

# Project Management

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The plastic sheet extrusion industry has developed from single (mono) layer extrusion to multilayer coextrusion systems of five, six, seven or more layered structures and the electronics required for operation of these systems have become more sophisticated. Additionally, vendor supplied components are more prevalent and require integration into the system.

Customers are becoming more sophisticated and are requiring more hi-tech PLC systems to be integrated into the system for monitoring and control. They schedule sales of product from new lines well in advance of line installation. With these systems sometimes producing upwards of 8000 lbs/hour, delivery of new systems that have been fully tested (downtime minimization) is of the utmost importance for the customer and for our relationship with the customer.

Our company has realized that putting a complete extrusion system together and shipping it on time requires the assignment of a project manager to each project. The project manager coordinates the complete delivery schedule start to finish, regardless of size, whether it be a single extruder or a multilayer extrusion system.

The primary purpose of the project manager is to coordinate the order from order entry through engineering, manufacturing, assembly (electrical and mechanical), system test and final shipment. He is responsible for specifying and ordering outside vendor components to completely conform to the specifications of the individual system that is being manufactured. Another important function of the project manager is to be the primary customer contact, working to resolve all issues that may arise on the project and keeping the customer informed of the project schedule status.

To get the order through the system, the project manager schedules a series of meetings throughout the order delivery schedule. There are meetings after receipt of an order which involves the sales, engineering and manufacturing departments. Project review meetings are held periodically thereafter to review the status of the project, coordinate electrical interface with mechanical assembly, and resolve any issues that may have developed since the last meeting was held. The number of meetings for each project depends on the complexity of the system. Reviewing the key component and resale delivery dates is very important to keeping an order on schedule. The sooner a problem is identified, the sooner the problem can be solved with a minimum delay to the schedule.

The key to any successful project is to keep the customer informed of the status of the project and all developing issues, and to do everything possible to meet the committed shipping schedule. With the complexity of the projects that we deal with today there are many things that can go wrong, but we have to overcome all obstacles to make our customer a success which leads to repeat orders.

- Larry Mellow, Davis-Standard

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