

IF I ONLY KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW



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Imagine how much better off you would be right now if you could have taken your current ideas on how to run a truss plant and applied them 10 or 20 years ago.

If only . . .

The challenge in business for us all is to develop and adopt new ideas so as to stay one step ahead of our competitors. Although this involves an element of risk, in almost all cases, those who have taken the initiative have been well rewarded.

It wasn't so long ago that a truss plant producing a house lot of trusses per day would employ about five or six factory staff and a few in the office. This would have been considered a highly productive and competitive plant with healthy profits.

Who would of thought that the same plant today would need to produce about twice as much or run with half the staff to achieve the same profit?

Imagine the benefits then of knowing what a difference simple automation of your saws and pressing stations could have made to your overall output.

Or if you could have foreseen the benefits of using information

generated by your truss design programs to automatically set cutting lengths, angles and jig locations.

So what's in store? What can we do now that will give us an edge?

Well here are just a few points that most of us will agree on:

- The truss industry will continue to become further automated and computerised.
- The way in which we use our production staff will change.
- Monitoring of our production will be a higher priority.
- Staff working conditions will improve and safety requirements will increase.

Let's have a look at what sort of changes we can expect in these areas.

The development of computerised and automated equipment for sawing and pressing will further improve as opportunities present themselves using new and emerging technologies.

Materials handling, preparation, presentation and removal of material, will be given a higher priority to ensure the production flow to the cutting and pressing stations is optimised.

There will be an increase in the amount of automation for the handling, in-feeding, offloading and stacking of raw materials, components and finished product.

An increasing amount of labour intensive and repetitious work will also be carried out by, or made easier by, automated equipment and as a result, production levels will be much less affected by breaks, sick days, holidays and rostered days off.

An increased focus for the production staff will be to ensure that each piece of automated equipment is achieving the maximum output. Downtime will be a major cost. Regular preventative maintenance will need to be given a high priority.

Monitoring the output of each piece of production equipment will be a key to ongoing success. Information collated by the automated equipment will be valuable for accurate scheduling and production management. Most automated equipment will include the ability to report output volumes in real time.

There will be an enormous amount of information available for use in making informed production based management decisions.

It is clear from the changes we have seen over the last few years, that the safety and working conditions of our staff will continue to be a high priority.

We will need to look more closely at how we can minimise the use of labour in areas where heavy lifting or fatigue etc are issues and also to improve all areas that will increase the safety of our staff.

As a result we are likely to see more machines used in place of labour in areas where

work-safety is an issue.

The challenge for us all is to plan for the changes that are in store in the future so we can remain competitive and keep one step ahead.

Some of us will look carefully and positively to find where opportunities may exist.

Some of us already are...

