Redesign Glass Cut Process to Increase Production Capacity at Window Manufacturing Company (WMC), Puerto Rico

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Abstract

Window Manufacturing Company (WMC) in Puerto Rico is a prestigious and visionary brand in the manufacturing industry of doors, windows, and architectural solutions, which over 55 years of experience. Glass and aluminum are two of the materials used in their production operations to deliver high quality doors and windows. In the critical areas of the glass-cutting process, there are no existing metrics or standardizations evaluate the state of operations. This research aims to improve the glass cut process output from 4,500 to 6,500 square feet daily. To achieve this objective, the entire process must be analyzed and observed from beginning to end to identify the root causes of the deficiencies in the maximization of capacity and production of glass cutting. Since the glass cutting line is the most demanded and has much variability in products, styles, sizes, and measurements, we can cut 6,500 square feet daily with 3.4 hours of overtime, which means an annual loss near $60,000. We use different empirical methods to analyze data, such as Lean Six Sigma, DMAIC methodology, and production optimization. By implementing several design alternatives, the objectives set for the project were reached and exceeded.

Keywords
Lean Six Sigma, Glass Manufacturing, Senior Design Project, Process Improvement

1. Introduction

WMC is the leading corporation in designing and manufacturing aluminum and glass goods. They specialize in custom doors and windows designing, manufacturing, distributing, and installing them for homes and businesses. This project will be based on the specific area of Glass, which has several phases in creating the final product. Glass cutting production is currently 4,500 square feet per day over 7.5 hours. This is a problem since the glass cutting line's capacity needs to be utilized to its full potential without incurring in overtime. To enhance the production output, management wants to enhance capacity by increasing glass cuts to 6,500 square feet in the same period. This project aimed to redesign the glass-cutting process to increase production capacity, including more planning and communication in the area, optimizing warehouse carts during production hours, equipment downtime, and a gantry layout design that can respond quickly to dynamic production requirements.

1.1 Objectives

Two objectives were established: increase capacity and production in the glass cut process from 4,500 SQFT to 6,500 SQFT daily and optimize the organization of the carts and glass gantry and reduce management downtime by 35%. Achieving these objectives will result in 100% reduction of the current overtime costs.

2. Literature Review

The project was organized following the process improvement DMAIC principles, with phases of historical data analysis, root cause analysis and implementation of alternatives. Several industrial engineering methods were used to facilitate evaluating causalities between the response and independent variables, with statistical validation of results provided, like Perez et al. (2021). Statistical inference tools can facilitate these analyses, with methods like those in Montgomery and Runger, (2010). The tools for the historical data analysis include a stopwatch time study to determine standard time
according to Korkmaz at all (2020). With the standard time, the daily throughput was determined. In these and other applications of time studies, an initial sample is collected and used to compute the final number of observations required for the study considering the margin of error and significance level (Meyers & Stewart, 2002). For the alternatives, some of the tools used were Kanban, Man Machine Diagram, and facility layout. With these tools, the operators’ tasks were re-organized and standardized, while the work methods were simplified. The man-machine diagram is a process modeling tool to compute the idle and productive times. Similar applications in literature from Montoya-Reyes et al. (2020), use the diagram to model a lathe and a grinding process. The results show improvement on the productivity of the line operators. One of the tools used to improve the process was facility layout. It is described by Pérez-Gosende et al (2020), as the process of setting up all factors necessary for production to optimize performance measures, in this case, maximize productivity. Some challenges for using facility layout are the variable material flow in a productive facility.

Additionally, the inventory management system was updated by recommended the required number of Kanban cards (Hunglin & Hsu-Pin, 1990) to operate in an optimal fashion. Kanban systems serve to control material flow in productive processes. There are several applications and mathematical methods, to compute the number of cards required in systems of this kind. One interesting application from Braglia, Gabbrielli & Marrazzini (2020) is using a Kanban system considering variable changeover times, which is applicable to our process, and we recommend the application of a similar rolling Kanban in future improvements. The tools applied from the project will result in the proposition of several design alternatives, which are then evaluated with a weighted decision analysis. The selected alternatives are then selected for implementation, and the values of the objectives are re-calculated, Cabrera et. al (2021).

