# Forward

This textbook series is published at a very opportunity time when the discipline of industrial engineering is experiencing a phenomenal growth in China academia and with its increased interests in the utilization of the concepts, methods and tools of industrial engineering in the workplace. Effective utilization of these industrial engineering approaches in the workplace should result in increased productivity, quality of work, satisfaction and profitability to the cooperation.

The books in this series should be most suitable to junior and senior undergraduate students and first year graduate students, and to those in industry who need to solve problems on the design, operation and management of industrial systems.

Gavriel Salvendy

Department of Industrial Engineering, Tsinghua University

School of Industrial Engineering, Purdue University

April, 2002

# 前　　言

本教材系列的出版正值中国学术界工业工程学科经历巨大发展、实际工作中对工业工程的概念、方法和工具的使用兴趣日渐浓厚之时。在实际工作中有效地应用工业工程的手段将无疑会提高生产率、工作质量、合作的满意度和效果。

该系列中的书籍对工业工程的本科生、研究生和工业界中需要解决工程系统设计、运作和管理诸方面问题的人士最为适用。

加弗瑞尔·沙尔文迪
清华大学工业工程系
普渡大学工业工程学院（美国）
2002 年 4 月

# Preface

The first edition of this book was published in 1980 under the title ***Automation, Production Systems, and Computer-Aided Manufacturing***. A revision was published in 1987 with about 200 more pages and a slightly different title: ***Automation, Production Systems, and Computer Integrated Manufacturing***. The additional pages expanded the coverage of topics like industrial robotics, programmable logic controllers, material handling and storage, and quality control. But much of the book was very similar to the 1980 text. By the time I started work on the current volume (technically the second edition of the 1987 title, but in fact the third generation of the 1980 publication), it was clear that the book was in need of a thorough rewriting. New technologies had been developed and existing technologies had advanced, new theories and methodologies had emerged in the research literature, and my own understanding of automation and production systems had grown and matured (at least I think so). Readers of the two previous books will find this new volume to be quite different from its predecessors. Its organization is significantly changed, new topics have been added, and some topics from the previous editions have been discarded or reduced in coverage. It is not an exaggeration to say that the entire text has been rewritten (readers will find very few instances where I have used the same wording as in the previous editions). Nearly all of the figures are new. It is essentially a new book.

There is a risk in changing the book so much. Both of the previous editions have been very successful for Prentice Hall and me. Many instructors have adopted the book and have become accustomed to its organization and coverage. Many courses have been developed based on the book. What will these instructors think of the new edition, with all of its new and different features? My hope is that they will try out the new book and find it to be a significant improvement over the 1987 edition, as well as any other textbook on the subject.

Specifically, what are the changes in this new edition? To begin with, the organization has been substantially revised. Following two introductory chapters, the book is organized into five main parts:

I. **Automation and control technologies**: Six chapters on automation, industrial computer control, control system components, numerical control, industrial robotics, and programmable logic controllers.
II. **Material handling technologies**: Four chapters covering conventional and automated material handling systems (e.g., conveyor systems and automated guided vehicle systems), conventional and automated storage systems, and automatic identification and data capture.
III. **Manufacturing systems**: Seven chapters on a manufacturing systems taxonomy, single station cells, group technology, flexible manufacturing systems, manual assembly lines, transfer lines, and automated assembly.

IV. **Quality control systems**: Four chapters covering quality assurance, statistical process control, inspection principles, and inspection technologies (e.g., coordinate measuring machines and machine vision).

V. **Manufacturing support systems**: Four chapters on product design and CAD/CAM, process planning, production planning and control, and lean production and agile manufacturing.

Other changes in organization and coverage in the current edition, compared with the 1987 book, include:

- Expanded coverage of automation fundamentals, numerical control programming, group technology, flexible manufacturing systems, material handling and storage, quality control and inspection, inspection technologies, programmable logic controllers.
- New chapters or sections on manufacturing systems, single station manufacturing systems, mixed-model assembly line analysis, quality assurance and statistical process control, Taguchi methods, inspection principles and technologies, concurrent engineering, automatic identification and data collection, lean and agile manufacturing.
- Consolidation of numerical control into one chapter (the old edition had three chapters).
- Consolidation of industrial robotics into one chapter (the old edition had three chapters).
- The chapters on control systems have been completely revised to reflect current industry practice and technology.
- More quantitative problems on more topics: nearly 400 problems in the new edition, which is almost a 50% increase over the 1987 edition.
- Historical notes describing the development and historical background of many of the automation technologies.

With all of these changes and new features, the principle objective of the book remains the same. It is a textbook designed primarily for engineering students at the advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate levels. It has the characteristics of an engineering textbook: equations, example problems, diagrams, and end-of-chapter exercises. A ***Solutions Manual*** is available from Prentice Hall for instructors who adopt the book.

The book should also be useful for practicing engineers and managers who wish to learn about automation and production systems technologies in modern manufacturing. In several chapters, application guidelines are presented to help readers decide whether the particular technology may be appropriate for their operations.

