

Re: MANUFACTURING SOFTWARE

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- *From:* Joerg <notthisjoergsch@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Tue, 29 May 2007 13:13:31 -0700
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Michael A. Terrell wrote:

Joerg wrote:

Yes, that's a different scenario. Yet even there a pull system can work well. If the guy in production thinks he'll need 50 feedthroughs during the day plus some other stuff he could just go and get them. Provided there is an ironclad thoroughness in checking the stuff out in the computer. Otherwise Kanban can land you in really hot water. I had the impression that companies sometimes clung to the old concept of kitting because only very few people would be trusted with materials management. That's one of the things I changed when I was "da boss".

We had three people in the stockrooms pulling all parts for each job. The parts and paperwork were put into an antistatic tray and moved in the computer from planning to production. If each assembler pulled their own parts there would have been 75 people in each other's way. ...

No problem. We had a chat about that and the individual managers agreed to keep foot traffic lean by urging their folks not to go all at once. Typically only 2-3 people from each department would actually show up in the stock room. I had a talk with the stock room clerks to see how they liked the new pulling scheme. "A lot", they said, citing mostly the absence of huge carts during a major kitting session.

This system prevented a job being started that was missing parts. ...

That's exactly one thing we wanted to become able to do. If a set of circuit breakers was missing because it was on back order they could now begin to assemble the system anyhow. No more waiting because a kit was incomplete, meaning we had less of that typical quarter-end ship crunch. Which also meant less overtime.

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Which meant less cost and a happy CFO.

... It

also allowed the head of production to walk up to someone and hand them a critical order that had a higher priority than what they were already working on. This usually only happened when a work order had parts on backorder, and the parts had just cleared incoming inspection. Common parts were in the main stockroom, while bulk parts and sheet metal were stored across the hall in the secondary stockroom.

We could even do that after someone had pulled such a critical item because the MRP knew where it went. A quick decision among the managers and a part was pulled back from area 1 and brought to area 2, and the MRP was updated accordingly.

The assemblers had to be certified for each item they could build. When they finished a job it was moved in the computer to the next level, and they picked up their next job from a list for their department, based on required lead times for shipping and what they were certified to build. Some items were a single level, while others were multiple levels. Single level would be the wire room or cable line, but PC boards were mounted into their cases and the harness attached. Then it went to the module line for testing and calibration or alignment. It was a complex MRP system, but management, the head of production, and the workers could track the location of everything in the company.

The test department was allowed to keep a small stock of parts for select in test and production repairs. These were exchanged when your stock was depleted. Customer support and out of warranty repairs were considered a separate division, and had their own inventory. It was moved from California to Florida, which turned out to be a wise choice. The old man who ran it died about six months later, and it would have been a nightmare to shut it down and move it if he had still been out west.

That is sad. Happened to the manager of our tool and die shop as well, he suffered a major stroke and did not recover. I still miss him.

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Regards, Joerg

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