3. Methods
Diverse lean and industrial engineering tools were combined to achieve the maximum impact on the company. For the historical data analysis, it was desired to understand the current process areas of opportunity. Standard times were computed using a stopwatch and work sampling studies, and several non-value-added tasks were detected. These were input in the workforce capacity analysis to determine the current production vs. the expected monthly production. To determine the root causes of the problems mentioned, tools like fishbone and the five whys were applied. It is faster to give solutions for resolving problems after conducting a root cause analysis. A decision matrix with a scale of one to three was used to help in determining the best option once the alternatives were presented. After implementing the improvements and standardizing them, the glass cut production target and the anticipated monthly production target were compared to confirm that the goals had been accomplished. Finally, Man Machine diagrams and a Gantt chart were used to show how long the suggested processes would take as well as the time savings.

4. Data Collection
For the historical data analysis, we saw the average demand vary monthly. The fluctuations in demand were evaluated with a One-Way Anova test, seen in table 1, where it can be concluded that the mean demand is not uniform each month since the p-value is less than the significance level α. If the project objectives are achieved, the company would be able to comply with the maximum requirements for any month of the year, as the production capacity will exceed the largest production requirements.

| Table 1. Glass Cut Production Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test results |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Groups | Count | Sum | Average | Variance |
| NOVEMBER | 19 | 54859.6 | 2887.35 | 1774706.273 |
| DECEMBER | 25 | 79147.2 | 3165.89 | 1407098.034 |
| JANUARY | 21 | 95311.1 | 4536.62 | 1606146.282 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>F crit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>32524977.71</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1626248.86</td>
<td>10.31503485</td>
<td>0.00013579</td>
<td>3.14525838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>97748027.37</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1576581.087</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130273005.1</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next, we will describe the operation sequences and traveling distances. Based on the operator’s tasks, the distances are evaluated considering the functions illustrated in Figure 1:

Operator A selects orders on the first computer
Operator A examines the gantry to determine the rack number
Operator A goes to the second computer to print labels
Operator A places the labels on each cut glass
Operators B, C, and D split the cut glass panel
Operators B, C, and D dispose of the waste material
Operators B, C, and D put the final products on the carts.

Considering the rectilinear distances and frequency of these tasks, the time spent on walking tasks consumes 120 shift days annually when computed using the Maynard Operation Sequence Technique by Zandin, (2002).

Figure 1. Spaghetti diagram showing process flow

A time study using a stopwatch to establish tasks standard times was conducted. It is divided into three standard calculations for: 1) operators. 2) Hegla machine with the best-case glass scenario - glass panel is located on the racks in front of the gantry, and 3) Hegla machine with the worst-case glass scenario - glass panel is in the back racks of the gantry. Worst and best scenarios will consider the longest and shortest glass location times.

The time study (Groover, 2007) assumptions considered a 5% margin of error, thirty preliminary observations were made for the operator time study, and five initial observations for the two machine time studies. The formula for calculating the n is then applied (sample size). The value n determines the number of additional observations obtained from the procedure after conducting the preliminary observations.

A 5S audit was conducted to observe the order of the area, the process of systematizing, shining, standardizing, and maintaining. During the process, it was observed that there was not much organization within the area, lack of cleaning, absence of labeling identification, disorganized glass gantry, limited carts space, have all been identified as deficiencies. According to this 5S checklist, the area of standardization, S4, is a significant area of opportunity. After conducted all the observations, it is obtained a total exist nineteen with score 67.8% and rating 1.4 and score 34.8% as seen in Figure 2.
5. Results and Discussion

The variables included are the duration of manual and automated operations, and the non-value added activities at its effects on the process cycle time (Y). Further analysis performed in this section includes:

- Measurement and classification of downtimes.
- Breakdown of idle and productive times for machine and operators
- Root cause analysis