# Acknowledgments

Several people should be mentioned for their contributions to the current edition. I am grateful to the following: Prof. G. Srinivasan of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India, for his thoughtful reviews of Chapters 15 and 16*; Prof. Kalyan Ghosh, Department of Mathematics and Industrial Engineering at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, for his suggestions on topics for this new edition; Prof. Steve Goldman, Department of Philosophy here at Lehigh who reviewed Chapter 27 on lean and agile production, and Marcia Hamm Groover, who was very helpful in solving my computer problems for me (she is my "computer tutor" and my wife). I must also thank several graduate students here at Lehigh (past and present) who did some of the research for the book for me: David Aber, Jose Basto, Pongsak Dulyapraphant, Murat Erkoc, Peter Heugler, Charalambos Marangos, Brant Matthews, Jianbiao Pan, Hulya Sener, Steve Wang, and Tongquiang Wu. I am also grateful for the help and encouragement provided by several editors at Prentice Hall, namely Marcia Horton, Bill Stenquist, Laura Curless, and Scott Disanno. Finally, I am thankful to all of the instructors who adopted the two previous editions, thus making those books commercially successful so that Prentice Hall would allow me to prepare this new edition.

* Chapters 15 and 16 are concerned with group technology and flexible manufacturing systems, respectively. Prof. Srinivasan first read about these topics in my 1980 ***Automation, Production Systems, and Computer-Aided Manufacturing***, while he was a student. He became interested in these topics and went on to make these his principal research areas. Now he is a GT and FMS expert and so I asked him to review these chapters for me, which he graciously agreed to do.

# About The Author

**Mikell P. Groover** is Professor of Industrial and Manufacturing Systems Engineering at Lehigh University, where he also serves as Director of the Manufacturing Technology Laboratory. He holds the following degrees, all from Lehigh: B.A. (1961) in Arts and Science, B.S. (1962) in Mechanical Engineering, M.S. (1966) and Ph.D. (1969) in Industrial Engineering. He is a Registered Professional Engineer in Pennsylvania (since 1972). His industrial experience includes full-time employment at Eastman Kodak Company as a Manufacturing Engineer. Since joining Lehigh, he has done consulting, research, and project work for a number of industrial companies including Ingersoll-Rand, Air Products & Chemicals, Bethlehem Steel, and Hershey Foods.

His teaching and research areas include manufacturing processes, metal cutting theory, automation and robotics, production systems, material handling, facilities planning, and work systems. He has received a number of teaching awards, including the ***Albert Holzman Outstanding Educator Award*** from the Institute of Industrial Engineers (IIE). His publications include over 75 technical articles and papers which have appeared in ***Industrial Engineering, IIE Transactions, NAMRC Proceedings, ASME Transactions, IEEE Spectrum, International Journal of Production Systems, Encyclopaedia Britannica, SME Technical Papers,*** and others. Professor Groover's avocation is writing textbooks on topics in manufacturing and automation. His previous books are used throughout the world and have been translated into French, German, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, and Chinese. His book ***Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing*** received the 1996 ***IIE Joint Publishers Award*** and the 1996 ***M. Eugene Merchant Manufacturing Textbook Award*** from the Society of Manufacturing Engineers.

Dr. Groover is a member of the Institute of Industrial Engineers, American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME), and North American Manufacturing Research Institute (NAMRI). He is a Fellow of IIE and SME.

### PREVIOUS BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

***Automation, Production Systems, and Computer-Aided Manufacturing***, Prentice Hall, 1980.

***CAD/CAM: Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing***, Prentice Hall, 1984 (co-authored with E. W. Zimmers, Jr.).

***Industrial Robotics: Technology, Programming, and Applications***, McGraw-Hill, 1986 (co-authored with M. Weiss, R. Nagel, and N. Odrey).

***Automation, Production Systems, and Computer Integrated Manufacturing***, Prentice Hall, 1987.

***Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems***, Prentice Hall, 1996.

# Contents

# PART V: MANUFACTURING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

# chapter 1

# Introduction

## CHAPTER CONTENTS



This book is about production systems that are used to manufacture products and the parts assembled into those products. The *production system* is the collection of people, equipment, and procedures organized to accomplish the manufacturing operations of a company (or other organization). Production systems can be divided into two categories or levels as indicated in Figure 1.1:

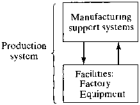



**Figure 1.1** The production system consists of facilities and manufacturing support systems.

1. *Facilities.* The facilities of the production system consist of the factory, the equipment in the factory, and the way the equipment is organized.
2. *Manufacturing support systems.* This is the set of procedures used by the company to manage production and to solve the technical and logistics problems encountered in ordering materials, moving work through the factory, and ensuring that products meet quality standards. Product design and certain business functions are included among the manufacturing support systems.

In modern manufacturing operations, portions of the production system are automated and/or computerized. However, production systems include people. People make these systems work. In general, direct labor people *(blue collar workers)* are responsible for operating the facilities, and professional staff people *(white collar workers)* are responsible for the manufacturing support systems.

In this introductory chapter, we consider these two aspects of production systems and how they are sometimes automated and/or computerized in modern industrial practice. In Chapter 2, we examine the manufacturing operations that the production systems are intended to accomplish.

## 1.1 PRODUCTION SYSTEM FACILITIES[1]

The *facilities* in the production system are the factory, production machines and tooling, material handling equipment, inspection equipment, and the computer systems that control the manufacturing operations. Facilities also include the *plant layout,* which is the way the equipment is physically arranged in the factory. The equipment is usually organized into logical groupings, and we refer to these equipment arrangements and the workers who operate them as the *manufacturing systems* in the factory. Manufacturing systems can be individual work cells, consisting of a single production machine and worker assigned to that machine. We more commonly think of manufacturing systems as groups of machines and workers, for example, a production line. The manufacturing systems come in direct physical contact with the parts and/or assemblies being made. They "touch" the product.

