

Fast React Systems - Specialist Planning & Sourcing Solutions for the Apparel, Textile & Footwear Industry

Planning & Productivity Improvement with FastReact

How FastReact can help your business to improve productivity

Most manufacturing businesses, even in low-cost countries, are increasingly faced with the problems of rising costs and competition for skilled labour. These factors are rapidly eroding any labour cost advantage and long-term survival and profitability are increasingly dependant on improvements in productivity.

Businesses that still rely on simple manual tools such as spreadsheets, reports and emails find it increasingly difficult to cope with the complexities of planning. The reality is that in the current planning environment of increased product complexity and rapidly reducing lead times, manual systems are now simply unable to cope.

FastReact has been specifically developed in the Apparel and Textiles sectors to provide solutions to these problems:

The FastReact Approach to Planning

Many companies look at ways to sew faster, such as new machinery, operator training and incentive schemes; but too many overlook the fact that sewing faster is not the only way to increase productivity...

It is equally important to have the operators spend more of the total available time sewing. In reality all factories lose 5% -20% of their

available capacity to non-productive time.

The Very Real Financial Benefits

Consider the potential saving of a 2-4% improvement in your own factory performance...

A typical factory in S E Asia employs 2000 workers and pays a minimum wage of around \$4 per 8 hours. The annual wage bill is therefore in the region of \$ 2.4 mil. It is commonly accepted that the real cost is double this when considering overheads; so \$4.8mil per year.

- A 2% improvement in operator utilisation would net a direct saving of \$96,000
- A 4% improvement in operator utilisation would net a direct saving of \$192,000!

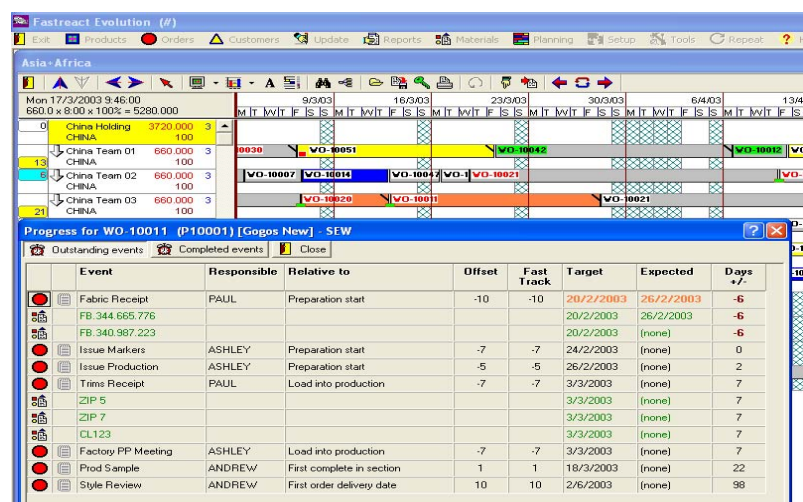
1. Waiting For Raw Materials and Accessories - Lost Time

The reality is that many companies struggle to clearly prioritise and communicate what they need from their suppliers and when.

How Can FastReact Help?

FastReact provides clear targets for each order/material item, based on 'how much and when required' in time for production. These targets are calculated on Just In Time (JIT)/ Lean principles, so clear priorities are set directly from the latest production plan.

Targets are NOT based simply on the delivery date minus a standard production lead time as this does not reflect priorities. If we have 30 orders all for the same delivery date, only the latest production plan can reflect our true priorities.



Example of a Low Level Planning Board with Raw Materials Linked to the Plan

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Through FastReact we can tell all suppliers exactly what we need and when. FastReact can then receive feedback on expected materials availability for quick and easy reference during the planning process.

If expected dates are not met, clear warnings arise on the planning board.

When considering action, quick and easy re-planning plus fast-tracking of activities makes problem solving easier.

2. Bottlenecks Due to Machine Shortages Or Capacity Problems

Many factories fail to see far enough in advance that they will have an overload or bottlenecks on some operations or processes. This will be due to the style mix at a particular time leading to machine shortages on certain machines in sewing, or capacity problems either before or after sewing on operations such as embroidery, washing or sandblasting etc. With an ever-changing plan, it can be difficult to keep track of the style mix and loading on key machines or processes. With manual and spreadsheet based systems, this can be an almost impossible task.

How Can FastReact Help?

FastReact allows the user to define which operations and machines they wish to monitor. As soon as the main sewing plan is created, the operation bar-charts provide an

easy to read monitor of the loading on key machines or process areas.

