

WORK SIMPLIFICATION

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Labor costs continue to increase and there is no reason to believe that the trend will change. More than ever before, users of manpower must find ways and means to increase their labor force productivity.

Some research shows that labor, in general, is about 70 percent productive. Most non-productivity is caused by inefficient systems, procedures and methods. Many satisfied workers, who are potentially high producers, are hampered by outdated, awkward, unnecessary, overly-sophisticated or useless procedures related to their work.

Why should operations be studied?

- Objectives and goals of the organization may have been revised. When this important action is taken, the entire organization often needs to be studied in detail.
- Policy changes usually will result in a need for procedural changes.
- Trends in customer complaints and other problem indicators
- Any of the following items will trigger the need for a follow-up study of results and effects:
 - New equipment
 - New or revised organizational unit or structure
 - New or revised layout
 - New product or service
 - Changed technology
 - Changed economic conditions

Who should do work simplification?

- Employees

The most significant improvements in streamlining operations are accomplished by the workers directly involved. However, they must be encouraged and equipped to do the

work simplification. Encouragement comes when there is a general climate conducive to progress in the organization, and a system of rewards. Employees must learn the fundamentals of flow process charting to adequately analyze operations. Table 1 is a typical flow process chart.

When employees conduct the study and initiate the simplification, the new method or procedure becomes their own. It is not viewed as an externally-imposed action, so its effectiveness is enhanced.

- Supervisors and other management personnel
 - Sometimes actions which begin at upper levels of management have such broad implications that overall impact studies must be made. It is then necessary to use experts in organizational and procedural analysis. These analysts should involve affected workers in every possible way, and practice the highest human relations skills.

Performing work simplification

The basic procedure in work simplification is to ask and answer a series of questions. Ask them in the following order:

- *Elimination* is the first action to consider. Can the entire job, process or task be eliminated? What would happen to the overall organization if employees stopped doing the job? This seems drastic, but many organizations have discovered tasks which contribute little or nothing to its goals.
- When you have determined that the entire job, process or task cannot be eliminated, attack its parts. As you examine each part, consider it first for elimination. If you cannot eliminate it, then ask if that part or step can be *combined* with others.
- When parts or steps of a job, process or task are combined, the new combination often must be *rearranged*. This rearrangement includes, but

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is not limited to, layout, flow and manhour requirements.

- The last question to ask is: Can the job, process or task be *simplified*? This question is last because well-meaning personnel often spend much time simplifying a job only to discover that it could be eliminated.

For example, a supervisor spent several hours successfully redesigning a form so it would be easier to use. As he was preparing to have it printed, he discovered there was no longer a need for the action that the form was designed to achieve.

Table 1. FLOW PROCESS CHART										NO.	PAGE NO.	NUMBER OF PAGES							
PROCESS Filling Out and Approving Form 00										SUMMARY									
<input type="checkbox"/> MAN OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MATERIAL										PRESENT		PROPOSED	DIFFERENCE						
CHART BEGINS In A's desk drawer										NO.		TIME	NO.		TIME				
CHART ENDS In A's "out" basket										NO.		TIME	NO.		TIME				
CHARTED BY										NO.		TIME	NO.		TIME				
DATE September 4, 1976										NO.		TIME	NO.		TIME				
ORGANIZATION Purchasing										NO.		TIME	NO.		TIME				
DISTANCE TRAVELED (Feet)										NO.		TIME	NO.		TIME				
DISTANCE TRAVELED (Feet)										NO.		TIME	NO.		TIME				
STEP NO.	DETAILS OF METHOD		OPERATION	TRANSPORTATION	INSPECTION	DELAY	STORAGE	DISTANCE (In feet)	QUANTITY	TIME	ANALYSIS (Why?)				ANALYSIS				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRESENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PROPOSED									WHAT?	WHERE?	WHEN?	HOW?	ELIMINATE	CHANGE	REPLACE	PERSON	IMPROVE
1	In A's desk drawer		○	◇	□	▽				NA									
2	Removed and placed on desk		○	◇	□	▽				0									
3	Fill out (1/3 copies)		●	◇	□	▽			1	10M									
4	In A's "out" basket		○	◇	□	▽				30M									
5	To B's office by messenger		○	◇	□	▽	100'			2M									
6	In B's "in" basket		○	◇	□	▽				25M									
7	Checked for accuracy		○	◇	□	▽				2M	✓								✓
8	Signed		●	◇	□	▽			1	0									
9	In B's "out" basket		○	◇	□	▽				35M									
10	To A's office by messenger		○	◇	□	▽	100'			2M	✓	✓	Does it need to go back to "A"?						✓
11	In A's "in" basket		○	◇	□	▽				20M	✓								
12	Read for completeness		○	◇	□	▽				3M	✓	✓	Could "B" do this?						✓
13	Carbons removed		○	◇	□	▽				1M	✓	✓							
14	Sorted for distribution		○	◇	□	▽				1M	✓	✓							
15	In A's "out" basket (awaiting pick-up)		○	◇	□	▽				30M	✓								
			○	◇	□	▽													
			○	◇	□	▽													
			○	◇	□	▽													
			○	◇	□	▽													
			○	◇	□	▽													
			○	◇	□	▽													

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