

Three Ways to Cut Waste in your Shop

By Thomas R. Cutler

Most moldmakers dream of capturing a 20-percent increase in output—even better if it is achieved in a few months. Moldmaking is a knowledge work environment, where projects are frequently in process, with more assignments on the way. Among all industrial sectors, standard industrial classifications (SIC) by the Department of Labor suggest that customers of moldmakers demand the most in scheduling, accuracy and project completion speed. Here are three recommendations for cutting the waste and giving your customers what they want.

1. Get Lean

Moldmakers must improve project management processes to dramatically increase output and productivity. A new option for the moldmaking industry, according to Mark Woepfel of Pinnacle Strategies—a consulting firm focused on operations management—is RABIT (rapid analysis and bottleneck improvement team), which like Six Sigma, Theory of Constraints and Lean Manufacturing, can impact resource task engagement, increasing productivity. This is achieved with proactive scheduling by implementing a single, rational task priority management system as well as performance management via clear feedback on process

performance. Focusing on the bottleneck processes and implementing only the changes that will have the largest impact, are typical elements of a RABIT project. Moldmakers must eliminate over-production, coordinate work scheduling and prioritization, and prevent resource multitasking.

2. Control Inventory

More than half of all moldmakers employ fewer than 50 workers and have yet to implement any sort of lean programming. For this large majority in the industry, cost-savings are best found in inventory control and management. Fishbowl Inventory—a popular inventory management solution among QuickBooks users—says, “As small-to-medium moldmakers grow and face increasing competition, the need for affordably priced inventory management is identical to larger moldmaking organizations. With automatic work orders, multilevel bills of materials, and other advanced tools, moldmakers must streamline complex tasks and speed up production lines.”



3. Hire the Right Staff

Nowhere in moldmaking is waste more evident than when hiring the wrong personnel. Stephen Berry from Scientific Management Techniques—a provider of manufacturing skills assessments—says, “It is quite easy to predict employee success in a mold shop. Hands-on assessment machines identify and measure the skills required to operate, maintain and troubleshoot a modern moldmaking facility.” Portable manufacturing skills assessments deliver a scientific-based, data-driven workforce skill assessment solution that lowers the risk and cost of hiring. It also drives industrial performance by increasing the skill level of the workforce. The data-driven hiring process allows moldmakers to hire workers based on proven, validated success factors and extend lean initiatives into the hiring process. Identifying and measuring skills prior to hire is the single most effective means to ensure quality, highly productive personnel in manufacturing. Waste can be eliminated when moldmakers use lean best-practice processes, lean inventory control solutions, and hiring the right staff the first time. [MMT](#)

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Pinnacle Strategies / pinnacle-strategies.com

Fishbowl Inventory / fishbowlinventory.com

Scientific Management Techniques / scientific-management.com