

For people seriously committed to product and process improvement

Brief

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Processes: Doing It Right the First Time

People, process and technology are the backbones of any business. Historically manufacturing management has been enamored by technology and repulsed by process. Industry performance improvement has long been judged by technology investment. Process effectiveness and workflow documentation has been a tough sell because it is perceived as a tedious task. Is there pain in the process?

Die-tech workers and management see it differently. "When we invest in new technology, we also invest in reengineering the processes that the new technology impacts. With standardized processes, people and tools (technology) are fully utilized," explains Dave Hoover, Vice President of Manufacturing.

Hoover describes process improvement at Die-Tech as a set of principles and practices which, when properly implemented, results in the elimination of waste and non-value adding activities.

There are four major steps in the Engineering process at Die-Tech: design, fabrication, assembly and debugging. Hoover relates that by developing a repeatable process, which manages the risks and resources of each step, the company has reduced their production lead-time by 75%. "We can design the die in one week, cut tooling within two days, reduce fabrication time by 60% and cut debugging time by 75%. A finished die, which used to take sixteen weeks, can be produced in as little as four weeks," asserts Hoover.

When asked about their repeatable process, Hoover admits that it gives them the competitive edge over other companies which don't question the status quo or set higher performance standards for themselves. "We take pride in our record of on time delivery of error free metal stampings. And we know our customers appreciate it; die sales in 2006 have increased 100% over last year.

"One key" adds Hoover, "is to be certain all product design issues are resolved before the purchase order for a die is placed. Our Business Development Engineers have strong technical expertise and understand our customers' requirements. We strive to eliminate errors in specifications before they can become a production problem."

Hoover continues, "Our systematic approach to analyzing information and materials guarantees that our products are made right the first time."

Are you frustrated working with companies not open or receptive to change? How would reduced turnaround time affect your ability to compete in the market place? Perhaps it is time to contact one of Die-Tech's Business Development Engineers.

Win a gift certificate! Send your ideas for Die-Tech product improvements and services to ideabox@die-tech.com and you will be entered in our quarterly drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift certificate.

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