

# Quick Tips

## Easy ideas to improve production efficiency

### Keep Blades Down for Moulding Removal

When you are cutting small frames, it is safer to remove the piece of moulding that you're cutting while the miter saw blades are in the down position. Keeping your foot on the pedal will make sure that the teeth of the blade remain safely below the surface of the table. That way, if an operator's fingers do happen to accidentally brush against the blade, they would only touch the ground steel hub and not the teeth. Once the moulding has been removed from the saw, the foot pedal can then be released and the next cutting cycle can begin.

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### Underpinner Nail Placement

Because various types of moulding materials react differently when V-shaped fasteners or wedges are pushed into the back of the moulding, they usually require different spacing for nail positions based on the type of material you're joining. If you use a programmable joiner with nail positions preset in memory, that means you could experience problems when you switch from wood to MDF to polystyrene mouldings. The nail closest to the outside of the frame needs to move inward on poly or MDF compared to wood moulding. And for MDF, you might also need to use fewer fasteners or shorter nails. Using fewer fasteners generally works better for MDF moulding whereas taller fasteners are preferable for most polystyrene profiles.

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### Record Your Processes

A quick and easy way to manage your production floor is to consider writing down the processes performed in producing your products. This can be as simple or as complicated as you want, but the key is to create something useful for you and your production staff. Start with how orders are taken and write down what happens from there. You may be surprised at how inefficient things may be working.

Thinking about your business in this manner will allow you to understand what is happening on a daily basis. This can lead to many ideas on how to improve what you are doing. It also allows you to communicate with your people more effectively. I suggest including pictures of how art is received, stored, and moved. Then add where it goes for mounting, how frames are cut and joined, and how matboard is pulled and cut. Lastly, list how and by whom pieces are assembled, wrapped, and stored for pick up.

Keep it simple to start—one or two pages at most. Refine your processes as you review them, and post the processes throughout your production floor for reference.

The whole review should take most people only a few minutes, but its benefits can be huge. Benefits include process improvement (review and improve—look for bottlenecks or duplication of effort), training (review consistently with current employees, show new employees how things work), and communication (getting everyone in the organization on the same page with common focus). Armed with this understanding, you can then look at such things as equipment requirements, software review, and personnel policies to maximize production effectiveness.

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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.