Potential overloads and problems are highlighted well in advance (by operation and by day/week/month), in plenty of time to take corrective action. Full drill down and 'modelling' of capacity and working hours etc. allow for rapid 'what-if' problem solving.

3. Poor Workflow Due to Work In Progress (WIP) Problems

For many factories, day to day production problems result in insufficient work for certain production lines. Many factories lose output due to not having cut/embroidered/printed the correct orders or the correct quantities to

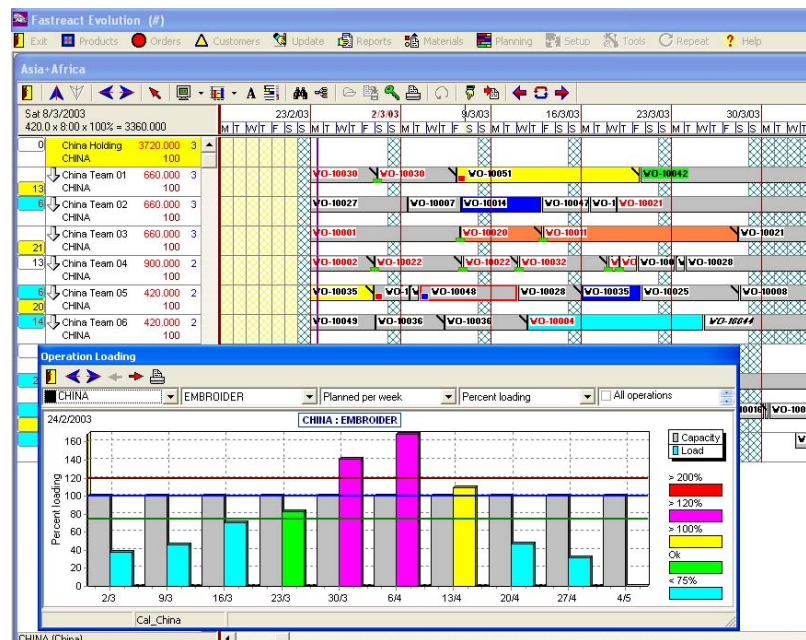
feed the production lines.

This is often the result of numerous, necessary changes to the production plan and not being able to quickly communicate the latest requirements/priorities to each department.

How Can FastReact Help?

FastReact generates work schedules for all departments and subcontractors from the master production plan (e.g. sew). This ensures the latest priorities are always clearly communicated. Daily production updates are also fed into FastReact.

Any WIP problems, such as insufficient cut work coming through for sewing, are immediately highlighted with a colour coded



Example of Bottleneck Management for Supporting Processes Driven from the Latest Plan

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warning on the FastReact planning board.

4. Fire Fighting Leads to Unnecessary Style and Colour Changes

All of the above problems cause further productivity losses due to fire fighting and the changes cause disruption on the factory floor. These problems often result in unnecessary style and colour changes. For example due to delays and urgency, a style which was originally planned on 1 sewing line now has to be re-planned on to 2 or 3 sewing lines to catch the delivery date. This means more style change losses and lower overall production efficiency.

How Can FastReact Help?

FastReact allows you plan and communicate better: If you can plan better to start with, there will be fewer surprises, and both management and suppliers will receive clearer priorities. Potential problems will be seen in advance and there is more time to fix them. In the inevitable cases where things do go wrong FastReact allows for quick 'what-if' planning to find and evaluate different solutions.

5. High Costs and Poor Decision Making Due to Laborious Manual Systems

Manual planning methods inevitably result in low efficiency and high overheads. Indirect staff used to manually enter data into numerous

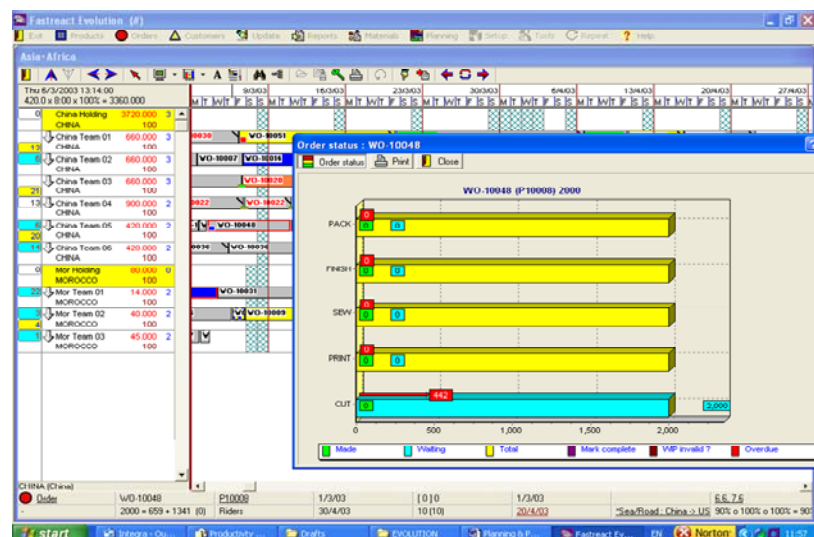
spreadsheets, reports, data summary and analysis sheets etc. Lack of visibility results in management time wasted in trying to identify priorities.

