



# OVERVIEW of AUTOMATION PLANNING PROJECT

## Why Do An Automation Planning Project?

Automating a major manufacturing operation is a significant endeavor for any organization. New automation projects are infrequent events, except at the largest of organizations. Company leadership usually endures a steep learning curve during these projects. Making a strategic investment in automation is a challenge due to shortened product life cycles now in the market. Automatic production machinery is costly and strongly influences company financial performance. Once the order for the new machinery is set in motion, it is often difficult and costly to make changes. In an automation planning project, Strategic Modularity, Inc. helps the client achieve its mission by applying proven, effective processes to help make an efficient and strategic equipment investment, turning a potential liability into an asset.

## Review Present and Future Requirements

An automation initiative is a major opportunity to build on what's going well and to enhance the effectiveness of the facility in support of the organization's mission. This includes a review of product designs, product mix, processes, staffing, quality control methods, and capital allocation. Key company success factors are developed for the new manufacturing system.

## Teamwork and Decision Making Process

A critical success factor for the successful automation project is that management is prepared to make the decisions that have long-term operational and financial impacts. Machinery purchase decisions are made by only a few decision makers, yet have far reaching impacts on the organization. To facilitate teamwork and crisp decision making, it is important to map the process and product structures, assess the impacts, and establish the sequence of potential decisions. The internal project manager is supported, developed, and coached for success.

## Requisition for the Equipment

Management, select employees, and others are queried about their needs and are enrolled in the process. Once requirements are understood, they are integrated into an iteratively developed

requisition that has management's firm support, works financially, and will be embraced by the large organization. This requisition guides the search for equipment, payback analysis, and potential risks.

## Evaluate Commercially Available Equipment

It is often better to purchase commercial equipment, if it is available. Sometimes used equipment is available for a fraction of the cost of new equipment. Companies often pursue custom automation because they are not aware of commercial offerings.

## Plan Utilization of Equipment

Equipment does not have to run 100% of the time to be effective. Think how we use cars and personal computers: they are labor saving when you need it. Production automation is the same way, and sometimes it pays to have duplicate machinery to keep workcells intact (a key lean manufacturing concept) to avoid excessive material movement and handling.

## Benefits

- Align capital and expenses with company financials.
- Create built-in options for expansion.
- Spending a small amount for the concept and plan accelerates cycle time and reduces total risk exposure.
- Projects that fail to meet business objectives can be cancelled or redefined.
- Improve the long-term utility of large capital investments and product platforms.
- Future variants of modular products can be produced in less time for less money.
- Independent client advice. Get the best automation solution for your company.
- Modular designs help manage complexity.
- Right-sized equipment provides the highest return on invested capital.
- The procurement process is significantly accelerated.

## Find Out More, Contact Strategic Modularity

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