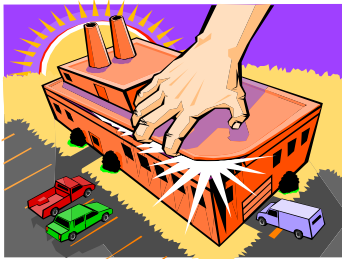


## A Day in the Life of an Operations Manager



*Link operational planning and execution in real-time, synchronize order fulfillment to gain visibility and control of your operation.*

Bill is head of operations for a mid-sized custom packaging company that has 400 employees at three Midwest locations. He's been at this company for several years, starting as a Plant Manager. It's grown over time, always doing pretty well when the economy is good and hanging in there when things are slow. While nothing is "broken", the competition is steadily gaining and customers are much less enthused with their promise dates, sometimes going elsewhere. In addition, the amount of specials, change orders and quick ships are forcing Bill to run the business differently. **All these exceptions are impacting the company's financial performance.** The current system that's in place is okay but there's just not much room for improvement.

At a recent operations meeting Bill and his team tried to brainstorm on ideas to improve the situation. Bill realized that over the years, the business had slowly changed, trying to be more customer focused, but with each change the "system" had become increasingly manual and complex, making it difficult to stay competitive. To organize their thoughts, Bill and his team identified the major issues on a whiteboard, they broke down as follows:

- Many products need to be shipped as part of a single customer order. Too many customer orders on the floor at one time and way too many shop orders. Cannot ship until all the parts of the order are done.
- Many operations required to complete product resulting in a lot of partially finished product on the floor. Difficult to know what to work on next – increases the chance for damage and accidents.
- Often do not have the purchased materials, setup crews, CNC programs, maintenance and other resources where they are needed, when they are needed.
- Often must expedite to ship orders on time or near on time. Orders are hard to find because there are so many on the floor. Pay a premium for partial and quick ship deliveries as a result. Shipping a ton of air.
- Significant percentage of floor space consumed by finished goods inventory as a result of a manufacture and hold program instituted years ago – negative impact on the bottom line.

WOW! It dawned on Bill that not only were these big problems, each caused the other to be worse – a vicious circle. Bill shuddered a bit when he realized what his production people were really going through to get the job done. His people didn't realize what a fire drill their jobs had become. To top it off, no one had a good idea on how to fix it. Being relatively small they were limited on technical resources and, while profitable, they had to be careful where they invested their time and money.

The next day Bill had a revelation while talking with his Intermec Sales Rep, Dan. Dan's company had just partnered with a supply chain company named 2think. 2think is headed by a couple of guys with over 40 years of combined experience successfully implementing solutions in companies like Bill's. They have engineered a way to make these solutions affordable, convenient and doable. They have the resources available to supplement lean IT staffs and can even arrange to have the applications maintained by professionals offsite. After meeting with 2think, Bill knew this was a company he could partner with. They were driven by Bill's needs, not their need to sell software. **2think would not be successful until Bill was successful.**

After Bill and his team worked with 2think, they determined that Viewlocity's Virtual Production Engine™ (VPE) product was what was needed. In 8 weeks the solution was rolled out to a pilot plant, even less time for the other two. Together, they developed a detailed plan and built it into the new system. 2think handled everything Bill's team couldn't or didn't want to, including integration, training and documentation. It was **turnkey with no surprises.**

The plant now releases orders to the floor only when all materials and resources are available to finish **complete customer orders**, scheduling all parts of the order to match the shipping schedule, down to the minute. It also synchronizes support operations like CNC programming to value added steps, reducing cycle time and WIP by over 45%. The system filters every reported plant activity through the VPE scheduling engine, re-synchronizing the plant in real-time – **keeping it on schedule.** When they do need to react they can do so in a controlled way that doesn't impact other orders. There's not much expediting required now as they can see where every order is in real-time, anytime. As a result of reduced cycle time and increased stability, 60% of the warehouse was freed up to support expansion, new production and future growth. Customer Service and Sales even use VPE on the web to check order status. Bill's company will continue to work with 2think to develop and integrate other parts of the company's supply chain, saving even more time and money.

The vicious circle is no longer so vicious.