Problems are often not visible until it is too late to avoid excess costs or late delivery. Staff are unable to quickly test out different "what if" scenarios when planning. Poor decisions result from not being able to consider alternatives.

Much time is typically wasted in numerous meetings, emails and phone calls to communicate the frequent changes in the plan. In summary, with manual systems far too much time and effort is spent in simply identifying the problems in the first place, leaving far too little time to solve them. Management time lost on managing and planning all these symptoms could be better spent on analyzing and

implementing business improvement solutions, such as SAM to provide better information for planning. FastReact makes both the planning team and management more productive, allowing them to concentrate on problem solving. Highly visual and easy to use, the FastReact solution sits on the local PC network and provides a central point of reference for all departments and 'a single version of the truth'.

To plan effectively there are many variables to consider including capacity, lead times, material availability and current production progress against the plan.... if one of these variables changes on a single order, it may also have a knock on effect on other styles and orders. FastReact allows the immediate effect to be seen, not just on the order involved, but also on all other orders.



Example of WIP Status Showing Full Progress of Any Order, Including Any Problems

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What Our Customers Say About FastReact

Jintana Apparel Co Ltd (Thailand)

"Before FastReact, it has been a difficult and time consuming job for us to make a production plan for even 50 production lines, with FastReact, they help us make planning for over 100 production lines a simple job. And there are lots more additional benefit that we are exploring."

Mr Purid Thanalongkorn, Managing Director

Crystal Group (Hong Kong)

"By selecting FastReact to work with our SAP business system and GPro shop-floor system, we have selected the Best of Breed applications to work together to provide the total solution for all our business needs. FastReact provides a highly visual, flexible and interactive means of manipulating all the essential planning elements of capacity, raw materials availability and critical path, in a single integrated solution."

Mr. Sherman Lau, President of Elegance Industrial Company Ltd

S.P. Apparels (India)

The use of FastReact has improved our On Time Delivery Performance (OTDP%) and has contributed to our sales growth. Good planning is fundamental to success in today's fast moving apparel industry. FastReact is the key driver to achieving successful control of this vital area. In our experience, the return on investment was around 6 months from full implementation".

Mr. P. Sundararajan, Managing Director

Dewhirst (UK)

"FastReact has enabled the closer coordination of functions within the business and this has facilitated a better materials planning process. This has directly resulted in the stockholding on materials being reduced by 40-50% (25-30 days stockholding down to an average of 15 days), at the same time as improving the raw material availability to the production floor. FastReact was surprisingly easy to install, and we have been very impressed with robustness and functionality provided by the software. Given the FastReact pedigree we expected a good planning system, but the flexibility and control provided by the FastReact Critical Path system was an unexpected bonus."

Glen Walker, Finance Director

VT Garment Co. Ltd (Thailand)

"We selected FastReact as it met all our requirements for a powerful planning tool, providing a garment industry specific solution that addressed and integrated the key planning areas of factory capacity and critical path not covered by our ERP business system. (FastReact) has enabled us to make real improvements in On Time Delivery and reductions in air freight. I would have no hesitation to recommend FastReact to other factories. If used correctly they should get a return on investment within 12 months."

Khun Orasri Lotharukpong, Deputy Managing Director

MAS Active (Sri Lanka)

"FastReact was the only tool on the market, which we found capable of meeting all our requirements; and the implementation timescale is impressive. This allows us to be operational with FastReact extremely quickly, delivering immediate benefits to the business".

Mr. Prasanna Jayasekera, Director Planning & Strategy

LT Karle (India)

"Fast React typically quotes a ROI of under one year. However, considering our monthly wage bill, a 2% improvement of our monthly efficiency (by just improving our planning) can provide a ROI under 3-4 months"

Gokal Chittaranjan, Chief Executive - Manufacturing

Integra Aparels and Textiles (India)

"We find that the planning board is the most used feature at our facility since it enables us to quickly and accurately plan and re-plan processes, besides providing a fantastic bird's eye view of all orders simultaneously."

"We expected payback in 18 months time and we are on course to better that."

Krishna Kumar, Chief Executive Officer

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