

3 Critical Components of Every Successful Project

The most successful people in the machine building business, or in any business for that matter, are those men and women who repeat their successes and avoid repeating the failures. While that statement seems obvious and elementary on the surface, we all know 'repeat offenders,' people or institutions who continue the same patterns of unproductive behavior and reap the same undesirable results. In our company's years of seeking out and obtaining the desirable results, we have identified three key elements that create a pattern of success in machine building—and any other kind of project:

1. A comprehensive understanding of the customer's needs

Each and every successful project starts with a thorough understanding of the desired outcome or needs. As with a physician, we must first diagnose before we can prescribe. The more information that you give your machine builder regarding your process flow, component pieces and assemblies, cycle time requirements, necessary poke-yokes, existing machinery, anticipated challenges and final customer "hot buttons," the better and more comprehensive our understanding of your desired goals and needs will be. In other words, if you request a plug for the hole in your boat, we must first understand the size, shape, cause, and characteristics of the hole before we can build a suitable plug.

2. A comprehensive solution to meet those needs

As a manufacturing engineer, you are charged not only with implementing continuous improvements to existing lines but also with bringing in new lines and projects. Your employer expects you to be able to find and then implement the solutions that will most profitably meet your company's needs. At times, your machine builder may recommend or implement traditional production methods that are tried and proven in applications similar to yours. At other times, they may introduce technology that you may not have experienced. Regardless, a good machine builder will work with you to develop a solution that meets or exceeds the needs that we all agree upon at the beginning of the project. If it's important to you, it's important to us. The plug that we design, build, and install is for the hole in your boat, not just any hole in any boat.

3. Shared values and trust among all parties

For any project to be truly successful, all parties must be dedicated to developing a win/win solution, and share a mutual trust. You trust that your machine builder will build and deliver a productive, profitable, and timely machine. We trust that we have been provided with all of the information necessary to make the project a success. If one party wins at the expense of the other, the project is a failure, no exceptions.

So what does it take to bring together a successful project? A thorough understanding of your needs, an understanding of how to meet them, and the trust that neither party will let the other down. Sounds simple. Sounds basic. The most important things in life usually are.