



## **Increase Plant Efficiencies**

BY Hal Ettinger

A drive to increase efficiencies and productivity can go a long way toward enabling printers to remain both competitive and profitable as the economy begins to recover.

Reducing operating costs to get the most out of ever-narrowing margins is key to being a strong player now and in the future.

Reducing waste and optimizing workflow in the physical plant is a good place to start. Following these five steps to increasing plant operating efficiencies can help you focus your efforts:

- Optimize movement of skids and materials (e.g., raw materials, work in progress, finished goods) within departments and from department to department.
- Identify space wasters (e.g., old equipment that's never or seldom used, raw materials or finished goods that have been around for years, etc.) and do something to reduce or get rid of them.
- Be aware of areas in the plant that are underutilized or not used at all. Rethink your use of space, with an eye to increasing efficiencies.
- Assess how work flows within departments and from department to department. Make sure people move and product flows in the most efficient ways possible. If that's not the case, make the necessary changes.
- Identify current and future production needs of customers and promising prospects. Increase efficiencies in those areas so you'll have a "leg up" on the competition as the market grows.

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