A manufacturing company attempts to organize its facilities in the most efficient way to serve the particular mission of that plant. Over the years, certain types of production facilities have come to be recognized as the most appropriate way to organize for a given type of manufacturing. Of course, one of the most important factors that determine the type of manufacturing is the type of products that are made. Our book is concerned primarily with

[1] Portions of this section are based on M. P. Groover, *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems* [2].

the production of discrete parts and products, compared with products that are in liquid or bulk form, such as chemicals (we examine the distinction in Section 2.1).

If we limit our discussion to discrete products, the quantity produced by a factory has a very significant influence on its facilities and the way manufacturing is organized. *Production quantity* refers to the number of units of a given part or product produced annually by the plant. The annual part or product quantities produced in a given factory can be classified into three ranges:

1. *Low production*: Quantities in the range of 1 to 100 units per year.
2. *Medium production*: Quantities in the range of 100 to 10,000 units annually.
3. *High production*: Production quantities are 10,000 to millions of units.

The boundaries between the three ranges are somewhat arbitrary (author's judgment). Depending on the types of products we are dealing with, these boundaries may shift by an order of magnitude or so.

Some plants produce a variety of different product types, each type being made in low or medium quantities. Other plants specialize in high production of only one product type. It is instructive to identify product variety as a parameter distinct from production quantity. *Product variety* refers to the different product designs or types that are produced in a plant. Different products have different shapes and sizes and styles; they perform different functions; they are sometimes intended for different markets; some have more components than others; and so forth. The number of different product types made each year can be counted. When the number of product types made in a factory is high, this indicates high product variety.

There is an inverse correlation between product variety and production quantity in terms of factory operations. When product variety is high, production quantity tends to be low; and vice versa. This relationship is depicted in Figure 1.2. Manufacturing plants tend to specialize in a combination of production quantity and product variety that lies somewhere inside the diagonal band in Figure 1.2. In general, a given factory tends to be limited to the product variety value that is correlated with that production quantity.

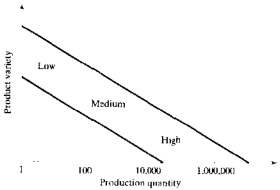



**Figure 1.2** Relationship between product variety and production quantity in discrete product manufacturing.

Although we have identified product variety as a quantitative parameter (the number of different product types made by the plant or company), this parameter is much less exact than production quantity is, because details on how much the designs differ are not captured simply by the number of different designs. The differences between an automobile and an air conditioner are far greater than between an air conditioner and a heat pump. Products can be different, but the extent of the differences may be small or great. The automotive industry provides some examples to illustrate this point. Each of the U.S. automotive companies produces cars with two or three different nameplates in the same assembly plant, although the body styles and other design features are nearly the same. In different plants, the same auto company builds heavy trucks. Let us use the terms "hard" and "soft" to describe these differences in product variety. *Hard product variety* is when the products differ substantially. In an assembled product, hard variety is characterized by a low proportion of common parts among the products; in many cases, there are no common parts. The difference between a car and a truck is hard. *Soft product variety* is when there are only small differences between products, such as the differences between car models made on the same production line. There is a high proportion of common parts among assembled products whose variety is soft. The variety between different product categories tends to be hard: the variety between different models within the same product category tends to be soft.

We can use the three production quantity ranges to identify three basic categories of production plants. Although there are variations in the work organization within each category, usually depending on the amount of product variety, this is nevertheless a reasonable way to classify factories for the purpose of our discussion.

### 1.1.1 Low Quantity Production

The type of production facility usually associated with the quantity range of 1 to 100 units/year is the *job shop*, which makes low quantities of specialized and customized products. The products are typically complex, such as space capsules, aircraft, and special machinery. Job shop production can also include fabricating the component parts for the products. Customer orders for these kinds of items are often special, and repeat orders may never occur. Equipment in a job shop is general purpose and the labor force is highly skilled.

A job shop must be designed for maximum flexibility to deal with the wide part and product variations encountered (hard product variety). If the product is large and heavy, and therefore difficult to move in the factory, it typically remains in a single location, at least during its final assembly. Workers and processing equipment are brought to the product, rather than moving the product to the equipment. This type of layout is referred to as a *fixed-position layout*, shown in Figure 1.3(a). In the pure situation, the product remains in a single location during its entire fabrication. Examples of such products include ships, aircraft, railway locomotives, and heavy machinery. In actual practice, these items are usually built in large modules at single locations, and then the completed modules are brought together for final assembly using large-capacity cranes.

The individual parts that comprise these large products are often made in factories that have a *process layout*, in which the equipment is arranged according to function or type. The lathes are in one department, the milling machines are in another department, and so on, as in Figure 1.3(b). Different parts, each requiring a different operation sequence,

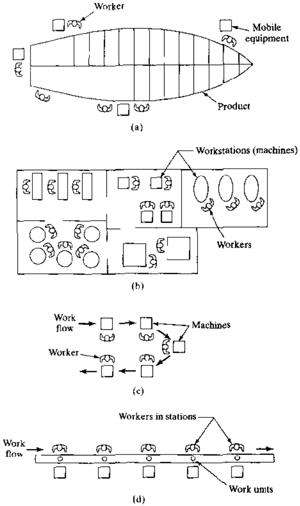



**Figure 1.3** Various types of plant layout: (a) fixed-position layout, (b) process layout, (c) cellular layout, and (d) product layout.

are routed through the departments in the particular order needed for their processing, usually in batches. The process layout is noted for its flexibility; it can accommodate a great variety of alternative operation sequences for different part configurations. Its disadvantage is that the machinery and methods to produce a part are not designed for high efficiency. Much material handling is required to move parts between departments, so in-process inventory can be high.

