



Getting the waste out – fast!

IET's client needed to boost throughput and labor productivity before either one became a serious business problem. Within three weeks, IET presented a solution that boosted throughput 33% without adding people, equipment or floor space. This quick action kept the client from possibly shutting down an OEM assembly line.

The Customer

A tier one automotive supplier known world-wide for its competence in designing and manufacturing interior systems.

The Challenge

As volumes and model variations increased on a new headliner program, production weaknesses became obvious. Material flow paths created congestion and inefficient handling, difficulties that were compounded by the product's low pack density. Multiple assembly lines, each dedicated to specific models, had been installed and the assembly lines were supplied directly by a foam line that dictated the overall pace and product mix. Labor productivity was below target and the plant struggled to achieve throughput goals as production volumes increased beyond 75% of the daily requirement.

The situation had to improve quickly for two main reasons: eliminate the possibility of missed shipments and reduce labor costs. The challenge would be to do so while utilizing the floor space currently occupied by the assembly operations.

The Solutions

IET began its involvement by mapping the entire process from receiving empty racks to shipping full racks and everything in between that touched the assembly process, including the foam operation. In addition, IET's engineers obtained all relevant data for assessing space requirements and model mix effects, as well as performed detailed time studies on each assembly step.

During the analysis and design phase, IET engineers sought to eliminate wasted material motion, increase throughput capability, and keep labor requirements to a minimum by developing layouts that facilitated smooth material flow and balanced workloads. Regular reviews with the plant management team kept everyone informed and on-board with the ideas being considered.

IET's recommendations provided a solution that enabled the company to increase shift throughput immediately by 33% with the current crew size – a winning solution for throughput and labor productivity – and no facility modifications. Another recommendation took advantage of planned changes in dock capabilities to further streamline product and rack flow. All data collection, analysis and design work was completed in just three weeks.

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3539 Glendale Ave. Toledo, OH 43614
 419.385.1233 800.278.1031
 www.ieteng.com

How can IET help you?

Any way you need us to.

Productivity

Current production standards

Current production performance

Detailed reasons for variances

Detailed plan for improvement

Goal-setting, accountability

Capacity planning

Key capital resources

Direct and indirect labor

Salaried personnel

Facilities

New manufacturing

Detailed process map

Layout

Facilities

Labor

Support

Indirect labor design

Standards

Material handling

Supervision

Maintenance

Plan for improvement

Total value analysis

Make vs. buy

Site selection

Consolidation

Vertical integration

Horizontal integration