5.1 Numerical Results

A downtime study was performed where it can be observed the major problems encountered were idle time and the organization and management area. This is shown in a Pareto chart in Figure 3 where the highest Muda are 16% on low production short on carts, 15% on exceed break time, 10% on preparation to start operations, 10% on production stop missing carts, and 9% on regular orders stop for recuts.
Figure 3. Management Downtime Pareto Chart

A man machine diagram modeled the tasks of the Operators A, B, C and D, which reveals that 60 SQFT can be produced in 6 minutes. WMC must produce 87 SQFT in six minutes to meet its daily production goal of 6,500 square feet. Table 2 reveals that the machine's idle time and productive time are approximately 50 percent and 50 percent, respectively, indicating a large portion of the shift is not productive time.

Table 2. Man Machine Diagram - Baseline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Cycle (Sec)</th>
<th>376</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Productive Time (sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hegla</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op. A</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op. B, C and D</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was discovered that task #2, which is to go to the gantry and check the rack number where the glass panel is located before each order, is redundant and wastes a lot of time, because the gantry changes the glass location order daily to be filled by inventory. This is how WMC first set up the gantry layout. Because the most demanded glass must be positioned in front so that the Hegla can locate them faster and create less waiting time for operators, it can be concluded that this order is not optimized according to the use of each glass panel, which creates machine idle time.

5.2 Graphical Results

The historical data analysis showed that the main identified problems were:
1. Management downtime, related to personnel, materials, and workload management. The focus will be in personnel, considering that they create the major downtime.
2. Production downtime, considering method, layout, and environment. The focus will be in layout, considering waiting for carts take too much time.
3. Equipment downtime, considering waiting for the operator to verify the gantry order take too much time.

A root cause analysis was performed for each of the three subproblems. In Figure 4, we proceeded to further explore the reasons for production downtime. One of the primary areas of concern was the facility layout, as it was not possible to park the quantity of production carts required to satisfy daily demand. The solutions for these issues are presented in the next section.
5.3 Proposed Improvements
After performing the root cause analysis, the following changes were made to the process:

- Rebalance manual operations and eliminate nonvalue added activities
- Gantry Re-layout
- Inventory Management System Improvement: Kanban Storage Carts

Additional details for each improvement are discussed next.

For the rebalancing of manual operations and elimination of nonvalue added activities tasks were reassigned. Three new Man-Machine configurations were proposed were Man-Machine Option #3 is based on deleting task number two of the glass-cutting process, that is, Operator A examines the gantry to determine which rack has the type of glass required by the order and reassigns task 4, applying labels to each final cut glass to operators B, C, and D instead of operator A. It is possible to produce 120 square feet in the same 6-minute period with this man-machine diagram option #3. This equates to a 100% increase in production and the best option for optimizing Hegla and Operators B, C and D. This option, shown in table 3, reduces the idle time of the Hegla machine by 25% and the idle time of the operators B, C, and D by 19%, resulting in the best option for both. Operator A’s idle time increases by 5%, but by reducing both the idle time of the machine and the idle time of the other operators, it is possible to reach a production of 120 squared feet, which exceeds the objective. WMC needed eighty-seven square feet in 6 minutes to reach its goal of 6,500 sqft, according to the analysis. With this diagram shown in table 3b., it is possible to reach a daily production of 9,000 squared feet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Total Cycle (Sec)</th>
<th>Resource Time (sec)</th>
<th>% Productive</th>
<th>Idle Time (sec)</th>
<th>% Idle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hegla</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op. A</td>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op. B, C and D</td>
<td></td>
<td>256</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Another corrective action was to improve the organization of the glass gantry, since it had been demonstrated that this solution would reduce downtime and save time and resources in the area. As already stated with the gantry arranged differently every day and the glass panels in different numbers of racks each day, it created an unnecessary task for operator A, which was to go and check the rack number after each order, number two, it increased the distance between the operators' tasks, resulting in more consumption time on business days, and number three, it increased the idle time of the operators and the Hegla machine in the man machine. This is a new order, shown in table 4 where each glass panel was placed according to its use, since having an optimized gantry order is the best alternative in all senses. Reorganizing and cleaning the glass gantry can take up to 3 hours of overtime on three working days. Since this reorganization will consume three days of overtime, that means a cost of implementation of $600.00 to the company. Distances between operator’s tasks consume now consume sixty-four shift days per year, representing a 46.7% percent reduction from the original 120 shift days.

