If it’s not broken, don’t fix it and an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

You’ve probably heard at least one of these sayings at some time during your career. When it comes to managing your product data, you should examine both statements more closely.

“If it’s not broken, don’t fix it,” means leaving a system untouched and continuing to operate without unnecessary interference, intrusion, or investigation. The reasoning is that if something is working, it will continue to work. Supposedly, minimizing the human element reduces the probability of failure or malfunction. But when it concerns product data management (PDM) systems, adhering to this axiom may ultimately be very costly.

Product life cycle management (PLM) systems often go untouched from their installation as pilots or early production systems until many months or even years later. Over time, the PLM system environment can experience such changes as increasing numbers of users and growing amounts of managed data. For example, a system that initially supports 50 clients could grow to support 500 clients—experiencing a tenfold increase in workload. The results are poor response times, lost productivity, and an unhappy user community. The saying, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” provides a simple solution to prevent such problems.

Making small investments in time and tools to characterize and analyze the performance of PLM systems on a routine basis can reap many rewards. You can integrate performance monitoring and system management to detect and prevent performance problems before they occur—resulting in higher performing systems, greater productivity, reduced down time, less cost, and a more satisfied user community.