



SOLUTIONS FOR WOOD

By Ric Ptak

Don't make your edgebander the bottleneck in your plant

Using value stream mapping (VSM) to determine flow, location and options of your edgebander.

The term value stream mapping refers to the tool for showing the sequence and movement (mapping) of information, materials and actions for a given product flow (value stream). Usually, the mapping is done by following a product's production path in reverse, or upstream from customer to supplier.

In this article, the value stream being addressed includes the action of edgebanding wood components in a millwork shop and how this operation affects what happens before product comes to the edgebander and also after it leaves the edgebander.

It is important to capture the big picture rather than just what is happening at the edgebander. In very simplistic terms one needs to know the cycle times of all the operations (both value added and non value added) in the



production sequence (including set up time or change over) as well as what is happening to the work in progress or inventory between processing steps.

If one was to ask edgebander operators, their supervisor or even the estimator how long it takes to edgeband an eight foot 19 mm thick melamine shelf with 0.5 mm PVC, or about the changeover set up time to edgeband product in 6.0 mm hardwood, one would most often get a ball park guess or just a plain "I don't know?"

in the plant layout, and when the need arises, help them to identify the correct options when upgrading their edgebander.

For many manufacturers, value stream mapping is a useful tool to integrate and evaluate edgebander options that fit the needs of the company and its customers. VSM can also give insight to the

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Knowing how long processes take can identify the bottleneck in an operation. There is also great value in knowing how long a process takes because doing so provides a baseline, which then allows you to track, measure and then make improvements. The improvements can be as simple as reducing set up times or having the edgebander in the correct location on the plant floor. Or, your analysis may lead to the costlier decision of upgrading the machine. Tracking times and performance will also help an organization identify waste and their sources, will give them insight into locating the edgebander

production, estimating and scheduling departments. For more information on VSM and this article, please contact Ric Ptak. **WW**

Ric Ptak has over 20 years of experience in implementing numerous improvement initiatives with the millwork industry, having held senior positions with a number of well-known millwork companies in Alberta.

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