

The Product Wheel Handbook: Creating Balanced Flow in High-Mix Process Operations

By Peter L. King, Jennifer S. King

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The Product Wheel (PW) design process has practical methods for finding the optimum sequence, minimizing changeover costs, and freeing up useful capacity. So much so, that the DuPont™ Company and Exxon Mobil are just a few companies that have used the product wheel concept to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage.

Breaking down a fairly complex design process into manageable steps, **The Product Wheel Handbook: Creating Balanced Flow in High-Mix Process Operations** walks readers through the process for designing and implementing the PW technique. It includes a case study taken from actual practice that illustrates the design process and its benefits. Describing how to apply the product wheel technique to any manufacturing operation, the book:

- Details the steps required to implement product wheels
- Explains why certain traditional manufacturing metrics should be reevaluated so they don’t inhibit product wheel performance
- Defines the cultural foundation necessary for smooth product wheel design and implementation
- Includes a real-world case study and several examples of product wheels being used by successful manufacturing companies?including BG Products, Inc., the DuPont™ Company, the Dow Chemical Company, and Appleton

Many of the steps in wheel design described in this book are not new. What’s new is their application to production planning and scheduling problems, and more importantly, a clear roadmap explaining how and when they should be used in product wheel design.

Supplying you with the tools to reduce the chaos often found in production scheduling, the book outlines a disciplined structure that will allow you to spend less of your time resolving schedule problems. Most importantly, it provides your organization with a stable platform to deal with abnormal events in a less

stressful and more logical manner.

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Editorial Review

Review

Peter L. and Jennifer S. King, authors of **The Product Wheel Handbook**, *have provided excellent strategies for implementing product wheels and improving an existing product wheel process. ... Written in a clear, concise manner, this book is a how-to manual for product wheel design, implementation, maintenance, and continuous improvement. The authors integrate principles with concepts in a way that is practical and easy to understand. ... If you are tasked to implement product wheels or want to learn more about how they can lead to improvements, you will find* **The Product Wheel Handbook** *a valuable reference.*
?Book review by Alan R. Leigh CSCP, CPIM, and Randy Woehl appearing in *APICS*, January 2014

Peter King continues to be a thought leader in the spread of advanced manufacturing practices throughout the process industries. His product wheel concepts and practices are an excellent resource for plants with multiple products sharing the operating assets.
?Ray Floyd, Shingo Prize-winning author of *Liquid Lean* and member of IndustryWeek's Manufacturing Hall of Fame

The authors have a gift for writing well, in a way that will keep the reader connected throughout this excellent work. It flows through the methodology in a well structured and logical way and could only be written by someone who has lived through product wheel implementation many times ... definitely a must-read for any Lean practitioner.
?Henrique Fagundes, Senior Project Manager, DuPont

The product wheel is a true landmark in the management and organization of the workplace. All manufacturing operations searching for a way to organize and level the factory should have this book.
?Cash Powell, Jr., Editorial Board, Target Magazine; Association for Manufacturing Excellence; Lead Consultant, Center for Competitive Change, University of Dayton

A clearly written guide to designing and improving product wheels ... . Pete and Jennifer King take you through a logical step-by-step process without ever resorting to simplistic recipes. This book will be valuable to businesses where both pull and push systems apply. Highly recommended!
?Peter C. Compo, Director of Integrated Business Management, DuPont

The Dow Chemical Company has used **The Product Wheel Handbook** *for good communication and collaboration between functions. We highly recommend this book as it is a logical layout with step by step implementation instructions. ... Not only did our processes become more efficient but our teams were able to understand a new process that they can apply in different applications in the work process. We recommend this book to any company looking to apply lean concepts specifically in the process industry and also for leaders who are looking for applications to help explain such processes to their employees.*
?Martin Fernandes, Supply Chain Innovation Director, Dow Chemical

?Shannon Hemmelgarn, Supply Chain Business Planner, Dow Chemical

The views expressed in this review are of the authors alone and do not represent the views of The Dow Chemical Company

About the Author

Jennifer S. King is an operations research analyst with a government contractor, analyzing operational impacts of emerging Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) technologies and developing cost and performance models to support airline investment decisions. Prior to that, she spent 5 years with the Department of Defense developing discrete event simulation models to assist the army in setting reliability requirements for new platforms, and analyzing performance of weapon systems alternatives. Her prior publishing experience includes editing textbooks and developing mathematics problems and solutions for ExploreLearning.

Jennifer has degrees in mathematics and psychology from the University of Virginia, and a master's degree in operations research from the University of Delaware. She is a member of INFORMS.

Peter L. King is the president of Lean Dynamics, LLC, a manufacturing improvement consulting firm located in Newark, Delaware. Prior to founding Lean Dynamics, Pete spent 42 years with the DuPont™ Company in a variety of control systems, manufacturing systems engineering, continuous flow manufacturing, and Lean manufacturing assignments. That included 18 years applying Lean manufacturing techniques to a wide variety of products, including sheet goods such as DuPont Tyvek®, Sontara®, and Mylar®; fibers such as nylon, Dacron®, Lycra®, and Kevlar®; automotive paints; performance lubricants; bulk chemicals; adhesives; electronic circuit board substrates; and biological materials used in human surgery. On behalf of DuPont, he consulted with key customers in the processed food and carpet industries. He retired from DuPont in 2007, leaving a position as principal consultant in the Lean Center of Competency. Recent clients have included producers of sheet goods, lubricants and fuel additives, and polyethylene and polypropylene pellets.

Pete received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Virginia Tech, graduating with honors. He is Six Sigma Green Belt certified (DuPont, 2001), Lean manufacturing certified (University of Michigan, 2002), and a Certified Supply Chain Professional (APICS, 2010). He is a member of the Association for Manufacturing Excellence, APICS, and the Institute of Industrial Engineers where he served as president of IIE's Process Industry Division in 2009–2010.

Pete is the author of *Lean for the Process Industries?Dealing with Complexity* (Productivity Press, 2009), and several published articles on the application of Lean concepts to process operations. He has been an invited speaker at several professional conferences and meetings.

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