

“Live” time tracking of jobs and factory staff

New Zealand joiners are using “time tracking” software with PCs on the factory floor to significantly increase weekly output and profits.

If you are looking for a better way to reduce your labour and overhead costs and to achieve a significant competitive advantage the following history on “time tracking” software will interest you. “Time tracking” software uses second hand PCs on the factory floor for factory staff to start and finish each job they work on and this information is reported “Live” through to the production manager’s PC.

Today, the following joiners are using “time tracking” software in their factories.

Pat Gavin Kitchens (Whangerei and Auckland)
Montage Kitchens (Hamilton)
Aborline Doors (Hamilton)
Modulink Kitchens & Cabinets (Christchurch)
Asset Kitchens and Cabinets (Auckland)
15th Avenue Kitchens (Tauranga)
Gartshore Group (Tauranga)*
SantaFe Shutters (Tauranga)*
Sage Manufacturing (Auckland)
Fewing Joinery Australia (Sydney)

Rose and Heather Furniture (Auckland)
Forest Furniture (Hamilton)
Total Timba Windows (Auckland)
Michael Draper Furniture Design (Auckland)
Taylormade Windscreens (Auckland)
Stainless Design (Hamilton)*

[**Stabi Craft Boats** (Invercargil)
Re. ex Boats (Christchurch)].

* Recently installed time tracking software

Criterion Manufacturing, has been using PCs on the factory floor that factory staff use and “time tracking” software for some 15 years.

Large manufacturing companies employing some 200 plus factory staff in a wide range of manufacturing industries in New Zealand and overseas have used full manufacturing software for many years. This software uses PCs on the factory floor to track jobs and factory staff. Generally factory staff “swipe” in their I.D. and they use bar code readers for reading and recording the job information.

The New Zealand aluminium window manufacturing industry very quickly adopted “time tracking” technology some eight years ago. Using PCs on the factory floor and time tracking software enabled aluminium window manufacturers to increase their weekly output by well in excess of 50% within a very short time frame. Today the four main aluminium profile supply franchises in New Zealand supply “time tracking” software to their respective window and door manufacturers (i.e. franchisees). These manufacturers use the software to “drive and maximize increases in output” and be more competitive and more



Logging onto jobs on the factory floor.



Monitoring staff & production from the office.

profitable. “Time tracking” software for tracking jobs and factory staff is necessary in this industry as there are more than 400 window manufacturers in New Zealand. And all these window manufacturers have almost identical; aluminium profile costs, other main materials suppliers, machinery supplied by the franchisor, – so these manufacturers compete for sales and profit margin primarily on their labour times achieved. That is, the main thing that differentiates the profitability of one window manufacturer from another is solely the “work rate” of their factory staff.

In 2002 Asset Kitchens and Cabinets in Manuwera, Auckland put in “time tracking software” using PCs on the factory floor. Since 2002 factory staff numbers have dropped from 13 to 8 whilst production levels have been maintained.

In 2002 “Empower” software commenced development of “time tracking” and “job scheduling” software specifically for New Zealand joinery manufacturers. Empower Software is Auckland based. This software is being used in many joinery factories throughout New Zealand and now marketed in Australia and the UK.

Joiners using “time tracking” software advise that “time tracking” tracks and reports many forms of “slippage” in their business which fall into three main areas; Firstly, numbers of

factory staff who continually complete jobs in time that well exceeds the time budgeted and quoted. Secondly, sales staff underselling the time budgeted to complete jobs in. (The main reasons sales management do not allow sufficient budgeted time on jobs include; not enough care and attention when quoting, insufficient technical knowledge of jobs, “underselling jobs” to achieve monthly sales budgets). Thirdly, production management not planning jobs and managing staff well enough.

Joiners also advise that there are many key benefits of time tracking software, including; Their factory staff get to see on the PC screens (positioned in the factory) the next job assigned to them and the time budgeted to complete it in. This provides staff with a goal to work towards. Factory staff when they finish each job also see on the PC screen the time they completed the job in – and also any time under or over the time budgeted. This drives all factory staff to achieve times budgeted on jobs. Production management can see on their screen what all factory staff are currently working on with budgeted times and time remaining on all jobs displayed. This enables production management to proactively discuss with factory staff why jobs “will run over the budgeted time”. General management can openly discuss in monthly management meetings each job – and the associated achieved time and budgeted time. Sales management being responsible for the budgeted times. Production management being responsible for actual times achieved. It is the responsibility of all management to simply ensure that “actual time” taken to manufacture product does not exceed the “budgeted time” for those jobs. All down time or overhead jobs are tracked on the PC as well. This helps factory staff be aware of budgeted times for each down time job and helps them not exceed budgeted times for down time jobs. This also helps management ensure that staff do not exceed time on down time jobs. When customers phone to find out where their order is admin staff can view the status of all jobs “live” on the PC screen.

Time tracking software is a production manager’s tool to drive significant increases in weekly output. And it is a general managers tool to drive significant increases in profit levels.

For a FREE information pack on Empower Time Tracking Software contact Sean OSullivan - seanos@ihug.co.nz or phone 027 228 4211 / 09 307 1111 any time.