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Textile weaving units - Lets stop recording efficiencies

In cut throat competitive environment, one of the ways to reduce costs is augmenting production. This is usually done by means of increased efficiencies or better utilisation of workforce. However, where best efficiencies are reached, and workforce fairly well utilised, the only way seems to be by expanding capacity which is a capital intensive thing, and requires lead times. Finally of course, if the market demand is there, one has to go for it. But before that, and to fill in the interim period, one can and should look at extracting more from the existing machines. The question is how, if it is already running at good efficiency.

The answer lies in redefining efficiency, or a better term would be, re-looking at the capacity utilisation of the machines and plant. Efficiencies per se can be slightly misleading. Consider this, plant A has efficiency of 90% with machines running at 300 RPM and plant B has 85% efficiency with machines running at 350 RPM, on the face of it, plant A seems to be operating better. Yet if we calculate the final production, plant B gives higher production. By correlation, more earning. Thus, while efficiency can be one good monitoring tool, it can not be a absolute benchmark. So can there be another comparative standard?

Yes, we would like to suggest a alternate method, one which is in vogue in some units. That of recording Picks Inserted instead of efficiency as the primary figure. Recasting the above example in this basis we get plant A operating at 270 picks per minute insertion, and plant B operating at 297 picks per minute insertion. The final commercial performance is in line with this ranking. Thus, during production evaluation itself, we get commercial performance parameters to a certain level.

This system not only ensures that a machine put into production is best utilised, but also ensures that the machine is put into production at its highest possible operational capability. Otherwise, the inherent tendency to run machines at lower than best speeds is always there. All technicians know doing this will give them higher efficiency. Taking the highlight away from efficiency readings helps curb this tendency.

Some units have already implanted this system. Targets are set in terms of picks that will be inserted over the time frame of selected period the targets are set for. Evaluation and recordings on a daily basis are also done on basis of picks inserted per shift or per day. This is fairly easy to do as most modern weaving machines come equipped with pick counters and readings can be recorded straight from it. Even the latest loom data systems come equipped with picks inserted displays. Still, we have observed that they continue to give prominence to efficiency recordings. We understand that those figures can also play a role in some evaluations, however, it is our experience that if both recordings are given equal importance concurrently, the tendency to veer toward monitoring on efficiency basis usually returns. This can also be partially due to reluctance to abandon an age old system and also the normal human trait of going back to status quo.

Here we would like to suggest a drastic measure. It is open to debate and discussion. Why don't we stop recording efficiencies all together, and just record Picks Inserted? Will that cause any problems? In our opinion, whatever minor problems are likely to arise, can be tackled and some via media found. Of course, like any other system the new one too is not going to be perfect in all respects and will have its own pitfalls and drawbacks. Still, in the balance the new system has a lot of merit in its potential to extract the hidden potential of the plant.

We welcome any discussion or criticism of the above approach. Let us at least evaluate and toss around this system, even if it is on paper.

- See more at: <http://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/3186/textile-weaving-units#sthash.6VhrDuwp.dpuf>