Table 4. Optimized Gantry Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Order</th>
<th>Recommended Order</th>
<th>Glass</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>% Freq</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5C</td>
<td>2727</td>
<td>20.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proceedings of the International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management Manila, Philippines, March 7-9, 2023

For the inventory management system improvements, a Kanban Storage Cart was recommended. The number of required Kanban was established using the following equation:

\[
D \times L \times (1 + S) \\
k = \frac{C}{\text{(1)}}
\]

Where the variables are defined as:
D = demand
LT = lead time
S = safety stock
C = container size
k = number of Kanban

Assuming the glass cuts area reaches the goal of 6,500 sqft in a 7.5-hour shift, the variables in the formula are shown in Table 5. The Kanban analysis suggests that six (6) carts must be available for a continuous flow, resulting in zero pauses in production for lack of carts.

Table 5 Kanban formulas assumptions and results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly production</td>
<td>149500</td>
<td>sqft/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift duration</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>hrs./day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Days</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>days/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Production</td>
<td>6500</td>
<td>sqft/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly Production</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>sqft/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>sqft/hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container size</td>
<td>1152</td>
<td>sqft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Conclusions
The project aimed to redesign the glass-cutting process to increase production capacity. To obtain the improvement, the main problem was divided in subproblems that considered task execution, inventory management system and layout. Following a root cause analysis, a weighted decision process was performed and three solutions, were identified. For the two objectives:

Increase capacity and production in the glass cut process from 4,500 SQFT to 6,500 SQFT daily – with the recommendations provided, the production increased to 9000 SQFT daily. Since there are seventy-five periods of 6 minutes on working days, multiplied by the production that these man-machine diagrams can do in the period of 6
minutes, which is 120 square feet, the total daily production is 9,000 square feet. This means that it has been demonstrated that in addition to the expected production capacity, an additional 2,500 square feet per day can be produced.

Optimize the organization of the carts and glass gantry and reduce management downtime by 35% - with the recommendations, the management downtime is reduced by 79%. This percentage of decrease is proven in the 8-waste checklist, where it was cut from 3 months of annual loss to only one month. Transportation was high in waste and was reduced to low, motion and extra processing were also from high reduced to medium, overproduction and waiting, were type medium reduced to low, resulting in reducing non value added activities.

The project achievements are summarized in table 6. Both objectives were exceeded, allowing the company to duplicate its daily output while reducing process downtimes. By achieving both objectives a 100% reduction of overtime costs was achieved, since production can be performed during regular work hours.

Table 6. Project objectives achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>Implemented Alternative</th>
<th>Project Objective Accomplished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ManMachine Diagram Option #3</td>
<td>• Glass Cut Production of 4,500 SQFT</td>
<td>• Glass Cut Production of 9,000 SQFT</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Daily 3.4 hours of overtime</td>
<td>• There’s no overtime and no annual loss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overtime annual loss of $59,670</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plannings and Operations Flowchart</td>
<td>• High management downtime</td>
<td>• Reduced management downtime by 79%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Annual loss of three months approximately</td>
<td>• Annual loss of one month approximately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledgements

Authors would like to thank the Center for Graduate Student Support Services: Promoting Mentoring, Assistantships, Writing to Enhance Completion, and Financial Education (USDE PPOHA Title V Award # P031M190040) for their financial support to participate in this conference. Also, want to thank WMC for the opportunity, and their guidance during the project duration.

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https://doi.org/10.1080/00207543.2021.1897176

Biographies

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