### 1.1.2 Medium Quantity Production

In the medium quantity range (100–10,000 units annually), we distinguish between two different types of facility, depending on product variety. When product variety is hard, the traditional approach is *batch production*, in which a batch of one product is made, after which the facility is changed over to produce a batch of the next product, and so on. Orders for each product are frequently repeated. The production rate of the equipment is greater than the demand rate for any single product type, and so the same equipment can be shared among multiple products. The changeover between production runs takes time. Called the *setup time* or *changeover time*, it is the time to change tooling and to set up and reprogram the machinery. This is lost production time, which is a disadvantage of batch manufacturing. Batch production is commonly used in make-to-stock situations, in which items are manufactured to replenish inventory that has been gradually depleted by demand. The equipment is usually arranged in a process layout, Figure 1.3(b).

An alternative approach to medium range production is possible if product variety is soft. In this case, extensive changeovers between one product style and the next may not be required. It is often possible to configure the equipment so that groups of similar parts or products can be made on the same equipment without significant lost time for changeovers. The processing or assembly of different parts or products is accomplished in cells consisting of several workstations or machines. The term *cellular manufacturing* is often associated with this type of production. Each cell is designed to produce a limited variety of part configurations: that is, the cell specializes in the production of a given set of similar parts or products, according to the principles of *group technology* (Chapter 15). The layout is called a *cellular layout*, depicted in Figure 1.3(c).

### 1.1.3 High Production

The high quantity range (10,000 to millions of units per year) is often referred to as *mass production*. The situation is characterized by a high demand rate for the product, and the production facility is dedicated to the manufacture of that product. Two categories of mass production can be distinguished: (1) quantity production and (2) flow line production. *Quantity production* involves the mass production of single parts on single pieces of equipment. The method of production typically involves standard machines (such as stamping presses) equipped with special tooling (e.g., dies and material handling devices), in effect dedicating the equipment to the production of one part type. The typical layout used in quantity production is the process layout, Figure 1.3(b).

*Flow line production* involves multiple workstations arranged in sequence, and the parts or assemblies are physically moved through the sequence to complete the product. The workstations consist of production machines and/or workers equipped with specialized tools. The collection of stations is designed specifically for the product to maximize efficiency. The layout is called a *product layout*, and the workstations are arranged into one long line, as in Figure 1.3(d), or into a series of connected line segments. The work is usually moved between stations by powered conveyor. At each station, a small amount of the total work is completed on each unit of product.

The most familiar example of flow line production is the assembly line, associated with products such as cars and household appliances. The pure case of flow line production is where there is no variation in the products made on the line. Every product is identical, and the line is referred to as a *single model production line*. However, to successfully market a

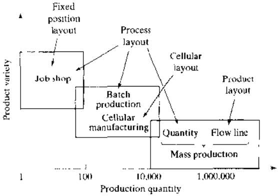



**Figure 1.4** Types of facilities and layouts used for different levels of production quantity and product variety.

given product, it is often necessary to introduce model variations so that individual customers can choose the exact style and options that appeal to them. From a production viewpoint, the model differences represent a case of soft product variety. The term *mixed-model production line* applies to those situations where there is soft variety in the products made on the line. Modern automobile assembly is an example. Cars coming off the assembly line have variations in options and trim representing different models (and, in many cases, different nameplates) of the same basic car design.

Much of our discussion of the types of production facilities is summarized in Figure 1.4, which adds detail to Figure 1.2 by identifying the types of production facilities and plant layouts used. As the figure shows, some overlap exists among the different facility types.

## 1.2 MANUFACTURING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

To operate the production facilities efficiently, a company must organize itself to design the processes and equipment, plan and control the production orders, and satisfy product quality requirements. These functions are accomplished by manufacturing support systems – people and procedures by which a company manages its production operations. Most of these support systems do not directly contact the product, but they plan and control its progress through the factory.

Manufacturing support involves a cycle of information-processing activities, as illustrated in Figure 1.5. The production system facilities described in Section 1.1 are pictured in the center of the figure. The information-processing cycle, represented by the outer ring, can be described as consisting of four functions: (1) business functions, (2) product design, (3) manufacturing planning, and (4) manufacturing control.

*Business Functions.* The business functions are the principal means of communicating with the customer. They are, therefore, the beginning and the end of the information-processing cycle. Included in this category are sales and marketing, sales forecasting, order entry, cost accounting, and customer billing.

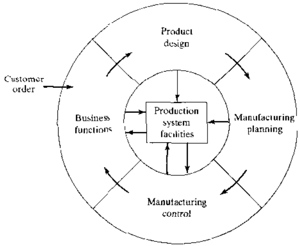



**Figure 1.5** The information-processing cycle in a typical manufacturing firm.

The order to produce a product typically originates from the customer and proceeds into the company through the sales and marketing department of the firm. The production order will be in one of the following forms: (1) an order to manufacture an item to the customer's specifications, (2) a customer order to buy one or more of the manufacturer's proprietary products, or (3) an internal company order based on a forecast of future demand for a proprietary product.

*Product Design.* If the product is to be manufactured to customer *design*, the design will have been provided by the customer. The manufacturer's product design department will not be involved. If the product is to be produced to customer *specifications*, the manufacturer's product design department may be contracted to do the design work for the product as well as to manufacture it.

If the product is proprietary, the manufacturing firm is responsible for its development and design. The cycle of events that initiates a new product design often originates in the sales and marketing department; the information flow is indicated in Figure 1.5. The departments of the firm that are organized to accomplish product design might include research and development, design engineering, drafting, and perhaps a prototype shop.

