



Production Efficiency

Production Managers wasting
their Welders Craftsmanship

Production Managers Wasting Welder Craftsmanship

If you're a production manager at a steel construction company, increasing production efficiency is always a key goal. It's a big challenge too. As a production manager, you supervise the entire chain of internal production processes involved. Often that means that you are tied to strict deadlines. At the same time, current market trends including stricter requirements for lean production and the increased digitalization of processes continue to put even more pressure on production departments, and you.

The direct effects on your company (and you) are multiple; from the undesirable situation of having to lay off staff, and worse yet, the risk of losing customers and profit.

In this article you'll find out:

- How the US welding industry may face a shortage of as many as 400,000 welders
- What to do in case you're forced to lay off much of your staff!
- How to stay in control of what's happening in your production department
- Eight techniques for improving production department efficiency

The US welding industry may face a shortage of 400,000 welders

Market trends compel efficiency in the internal production process

Besides some company specific factors, there are a number of general market trends significantly decreasing your company's production efficiency.

In the past 30 to 40 years the number of highly skilled craftsmen has continued to decline, especially welders. Part of the reason, the vast majority of experienced welders is now approaching retirement age and their craftsmanship has not been passed down. Ever since the end of the global recession in June 2009, manufacturing has continued to grow faster than the rest of the economy, which in-turn has caused a sharp rise in the demand for skilled welders. According to the American Welding Society, the US welding industry will face a shortage of about 400,000 operators by 2024. At the same time, welder productivity (or the amount of welding accomplished by any welder in any given day) is being hampered by a declining workforce. Often a welder has to do the fitting, the grinding and the cleaning of residual material (spatter, dust etc.) and that's how you gradually start wasting the skills of your production department's most valuable and scarce resource – the welder.

Other market trends have the potential to greatly affect your production process as well. Younger workers are less willing to engage in heavy physical labor. They are typically more aware of recent technical developments, which eliminate the need for manual work. Keeping up to date with the latest digital solutions is also a requirement for production departments and for you as its leader. At the very least, you need to stay ahead of your competitors. In addition, you probably have to deal with increasingly strict requirements for lean manufacturing practices introduced by top management, which can be time consuming to implement.

Recently, increasingly stringent safety and fabrication quality requirements represent a new challenge for you. Along with those requirements, the demands for complex and extraordinary design and structures continue to grow. Structures need to be lighter and stronger, which in-turn demand higher quality fabrication results.

Don't wait until you've been forced to lay off half of your staff!

Factors negatively affecting the company and its production department

The inability to respond to evolving market trends can directly lead to production department inefficiency at steel fabrication companies. The following trends represent only a few of the negative side effects for production departments:

- Inability to meet production objectives and quality standards
- Losing competitive edge by not being able to meet quality standards
- Dealing with more frequent logistical problems
- Higher risk of losing customers
- Losing profit or risk laying off staff



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Stay in control of what's happening at your production department

Factors negatively affecting the production manager

In your role as production manager, you probably supervise the entire chain of internal production processes involved. That is why increasingly changing market demands affect you directly. Fast paced changes can result in not meeting your goals and objectives along with not meeting tough deadlines. In addition, this often results in constant feelings of frustration and worries about both the success of the project and the future of the department staff. Other sources of frustration arise from feeling not being in control anymore. Then, frequently having to bring updates on unsuccessful project developments to the top management adds more frustration. If not handled in a timely manner, this can escalate to a complete loss of motivation and dedication to your work.

“A story of constant frustration: The fast paced changes result in you not meeting your goals and objectives.”



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8 Techniques to improve your production department efficiency

How to successfully deal with the factors decreasing production efficiency

How do you stay flexible and adaptive to ever-increasing market demands? How can you ensure efficiency of the production process? How do you stay innovative and ahead of competition? Is the solution solely your responsibility as production manager?

There are eight techniques that can minimize the effect of problematic market trends. These techniques will help you improve your company's fabrication process:

- Digitalize your workflow
- Reduce grinding to a minimum
- Reduce welding volume
- Eliminate heavy physical labor
- Increase cutting accuracy
- Safeguard your know-how
- Make sure your processes meet certification requirements
- Eliminate human error



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Are the answers found in automated welding?

Although automated welding is often one of the first solutions production managers think of, it is often not the first step to take in solving market challenges. In fact, you can postpone the investment in automated welding solutions if you follow the eight techniques on the previous page. Download the whitepaper 'Winning Practices for Improving your Production Process' to find out how.

If market challenges are solved this easily, then why do most productions managers still fail in achieving the necessary change? Read the article 'Pitfalls to Avoid when Improving your Production Process' and make sure you avoid these pitfalls.

Downloads

- Article ['Winning Practices for Improving your Production Process'](#)
- Article ['Pitfalls to Avoid when Improving your Production Process'](#)