A' and 'R'.

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