*Manufacturing Planning.* The information and documentation that constitute the product design flows into the manufacturing planning function. The information-processing activities in manufacturing planning include process planning, master scheduling, requirements planning, and capacity planning. *Process planning* consists of determining the sequence of individual processing and assembly operations needed to produce the part. The manufacturing engineering and industrial engineering departments are responsible for planning the processes and related technical details.

Manufacturing planning includes logistics issues, commonly known as production planning. The authorization to produce the product must be translated into the master production schedule. The *master production schedule* is a listing of the products to be made, when they are to be delivered, and in what quantities. Months are traditionally used to specify deliveries in the master schedule. Based on this schedule, the individual components and subassemblies that make up each product must be planned. Raw materials must be purchased or requisitioned from storage, purchased parts must be ordered from suppliers, and all of these items must be planned so that they are available when needed. This entire task is called *material requirements planning*. In addition, the master schedule must not list more quantities of products than the factory is capable of producing each month with its given number of machines and manpower. A function called *capacity planning* is concerned with planning the manpower and machine resources of the firm.

*Manufacturing Control.* Manufacturing control is concerned with managing and controlling the physical operations in the factory to implement the manufacturing plans. The flow of information is from planning to control as indicated in Figure 1.5. Information also flows back and forth between manufacturing control and the factory operations. Included in the manufacturing control function are shop floor control, inventory control, and quality control.

*Shop floor control* deals with the problem of monitoring the progress of the product as it is being processed, assembled, moved, and inspected in the factory. Shop floor control is concerned with inventory in the sense that the materials being processed in the factory are work-in-process inventory. Thus, shop floor control and inventory control overlap to some extent. *Inventory control* attempts to strike a proper balance between the danger of too little inventory (with possible stock-outs of materials) and the carrying cost of too much inventory. It deals with such issues as deciding the right quantities of materials to order and when to reorder a given item when stock is low.

The mission of *quality control* is to ensure that the quality of the product and its components meet the standards specified by the product designer. To accomplish its mission, quality control depends on inspection activities performed in the factory at various times during the manufacture of the product. Also, raw materials and component parts from outside sources are sometimes inspected when they are received, and final inspection and testing of the finished product is performed to ensure functional quality and appearance.

## 1.3 AUTOMATION IN PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Some elements of the firm's production system are likely to be automated, whereas others will be operated manually or clerically. For our purposes here, *automation* can be defined as a technology concerned with the application of mechanical, electronic, and computer-based systems to operate and control production.

The automated elements of the production system can be separated into two categories: (1) automation of the manufacturing systems in the factory and (2) computerization of the manufacturing support systems. In modern production systems, the two categories overlap to some extent, because the automated manufacturing systems operating on the factory floor are themselves often implemented by computer systems and connected to the computerized manufacturing support systems and management information system operating at the plant and enterprise levels. The term computer-integrated manufacturing is used to indicate this extensive use of computers in production systems. The two categories of automation are shown in Figure 1.6 as an overlay on Figure 1.1.

of equipment that makes the system complex.

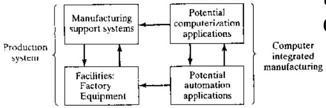



**Figure 1.6** Opportunities of automation and computerization in a production system.

### 1.3.1 Automated Manufacturing Systems

Automated manufacturing systems operate in the factory on the physical product. They perform operations such as processing, assembly, inspection, or material handling, in some cases accomplishing more than one of these operations in the same system. They are called automated because they perform their operations with a reduced level of human participation compared with the corresponding manual process. In some highly automated systems, there is virtually no human participation. Examples of automated manufacturing systems include:

- automated machine tools that process parts
- transfer lines that perform a series of machining operations
- automated assembly systems
- manufacturing systems that use industrial robots to perform processing or assembly operations
- automatic material handling and storage systems to integrate manufacturing operations
- automatic inspection systems for quality control

Automated manufacturing systems can be classified into three basic types (for our purposes in this introduction; we explore the topic of automation in greater depth in Chapter 3): (1) fixed automation, (2) programmable automation, and (3) flexible automation.

*Fixed Automation.* *Fixed automation* is a system in which the sequence of processing (or assembly) operations is fixed by the equipment configuration. Each of the operations in the sequence is usually simple, involving perhaps a plain linear or rotational motion or an uncomplicated combination of the two; for example, the feeding of a rotating spindle. It is the integration and coordination of many such operations into one piece of equipment that makes the system complex. Typical features of fixed automation are:

- high initial investment for custom-engineered equipment
- high production rates
- relatively inflexible in accommodating product variety

The economic justification for fixed automation is found in products that are produced in very large quantities and at high production rates. The high initial cost of the equipment can be spread over a very large number of units, thus making the unit cost attractive compared with alternative methods of production. Examples of fixed automation include machining transfer lines and automated assembly machines.

*Programmable Automation.* In *programmable automation*, the production equipment is designed with the capability to change the sequence of operations to accommodate different product configurations. The operation sequence is controlled by a *program*, which is a set of instructions coded so that they can be read and interpreted by the system. New programs can be prepared and entered into the equipment to produce new products. Some of the features that characterize programmable automation include:

- high investment in general purpose equipment
- lower production rates than fixed automation
- flexibility to deal with variations and changes in product configuration
- most suitable for batch production

Programmable automated production systems are used in low- and medium-volume production. The parts or products are typically made in batches. To produce each new batch of a different product, the system must be reprogrammed with the set of machine instructions that correspond to the new product. The physical setup of the machine must also be changed: Tools must be loaded, fixtures must be attached to the machine table, and the required machine settings must be entered. This changeover procedure takes time. Consequently, the typical cycle for a given product includes a period during which the setup and reprogramming takes place, followed by a period in which the batch is produced. Examples of programmable automation include numerically controlled (NC) machine tools, industrial robots, and programmable logic controllers.

