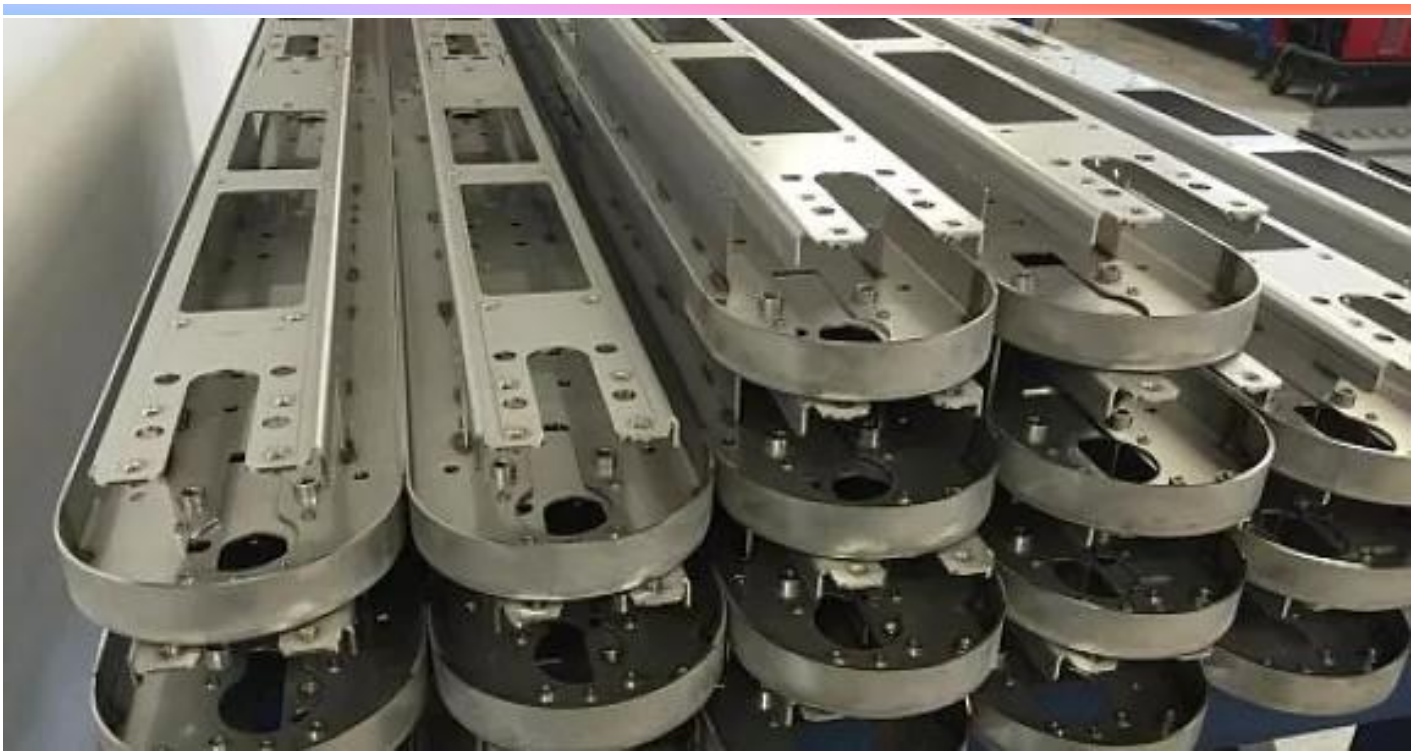


M-Design Production halves delivery times and doubles turnover thanks to QRM

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M-Design Production has for some time been making the best high quality sheet metal products, but delivery scheduling and production planning was often something of a challenge. Therefore the company decided to take a different approach to the production department and by extension, the entire company. The recent staged implementation of the new strategy, known as QRM, has certainly had a positive effect!

M-Design Production based in Zedelgem in Belgium specialises in laser cutting and bending sheet materials as well as metal welding. This SME offers high quality, customised sheet metal and welding work to both large and small customers including M-Design, who produce stoves and fireplaces. The company aims for sustainability thanks to the high-tech software and machinery it uses, as well years of experience among its employees.

Each day the company goes through more than 10 tons of material of various qualities and thicknesses. The starting point of every product is the sheet material that is always held in stock. The sheets are processed free of scratches in an automatic sheet store that has a storage capacity of 80 tons. The company insists on keeping wastage to a minimum in order to offer competitive prices. Efficiency and lead times at each production stage are maximised, with design refinements occurring each step of the way. This is how M-Design strives to deliver top quality just when it is

needed.

According to company manager Jan Pauwels: “We’ve really worked hard on product quality, which has resulted in us obtaining ISO 9001 certification. The production itself was next. It was mainly delivery times and production planning that proved to be pretty challenging.” M-Design Production went in search of finding a way of improving delivery times and ended up talking to Sirris.

QRM is simply common sense

Jan Pauwels learned more about QRM (Quick Response Manufacturing) by participating in one of our Masterclasses. He immersed himself in the strategy and also joined the QRM Alpha Specialist training course. This is how the changes that took place at the company were speeded up. Jan: “Because of the training course, I started noticing things that I had missed before, and so gradually I started looking differently at the way we did things. The idea that ‘machines mustn’t stop’ gradually evolved into ‘machines may come to a standstill’. QRM gave me new and to be honest, obvious insights, which were often contrary to what I had been taught before. You learn how to use your common sense.”

Breakthrough with Q-ROC

M-Design Production went at full speed with implementing QRM in the production department, and with good results. In addition, a Q-ROC was launched at office level where one group was separated and face-to-face communication was instigated. Jan Pauwels explained: “Emailing has become the norm inside companies, although this form of communication takes up precious time and is ultimately not completely reliable. Have all the messages been read? Will the recipients reply? And when? By bringing people together in a separate area you encourage them to talk among themselves and ask each other more questions, which are generally answered immediately.” This way people have become more aware of what is important and the orders and follow-up run more smoothly right from the start.

Ambitions reinforced by positive results

Even with just a few modifications taken from the QRM philosophy, M-Design was able within a couple of months to see an increase in turnover of more than 50 per cent while employing the same number of people. Order follow-up is now strictly managed and is much more transparent.

Jan Pauwels: “In order to know what kind of results, if any, you get with the changes, it is important to take measurements. Once you’ve identified the starting point you can see the impact and also the level of impact that has been made. This demonstrated that by making just a few changes we were able to reduce lead times by one third in just a three months. These results have given us a clear boost to go even further. It must be possible to double the turnover with the same number of people, while simultaneously halving the lead times. Already deliveries are coming increasingly within the planned periods and, very importantly, lead times have become predictable.” This even applies to the large deliveries, which is much appreciated by the customers.

(Source picture : M-Design Production)

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