Whatever Happened to *"Just-In-Time"*?

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All of us who are old enough remember the bandwagon we were on in the 80s: ***JIT***. Just In Time manufacturing principles were going to solve all of America's manufacturing problems. But as the 90s came around, the economy took off, the Cold War ended, and ***bam!*** We all got complacent again. A little sloppy. A little bit fat (*well…*). We all have heard it: *we gotta make hay while the sun's shining*, right?

It's time to re-visit those principles, hone our collective manufacturing skills, and get competitive again. The fat years are gone for the time being, now we have to get serious again.

Here is a short list of Just In Time manufacturing principles:

- Utilize Group Technology methods
- Maintain simplicity and flexibility
- Eliminate setup time
- Organize focused sub-plants around product families
- Strive for ZERO INVENTORY…it's just dead money laying around
- Develop uniform plant loads
- Use the "pull" system for scheduling
- Control quality at the source…don't inspect it in afterwards
- Emphasize product performance
- Monitor and control processes and their results
- Establish Total Preventive Maintenance programs
- Stress, strive for, and insist on CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
- Encourage Management By Eye
- Encourage worker involvement
- Assure employment security
- Establish long-term vendor relationships

It's a long road to JIT. We've probably forgotten how to do it. Life has been good for a long time and we haven't had to hustle much. But those days are over. So, where do we start? We need to start squeezing those excess costs out of our manufacturing porcesses. It's going to take some time, it always does, but the benefits are astounding. We've seen it before, we know it can be done. We can start by instituting The Lead Time Reduction Process given below.

Lead Time Reduction Process Steps

1. Identify the product & service you provide.
2. List all steps required to complete product, from start to finish.
3. Identify time now required to complete each step (for benchmarking).
4. Identify steps that add value to the product.
5. Graph processes (See Figure 1).
6. Analyze and eliminate time needed for non-value added ("NVA") steps.
7. Analyze and reduce time needed for value added ("VA") steps.
8. Graph this process.
9. Identify the "ideal" process (ideal = minimum time for "VA" steps with no "NVA" steps).
10. Graph ideal process and work to achieve it.

Seems simple, doesn't it? Well, it is.

Get to work, and do it well.

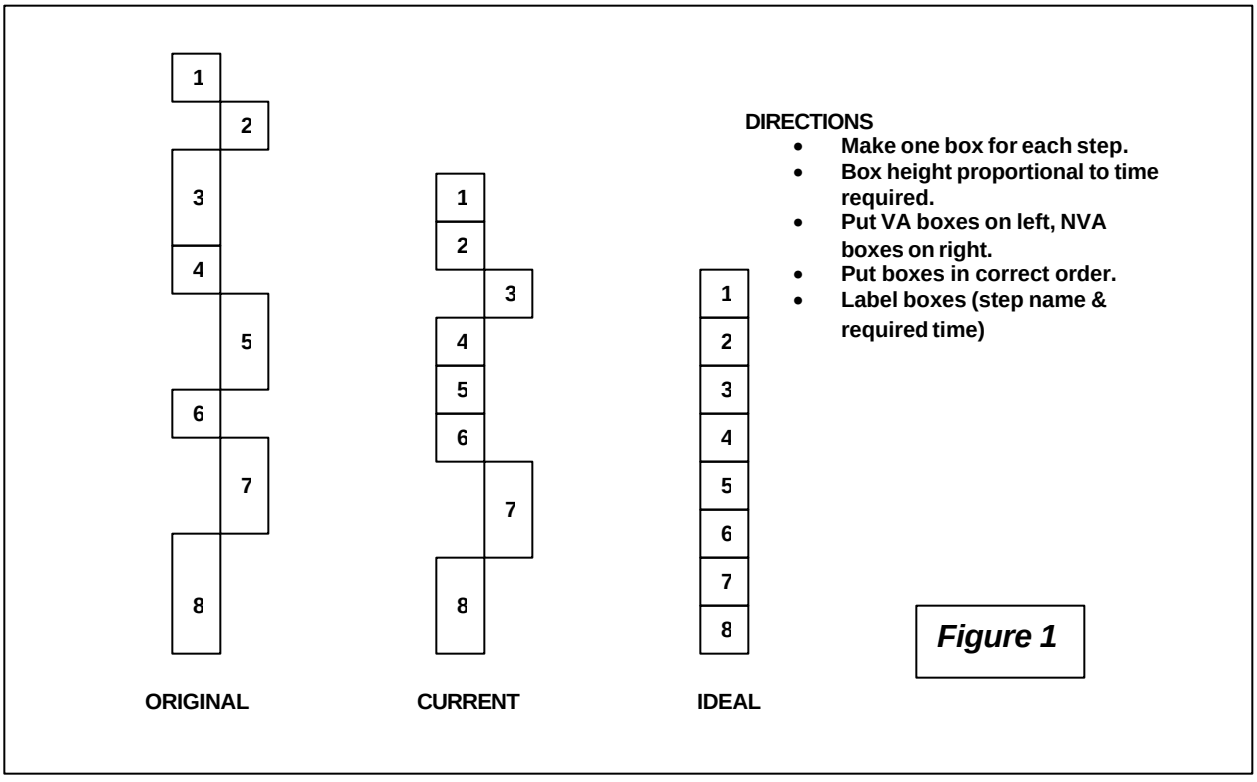

Figure 1