*Flexible Automation.* *Flexible automation* is an extension of programmable automation. A flexible automated system is capable of producing a variety of parts (or products) with virtually no time lost for changeovers from one part style to the next. There is no lost production time while reprogramming the system and altering the physical setup (tooling, fixtures, machine settings). Consequently, the system can produce various combinations and schedules of parts or products instead of requiring that they be made in batches. What makes flexible automation possible is that the differences between parts processed by the system are not significant. It is a case of soft variety, so that the amount of changeover required between styles is minimal. The features of flexible automation can be summarized as follows:

- high investment for a custom-engineered system
- continuous production of variable mixtures of products
- medium production rates
- flexibility to deal with product design variations

Examples of flexible automation are the flexible manufacturing systems for performing machining operations that date back to the late 1960s.

The relative positions of the three types of automation for different production volumes and product varieties are depicted in Figure 1.7. For low production quantities and new product introductions, manual production is competitive with programmable automation, as we indicate in the figure and discuss in Section 1.4.1.

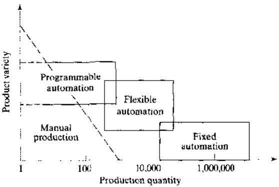



**Figure 1.7** Three types of automation relative to production quantity and product variety.

### 1.3.2 Computerized Manufacturing Support Systems

Automation of the manufacturing support systems is aimed at reducing the amount of manual and clerical effort in product design, manufacturing planning and control, and the business functions of the firm. Nearly all modern manufacturing support systems are implemented using computer systems. Indeed, computer technology is used to implement automation of the manufacturing systems in the factory as well. The term *computer-integrated manufacturing* (CIM) denotes the pervasive use of computer systems to design the products, plan the production, control the operations, and perform the various business-related functions needed in a manufacturing firm. True CIM involves integrating all of these functions in one system that operates throughout the enterprise. Other terms are used to identify specific elements of the CIM system. For example, *computer-aided design* (CAD) denotes the use of computer systems to support the product design function. *Computer-aided manufacturing* (CAM) denotes the use of computer systems to perform functions related to manufacturing engineering, such as process planning and numerical control part programming. Some computer systems perform both CAD and CAM, and so the term *CAD/CAM* is used to indicate the integration of the two into one system. Computer-integrated manufacturing includes CAD/CAM, but it also includes the firm's business functions that are related to manufacturing.

Let us attempt to define the relationship between automation and CIM by developing a conceptual model of manufacturing. In a manufacturing firm, the physical production activities that take place in the factory can be distinguished from the information-processing activities, such as product design and production planning, that usually occur in an office environment. The physical activities include all of the processing, assembly, material handling, and inspection operations that are performed on the product in the factory. These operations come in direct contact with the product during manufacture. The relationship between the physical activities and the information-processing activities in our model is depicted in Figure 1.8. Raw materials flow into one end of the factory and finished products flow out the other end. The physical activities take place inside the factory. In our model, the information-processing activities form a ring that surrounds the factory, providing the data and knowledge required to successfully produce the product. These in-

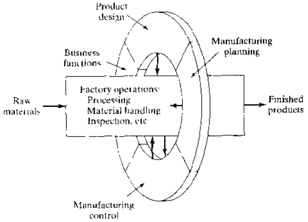



**Figure 1.8** Model of manufacturing showing factory operations and the information-processing activities for manufacturing support.

formation-processing activities are accomplished to implement the four basic manufacturing support functions identified earlier: (1) business functions, (2) product design, (3) manufacturing planning, and (4) manufacturing control. These four functions form a cycle of events that must accompany the physical production activities but do not directly touch the product.

### 1.3.3 Reasons for Automating

Companies undertake projects in manufacturing automation and computer-integrated manufacturing for a variety of good reasons. Some of the reasons used to justify automation are the following:

1. *To increase labor productivity.* Automating a manufacturing operation usually increases production rate and labor productivity. This means greater output per hour of labor input
2. *To reduce labor cost.* Ever-increasing labor cost has been and continues to be the trend in the world's industrialized societies. Consequently, higher investment in automation has become economically justifiable to replace manual operations. Machines are increasingly being substituted for human labor to reduce unit product cost.
3. *To mitigate the effects of labor shortages.* There is a general shortage of labor in many advanced nations, and this has stimulated the development of automated operations as a substitute for labor.
4. *To reduce or eliminate routine manual and clerical tasks.* An argument can be put forth that there is social value in automating operations that are routine, boring, fatiguing, and possibly irksome. Automating such tasks serves a purpose of improving the general level of working conditions.
5. *To improve worker safety.* By automating a given operation and transferring the worker from active participation in the process to a supervisory role, the work is made

safer. The safety and physical well-being of the worker has become a national objective with the enactment of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) in 1970. This has provided an impetus for automation.

