

Roland Heuff
+27 31 266 8278
roland@productivityassign.com



Production trends are changing. So should TAKT times.

What a great opportunity to right size your plant!

With the market slow down, customer call-off rates have at least halved in the automotive business and in other cases sent out shock waves to industry captains.

But, it's during these tight times when we're hungry for work that we learn the vital lessons of factory physics. The learning curve is steep and its a valuable opportunity to make positive in roads to improving productivity.

It all starts with our customers and the market we're in. How accurately can we read the market and its trends? And, how effectively can we transform customer wants into saleable product? Both require fast footwork.

Adjusting our BOM's and resource requirements quickly is going to give us the edge. That's the kind of TAKT change we're looking for. TAKT expresses the customer demand rate, which will determine the pace at which our products will flow down the lines. Too high and we'll over produce. These surplus products we'll probably discount later on in order to move. Too low and we'll struggle to meet at least one of the 5 star hit rate criteria of right place, right time, right cost, right quality and right quantity. Here is a simple procedure that will ensure we'll emerge wiser once the growth rate finds its previous levels.

- Measure customer call off rates in units per given periods. I.e. Shifts, days, weeks, months etc. Note, the shorter the period, the better.
- Calculate the comparable production volumes for that period, allowing for normal stoppages such as rest breaks, maintenance, cleaning times etc. This would be similar to calculating production and could vary between 15% and 5% of available production time depending on industry, product variety and management discipline.
- Express this in units per hour if possible or time (Mins) per unit for ease of understanding.
- If process times need re-assessing, take advantage of this quieter period. Standard times are never considered absolute and should be reviewed at least every few years.

- Set up a spreadsheet if you don't already have one detailing process operations and standard times. Then factor in TAKT times expressed as production volumes and bingo! You've got a handle on manning, equipment, production control and process effectiveness. All the right stuff to manage production.
- Then, set up short interval controls at each station to monitor hourly outputs and to keep the line in a state of balance.

Another way of doing this is through a software programme called "PA Performer". This will measure labour performance, machine utilization, overall effectiveness, overall effective utilization or Overall Resource Utilisation. It will also provide management reports and keep track of trends in production performances.

Lastly, look for the positive aspects and focus on them, any preparation work we can do now will support us when we get busy again.

Roland Heuff
16th Feb 2009