

Improving Safety and Productivity In Your Printing and Finishing Operations

A quick-reference guide for keeping your people safe and productivity high.



POST PRESS SPECIALTIES
FINISHING STRONG

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS: THE SIMPLE CASE FOR PUTTING THE SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY AND PRODUCTIVITY

If you manage a printing or post-press operation, you know how difficult it can be to focus on the fundamentals when juggling dozens of projects each week. Safety and productivity can sometimes be lost in the shuffle. Here's how to keep them front and center.

The essentials of safe, productive operations never go out of style, and they never should. Successful owners and managers know that certain principles must be revisited and reinforced often to keep inefficiencies and mistakes to a minimum.

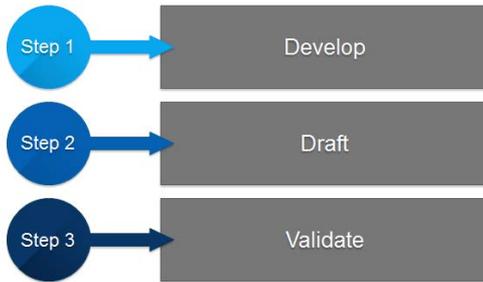
But it's never enough to simply facilitate discussions. Action must be taken and progress must be made to help your team internalize and make the changes necessary to reduce ongoing risk and prepare for higher volumes and expanded opportunities.

Your leaders on the production floor have been promoted most likely because they've excelled at working in the business. They may not be as experienced at working on the business.

To get everyone on the same page and focused on the right issues it's important to occasionally step back and provide perspective.

The daily grind will always be there, and there's never a great time to address process improvement, but **here are five safety and productivity ideas that you can use to keep your operations safe and efficient.**

IDEA #1: USE CHECKLISTS TO REDUCE VARIATION



Checklists are used by the most advanced industries and specialties including medicine, aviation, engineering and of course manufacturing. Even simple checklists are proven to prevent mistakes and improve efficiency, quality, safety, and communication.

Checklists provide your people with guard rails, giving them more confidence and more security. This in turn reduces the number of easily preventable errors and the associated disruptions caused by errors.

Nationally-renowned surgeon, author and expert on healthcare Dr. Atul Gawande, tells the story of how a doctor created a basic checklist in an attempt to prevent infections in the intensive care unit of his hospital. With the use of a checklist, the infection rate went from 11 percent to zero.

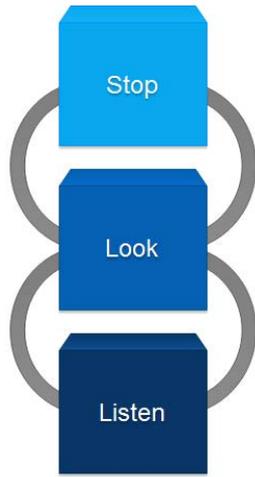
Dr. Gawande has created his own **Checklist for Checklists**, courtesy of projectcheck.org. Here are the highlights:

Develop. Have clear, concise objectives for your checklist and make sure to account for key steps.

Draft. Make sentences direct and simple and try to fit everything on one page.

Validate. Make sure it fits with work flow and is understood by front line users.

IDEA #2: ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF SAFETY



Company leaders set the tone for safe operations. If you're not talking about it and providing helpful reminders on a regular basis, you should be.

Printing and bindery equipment, despite all the safeguards, can still cause serious injury. Forklifts, trucks and loading docks also pose their own special hazards, especially to new associates.

There are plenty of free and low-cost safety training resources available online through OSHA, the Printing Industries of America, and the Binding Industries Association.

Here are a few areas of safety that can't be emphasized enough:

Lifting Procedures. Preparation and technique make all the difference. Testing the weight, bending at the knees, and wearing protective gloves and gear can go a long way in preventing injuries.

Machine Operations. Hearing protection, closed-toe shoes, and never working alone are just the basics. Make sure everyone on the plant floor knows the finer points as well.

Packing, Loading and Staging. Forklifts and other motorized carts can cause great damage to life, limb and facilities. Make sure that all operators are properly trained, speed is under control, and blind corners are marked for caution.

IDEA #3: INVEST IN TRAINING



Take a closer look at your internal training. Are there enough opportunities for cross-training and advancement? Are you taking advantage of manufacturer resources and training functions?

A day or two of training, or even just a few hours each week can pay huge dividends in load-balancing, throughput, and staffing flexibility.

Let your best people get involved. They want to share their expertise with others. It's a source of pride and recognition and keeps them energized in their positions.

Training resources are readily available:

Equipment manufacturers and dealers are great resources. They know that proper training makes their systems more successful so lean on them to provide in-house sessions with your staff and lead train-the-trainer programs.

Your best people are looking for new challenges. The know-how and expertise on your own staff should be captured and shared for the benefit of the entire company. Knowledge is an asset you should be harnessing.

Learning opportunities create positive work environments. Your associates want to be competent and do a good job. Additional training feeds that desire.

IDEA #4: MANAGE ACTIVITY AND MEASURE RESULTS



It sounds simple: Keep track of what your people are doing and help them do more of the productive things and less of the unproductive things.

But what's productive and what isn't? There's no substitute for documenting activities, performance and results. The numbers don't lie and they also give you the objectivity necessary to make important decisions.

When folding machine production varies by operator, you need to find out why. Is it lack of training? Distraction? Attitude?

Measuring results will lead to questions and these questions will guide you in your process improvement initiatives.

Measurements that matter:

Output. How many units of work are produced? When all things are equal with respect to complexity and equipment, why are some operators more productive?

Time. What is the time required to set up and get started and then see it to the end? What allows some operators to finish fast and strong while others take more time?

Quality. Errors and defects are expensive mistakes. At what rate are these occurring in your plant and where are the opportunities to reduce them?

IDEA #5: DEALING WITH DOWNTIME



The production schedule drives activity and activity keeps people engaged and productive. When things get slow its important to have a schedule and a plan as well.

The common response to downtime is to clean, sweep, oil a few parts, and generally look busy. Menial time-killers get done, but little value is added.

Instead, create a plan for slack time or down time activities that will help improve production for the next big rush.

Create your downtime to-do list today so you can make the most of the next slow period:

Inspection, Maintenance and Repair.

Go over your equipment with a fine-tooth comb. Look for worn belts, bearings, and other consumables that can be proactively replaced to avoid failure in the near future.

Inventory and Storage. Inventory parts and tools. Look for more efficient ways to configure storage and workspaces.

Cross-Training. Conduct a continuous education session on industry trends, issues, tips and techniques. Promote new training in different departments for experienced and new employees alike.

Thank You

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