

Quick Tips

Easy ideas to improve production efficiency

Overlooked Tools

Everyone likes to have the right tools around the house, but it is just as important to have them in the workplace. Having the proper tools to manufacture a product is essential. They help get the job done right, enhance efficiency, provide employee workplace safety, and ensure a quality product. Some of the handier tools that are often overlooked are:

- A dust removal roller keeps prints, substrates, and film clean prior to processing a mounting package in a press or roller laminator without leaving a tacky residue.
- Anti-static wisks, cloths, and gloves dissipate electrostatic charges that can build up on images and substrates and attract dust and dirt.
- Safety rulers reduce the chances of trimming accidents and improve accuracy. Look for ones with non-skid pads to prevent twisting and keeping the edges straight and true. Rulers with rugged safety guards also help keep cutting blades from riding up onto fingers and hands.
- Self-healing cutting mats can prolong the life of cutting tools and perforators and are designed to protect work surfaces from blades and knives.

These helpful tools make any production work easier and safer and make sure you're delivering a quality product to your customers.

Sue Doyen
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Miter Saw Cutting Area

It's often obvious if a double miter saw will cut a specific profile. But sometimes it's not. The best time-saving way to determine if a saw will accommodate a particular piece of moulding is to keep a drawing hand that shows the cutting capacity for varying heights and widths of a specific saw.

These templates either come with a saw, can be found in sales material, or are available on request from a manufacturer, who should be happy to provide them to their customers. Since the design of individual saws vary, having a chart for a specific saw is essential. Also, on saws that can use different size blades, the profiles that the saw accommodates also vary with blade diameter.

Once you have the appropriate drawing, make a copy, laminate it, and keep it with the saw. Just place it against the end of any moulding you're planning to cut. Any profile that fits within the drawing area can be cut on that saw.

With many saw models, as the width of the moulding increases the overall height needs to be less if you want to keep the highest points within the cutting area. Just make sure that the moulding fits within the area shown on the chart, and the saw will cut without a problem.

Jim Burke
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Use Color to Organize Your Production

There are many ways to manufacture custom frame orders in a production environment. If your production is anything like ours, it relies on an order/work ticket or some piece of paper that follows the order. The use of color can really help manage the flow of orders and, even in highly computerized production environments, the use of bright colors helps everyone visualize what is important.

We use color to make important things stand out—rushes and items to be shipped or delivered to customers. Special requests are circled or highlighted to make sure that the people working on those orders notice that something is different. Our “magic” color is red for these items. When people on the production floor see red, they know there is something special about that order.

We also batch items using color. We manually write in the same spot on each order/work ticket when orders need to be completed by, and color-code the days. Tuesdays are pink; Wednesdays are orange; Thursdays are purple; Fridays are green; and Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays are blue. The use of color allows our employees to clearly see when items are due and when they should be out of the factory. Even with intricate software, the use of color in this way help employees know quickly, at a glance, the status of a particular order.

Research has determined that more than 70 percent of all people learn better with visual stimulus. Color recognition is easy to implement and is comfortable for people to respond to. Using color in a production environment can help make employees more efficient.

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Contributors to this column are industry members who have experience in production framing operations. If you have a tip of your own, please send it to Quick Tips, PFM Production, 207 Commercial Court, Morganville, NJ 07751.