

Truss shop managers: Smartest Thing You Can Do For Profit in 2010

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SUNAPEE, NH—Warning! Blunt and frank language in this article. Check your ego limitations for new ideas before reading this article.

I am about to tell you the smartest thing you can do for profit this year. Do you want to become a statistic and be part of the 60% of truss plants that are no longer in business? No, of course not—you want to make more money and you are ready to listen. Well honestly 80% of you are about to give the excuse that you really don't have the time. So in other words you really do not want to make any more money than what your current practices are going to give you. You are all set and you don't have any room for improvement because change might take some additional effort from you and your employees. Hmmm, don't you get tired of the whining from your employees about not having enough time to make real changes? Are you doing the same thing now?

Well here is the one thing that will make you more money than your current practices have been doing for you. Track each and every order's labor efficiencies and labor cost. That's right, it is that simple. It is not getting more sales. Getting more sales is always the excuse of any non-profitable company. We all can make more money with more sales. But what about existing sales you have? You think you know how profitable the orders are but you don't know for sure because you have never tracked every order or paid attention to the actual numbers of each order after they have been processed.

Why does tracking every order really matter? Did you know that there is not one forward-thinking and successful major manufacturer in any other industry that does not track each and every order? It has been only our industry, the component industry, which has been lax about the idea of tracking each order. It matters—because what you are really having been doing all these years is guessing about each order's true margins and not really knowing the true margins.

Tell me this: Why is it always the other company that does not know what they are doing when their component bid is so much lower than yours? Why is it always the other guy who is a complete idiot who does not know what they are doing? Do you think that perhaps, just maybe, they actually may know something that you do not? Maybe it is time to set your ego aside, listen to sage advice: Look at what successful companies are doing and take their lead. It is time to track every order in your shop.

What have you really got to lose to track each order? Do you really think that tracking every order is a time-waster? Every single study done for manufacturing has proven just the opposite. Every single study has proven that tracking of individual orders and employee efficiencies have improved

overall profit by reducing costs and providing better estimation of future work orders. Not one single study done by any industrial engineer has proven that tracking orders was a time-waster and should not be done. What do you know that they do not?

There are two ways to track the orders in your shop: Use time cards and input all the data into a spreadsheet or use software. Which do you think is easier? Well to be honest it is software—but not all software is easy to use. Some requires a great deal of effort. Of course you are guessing that I'm about to tell you that mine is the easiest to use. And you would be right -- I am about to tell you that mine is the easiest to use. And also the least amount of cost!

'The easiest' and 'most flexible' are the two most common terms that describe my labor-tracking program. The Truss Shop Labor Tracking (TSLT) program is a full-featured truss management software for creating bids and tracking your shop's labor. Most of my clients use their current plate vendor's truss management software for bidding and my software for tracking of their labor. You can use it for both or one, it is up to you.

The TSLT does not require any prior scheduling of orders or employees to workstations before processing. To start an order for tracking, it is this simple: (1) Create and import the truss files and change the status to 'Work In Progress.' (2) Employees log order into the workstation. (3) Employees log into workstation only once during their shift. (4) One employee at each workstation changes orders as they complete the orders. (5) Change status of order to 'Completed' and print reports. That's it. Any employee or order can be changed to any location at any time without any fuss or scheduling. Maximum flexibility with maximum ease of use is what the TSLT was designed for from the start. No current major plate vendor's tracking program is easier to use than the TSLT program.

Use existing full-featured Windows XP® computers in your shop to run the TSLT program. There is no need to add additional computers to every location to track the labor. Install and setup the TSLT over the Internet with my assistance at no additional fee. In less than 24 hours you could be tracking every order in your shop for only \$2,990/year. There is nothing easier or less costly than the TSLT software for truss manufacturers. Three-month, no-obligation trial period for all new installs.

For more information on Truss Shop Labor Tracking software from Todd Drummond Consulting please visit www.todd-drummond.com, call 603.763.8857 or circle Reader Service No. __.