

Manufacturing Toolbox For Next-Level Productivity

There's more than one kind of tool necessary for success in manufacturing. Here are some concepts and ideas you should have in your toolbox to yield higher productivity.



Smarter Equipment

Networking your production equipment and integrating sensors or SCADA systems can provide you with better analytics and greater visibility. Although this may involve upfront costs, it can more than make up for it through increased efficiency and productivity.

Continued Education

Integrated manufacturing systems today require a multitude of highly specialized capabilities. An emphasis on training equips your staff with the skills these systems require.



Increased Scrutiny

Improving your workflow begins with a close examination of how your facility works. Value mapping can identify areas where you may have pinch points that can be eliminated. These can include maintenance processes, MRO logistics and resource planning systems.

Updated Processes

Once you have a clear idea of how your workflow does or does not function as well as it should, the next step is to utilize reliability best practices to determine the root causes, engineer solutions, and determine the leading and lagging indicators for process optimization. Establishing solid metrics for success is key to better ensuring you're on the right track.



Investment in Maintenance

Your equipment won't deliver expected benefits if you don't take the time to care for it. If you experience downtime due to neglect, it will set you back considerably and make it more difficult to recover. Let historical failure data, OEM recommendations and analysis of repair spending help determine how you optimize your critical asset maintenance programs.

Employee Collaboration

The gears of a machine only work when they're meshed and turning toward the same goal. Make sure your employees are aligned to a common strategic plan. Also make sure that improvement is a collaborative process that engages employees at all levels of the organization, and a more productive workplace will result.



Diligent Organization

Keeping everything in its place is crucial in a manufacturing environment. Wasted time that comes from confusion and duplicated work eats into your profitability.

Realistic Expectations

Setting the bar too high can generate stress and hurt employee morale. Unrealistic goals also may influence workers to cut corners on quality and safety, which will be costly in the long run. The best place to start is to truly assess your current conditions. Identify root causes of pain points, engage those involved and set goals for incremental improvement.

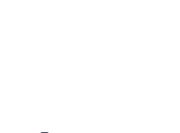


Optimized Inventory

Maintaining the proper levels of inventory means you won't experience shortages or be burdened with too much stock. You should automate your inventory tracking to better understand the flow of raw materials, WIP, MRO and finished products. Utilization of software can alert you to deviations from optimized setpoints and allow you to maintain the critical inventory required to operate with confidence.

Vendor Relationships

You depend on your vendors to supply you with what you need when you need it. Building transparent partnerships through shared forecasts will allow your vendors to be better prepared, more agile and more efficient — so you can be, too.



Improved Forecasting

Being able to predict the ebb and flow of supply and demand is essential. Today, it is possible to use software platforms to create predictive models as long as you are diligent about documenting everything. If you have all of the data as well as the proper business, customer, resource and maintenance planning software, you can have smoother forecasting.

Focused Recruiting

Finding the best people for your operations can make all the difference. Many manufacturers concentrate on recruiting their next generation of workers from trade schools and technical programs, rather than more general resources.