6. *To improve product quality.* Automation not only results in higher production rates than manual operations; it also performs the manufacturing process with greater uniformity and conformity to quality specifications. Reduction of fraction defect rate is one of the chief benefits of automation.
7. *To reduce manufacturing lead time.* Automation helps to reduce the elapsed time between customer order and product delivery, providing a competitive advantage to the manufacturer for future orders. By reducing manufacturing lead time, the manufacturer also reduces work-in-process inventory.
8. *To accomplish processes that cannot be done manually.* Certain operations cannot be accomplished without the aid of a machine. These processes have requirements for precision, miniaturization, or complexity of geometry, that cannot be achieved manually. Examples include certain integrated circuit fabrication operations, rapid prototyping processes based on computer graphics (CAD) models, and the machining of complex, mathematically defined surfaces using computer numerical control. These processes can only be realized by computer controlled systems.
9. *To avoid the high cost of not automating.* There is a significant competitive advantage gained in automating a manufacturing plant. The advantage cannot easily be demonstrated on a company's project authorization form. The benefits of automation often show up in unexpected and intangible ways, such as in improved quality, higher sales, better labor relations, and better company image. Companies that do not automate are likely to find themselves at a competitive disadvantage with their customers, their employees, and the general public.

## 1.4 MANUAL LABOR IN PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Is there a place for manual labor in the modern production system? The answer is certainly yes. Even in a highly automated production system, humans are still a necessary component of the manufacturing enterprise. For the foreseeable future, people will be required to manage and maintain the plant, even in those cases where they do not participate directly in its manufacturing operations. Let us separate our discussion of the labor issue into two parts, corresponding to our previous distinction between facilities and manufacturing support: (1) manual labor in factory operations and (2) labor in the manufacturing support systems.

### 1.4.1 Manual Labor in Factory Operations

There is no denying that the long-term trend in manufacturing is toward greater use of automated machines to substitute for manual labor. This has been true throughout human history, and there is every reason to believe the trend will continue. It has been made possible by applying advances in technology to factory operations. In parallel, and sometimes in conflict, with this technologically driven trend are issues of economics that continue to find reasons for employing manual labor in manufacturing operations.

Certainly one of the current economic realities in the world is that there are countries whose average hourly wage rates are sufficiently low that most automation projects are impossible to justify strictly on the basis of cost reduction. At time of writing, these countries include Mexico, China, and most of the countries of Southeast Asia. With the recent passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the North American continent has become one large labor pool. Within this pool, Mexico's labor rate is an order of magnitude less than that in the United States. For U.S. corporate executives making decisions on a factory location or the outsourcing of work, this is an economic reality that must be reckoned with.

In addition to the labor rate issue, there are other reasons, ultimately based on economics, that make the use of manual labor a feasible alternative to automation. Humans possess certain attributes that give them an advantage over machines in certain situations and certain kinds of tasks. Table 1.1 lists the relative strengths and attributes of humans and machines. A number of situations can be listed in which manual labor is usually preferred over automation:

- *Task is too technologically difficult to automate.* Certain tasks are very difficult (either technologically or economically) to automate. Reasons for the difficulty include: (1) problems with physical access to the work location, (2) adjustments required in the task, (3) manual dexterity requirements, and (4) demands on hand-eye coordination. Manual labor is used to perform the tasks in these cases. Examples include automobile final assembly lines where many final trim operations are accomplished by human workers.
- *Short product life cycle.* If the product must be designed and introduced in a short period of time to meet a near-term window of opportunity in the marketplace, or if the product is anticipated to be on the market for a relatively short period, then a manufacturing method designed around manual labor allows for a much faster product launch than does an automated method. Tooling for manual production can be fabricated in much less time and at much lower cost than comparable automation tooling.
- *Customized product.* If the customer requires a one-of-a-kind item with unique features, manual labor may have the advantage as the appropriate production resource because of its versatility and adaptability. Humans are more flexible than any automated machine.
- *To cope with ups and downs in demand.* Changes in demand for a product necessitate changes in production output levels. Such changes are more easily made when manual labor is used as the means of production. An automated manufacturing system has a fixed cost associated with its investment. If output is reduced, that fixed cost must be spread over fewer units, driving up the unit cost of the product. On the other hand,

**TABLE 1.1** Relative Strengths and Attributes of Humans and Machines

| *Relative Strengths of Humans* | *Relative Strengths of Machines* |
|---|---|
| Sense unexpected stimuli | Perform repetitive tasks consistently |
| Develop new solutions to problems | Store large amounts of data |
| Cope with abstract problems | Retrieve data from memory reliably |
| Adapt to change | Perform multiple tasks at same time |
| Generalize from observations | Apply high forces and power |
| Learn from experience | Perform simple computations quickly |
| Make difficult decisions based on incomplete data | Make routine decisions quickly |

an automated system has an ultimate upper limit on its output capacity. It cannot produce more than its rated capacity. By contrast, manual labor can be added or reduced as needed to meet demand, and the associated cost of the resource is in direct proportion to its usage. Manual labor can be used to augment the output of an existing automated system during those periods when demand exceeds the capacity of the automated system.

- *To reduce risk of product failure*. A company introducing a new product to the market never knows for sure what the ultimate success of that product will be. Some products will have long life cycles, while others will be on the market for relatively short lives. The use of manual labor as the productive resource at the beginning of the product's life reduces the company's risk of losing a significant investment in automation if the product fails to achieve a long market life. In Section 1.5.3, we discuss an automation migration strategy that is suitable for introducing a new product.

### 1.4.2 Labor in Manufacturing Support Systems

In manufacturing support functions, many of the routine manual and clerical tasks can be automated using computer systems. Certain production planning activities are better accomplished by computer than by clerks. Material requirements planning (MRP, Section 26.2) is an example: In material requirements planning, order releases are generated for component parts and raw materials based on the master production schedule for final products. This requires a massive amount of data processing that is best suited to computer automation. Many commercial software packages are available to perform MRP. With few exceptions, companies that need to accomplish MRP rely on the computer. Humans are still required to interpret and implement the output of these MRP computations and to otherwise manage the production planning function.

