b-token and Sirris design more efficient production flow

01 June 2016, 13:43

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Token manufacturer b-token, based in Retie, has grown exponentially in the past few years. However, production had struggled to keep pace, and delivery times were sometimes being missed. Sirris's experts investigated exactly where the capacity problem lay and worked with b-token to design a new production flow.

- Review of current production flow
- Calculation of theoretical production capacity
- Analysis of production with a view to flexible automation.

Based in Retie in the Campine region of northern Belgium, b-token develops and manufactures personalised tokens which it exports all over the world. Embossed Braille Tokens™ and tokens that activate a smartphone app are among the extensive range of products manufactured by this innovative SME.

> "The calculation of theoretical production capacity pointed to a capacity problem. This meant that every minor delay in production had dramatic implications for the lead time."

Straining at the limits

Things are moving quickly for Retie-based token manufacturer b-token, with over 30 million discs of all imaginable colours and designs rolling off the production line each year. The company is also innovating heavily, recently launching a Braille Token™ as well as Smart Tokens that activate extra information on a smartphone.
However, its rapid growth in recent years had pushed the company to its limits, both technologically and organisationally, meaning that b-token was not always able to meet its agreed delivery times.
To determine exactly where the problems lay and design a more efficient production flow, the token manufacturer sought assistance from Sirris.

Production flow scan

Sirris's experts calculated the theoretical production capacity of the existing facilities and workforce. They then examined the current production flow, looking at how each step was organised, how much time it took, and above all where time was being wasted. The experts also considered whether certain steps in the production process could be automated.

New machines and expanded workforce

The analyses found that the company was indeed struggling with capacity issues due to its exponential growth, so that every minor delay had disastrous knock-on effects for delivery times. Both the workforce and facilities were in urgent need of expansion. b-token has wasted no time investing in new machinery and expanding its production teams.

However, the scan also found potential efficiency gains within the flow. The production process in the new manufacturing building was redesigned to enhance its flow. Analysis of the printing process found that much of the manual work could be done by robots, including the placing of tokens in the moulds. Here too, b-token has already taken some initial steps – a ‘token’ of its commitment to a more productive future.

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