

Whatever it Takes

Nail big projects with this checklist for ensuring careful planning and attention to detail.

“This is a huge opportunity for us. We just need to nail this project. Do whatever it takes.”

Maybe you have heard this “go get ‘em” speech at the outset of a new customer project. Perhaps you’ve even been guilty of giving this kind of speech yourself. But pretend for a moment you’re on the receiving end. What, exactly, are you supposed to do?

Times are tough. The economy is slow. New business projects are tough to come by, if they exist at all. Yet winning new projects may be your only opportunity to survive the downturn. Knowing this, why on earth would we assume that telling our people to do whatever it takes to nail a project is sufficient planning? Does your finishing operation use a checklist for all new projects? If not, consider developing one with the following in mind:

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

✓Ensure lead times expected by the customer are documented and that the customer’s method for measuring on-time delivery is understood.

✓Understand how the customer defines a quality part. If there is a written specification it should be reviewed and on file before processing the first order. If the project is being transferred from another vendor, be certain you understand the reasons the previous supplier lost the project.

✓If a sample product was run during the sales process, have examples available for comparison.

✓Make note of all pertinent contact people in the customer’s organization. The list should include repre-

sentatives of operations, shipping and receiving, purchasing, quality and accounting. Give the customer a list for your organization.

✓Document all aspects of the pricing model, including purchase order arrangements, volume discounts, minimum charges, freight charges, and expedite fees. Many sales people make commitments during the sales process and don’t document them. Make sure the sales team reviews customer expectations and has an opportunity to amend or correct.

PROCESSING AND INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

✓Verify how product will be packaged by the customer when received.

✓Document special processing or handling requirements directly on the traveler or work order.

✓Confirm that customer lot control requirements are documented.

✓Define unique aspects of the substrates. Examples include uncommon alloys and lubricants or rust preventatives that may affect parameters.

✓Ensure the order is routed to the proper department, line and process.

✓Consider capacity limitations before receiving the first order to confirm machine capacity.

✓Establish that any special racking requirements have been properly documented.

✓Define all process parameters (*e.g.* dwell times, bath temperatures, chemical concentrations).

✓Document throughput information (parts per rack, pounds per barrel, parts per hour, etc.) before running the first order.

✓Implement inspection procedures adequate to meet the customer’s quality expectations.

✓Ensure that any specific tests or sampling plans required by the customer are followed.

PACKAGING AND TRANSPORTATION

✓Review all customer packaging requirements prior to initiating the order.

✓Ensure all necessary materials are available.

✓If the finisher is expected to provide transportation, properly establish dock times.

✓If product is being shipped by common carrier, establish whether the customer has preferences.

New projects can make or break a year, and in this tough economy can even make or break a finisher. Don’t just tell your team to do whatever it takes to nail the new project. Tell them what it takes. ■



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