In modern production systems, the computer is used as an aid in performing virtually all manufacturing support activities. Computer-aided design systems are used in product design. The human designer is still required to do the creative work. The CAD system is a tool that assists and amplifies the designer's creative talents. Computer-aided process planning systems are used by manufacturing engineers to plan the production methods and routings. In these examples, humans are integral components in the operation of the manufacturing support functions, and the computer-aided systems are tools to increase productivity and improve quality. CAD and CAM systems rarely operate completely in automatic mode.

It is very unlikely that humans will never be needed in manufacturing support systems, no matter how automated the systems are. People will be needed to do the decision making, learning, engineering, evaluating, managing, and other functions for which humans are much better suited than are machines, according to Table 1.1.

Even if all of the manufacturing systems in the factory are automated, there will still be a need for the following kinds of work to be performed:

- *Equipment maintenance*. Skilled technicians will be required to maintain and repair the automated systems in the factory when these systems break down. To improve the reliability of the automated systems, preventive maintenance will have to be carried out.
- *Programming and computer operation*. There will be a continual demand to upgrade software, install new versions of software packages, and execute the programs. It is anticipated that much of the routine process planning, numerical control part pro-

gramming, and robot programming may be highly automated using artificial intelligence in the future.

- *Engineering project work.* The computer-automated and integrated factory is likely never to be finished. There will be a continual need to upgrade production machines, design tooling, and undertake continuous improvement projects. These activities require the skills of engineers working in the factory.
- *Plant management.* Someone must be responsible for running the factory. There will be a limited staff of professional managers and engineers who are responsible for plant operations. There is likely to be an increased emphasis on managers' technical skills rather than in traditional factory management positions, where the emphasis is on personnel skills.

## 1.5 AUTOMATION PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

The preceding discussion leads us to conclude that automation is not always the right answer for a given production situation. A certain caution and respect must be observed in applying automation technologies. In this section, we offer three approaches for dealing with automation projects:[2] (1) the USA Principle, (2) the Ten Strategies for Automation and Production Systems, and (3) an Automation Migration Strategy.

### 1.5.1 USA Principle

The USA Principle is a common sense approach to automation projects. Similar procedures have been suggested in the manufacturing and automation trade literature, but none has a more captivating title than this one. USA stands for:

1. *Understand* the existing process
2. *Simplify* the process
3. *Automate* the process.

A statement of the USA principle appeared in an APICS[3] article [4]. The article was concerned with implementation of enterprise resource planning (ERP, Section 26.6), but the USA approach is so general that it is applicable to nearly any automation project. Going through each step of the procedure for an automation project may in fact reveal that simplifying the process is sufficient and automation is not necessary.

***Understand the Existing Process.*** The obvious purpose of the first step in the USA approach is to comprehend the current process in all of its details. What are the inputs? What are the outputs? What exactly happens to the work unit between input and output? What is the function of the process? How does it add value to the product? What are the upstream and downstream operations in the production sequence, and can they be combined with the process under consideration?

[2] There are additional approaches not discussed here, but in which the reader may be interested: for example, the ten steps to integrated manufacturing production systems discussed in J. Black's book: ***The Design of the Factory with a Future*** [1].

[3] APICS = American Production and Inventory Control Society.

Some of the basic charting tools used in methods analysis are useful in this regard, such as the operation process chart and the flow process chart [5]. Application of these tools to the existing process provides a model of the process that can be analyzed and searched for weaknesses (and strengths). The number of steps in the process, the number and placement of inspections, the number of moves and delays experienced by the work unit, and the time spent in storage can be ascertained by these charting techniques.

Mathematical models of the process may also be useful to indicate relationships between input parameters and output variables. What are the important output variables? How are these output variables affected by inputs to the process, such as raw material properties, process settings, operating parameters, and environmental conditions? This information may be valuable in identifying what output variables need to be measured for feedback purposes and in formulating algorithms for automatic process control.

*Simplify the Process.* Once the existing process is understood, then the search can begin for ways to simplify. This often involves a checklist of questions about the existing process. What is the purpose of this step or this transport? Is this step necessary? Can this step be eliminated? Is the most appropriate technology being used in this step? How can this step be simplified? Are there unnecessary steps in the process that might be eliminated without detracting from function?

Some of the ten strategies of automation and production systems (Section 1.5.2) are applicable to try to simplify the process. Can steps be combined? Can steps be performed simultaneously? Can steps be integrated into a manually operated production line?

*Automate the Process.* Once the process has been reduced to its simplest form, then automation can be considered. The possible forms of automation include those listed in the ten strategies discussed in the following section. An automation migration strategy (Section 1.5.3) might be implemented for a new product that has not yet proven itself.

### 1.5.2 Ten Strategies for Automation and Production Systems

Following the USA Principle is a good first step in any automation project. As suggested previously, it may turn out that automation of the process is unnecessary or cannot be cost justified after it has been simplified.

If automation seems a feasible solution to improving productivity, quality, or other measure of performance, then the following ten strategies provide a road map to search for these improvements. These ten strategies were first published in my first book.[4] They seem as relevant and appropriate today as they did in 1980. We refer to them as strategies for automation and production systems because some of them are applicable whether the process is a candidate for automation or just for simplification.

1. *Specialization of operations.* The first strategy involves the use of special-purpose equipment designed to perform one operation with the greatest possible efficiency. This is analogous to the concept of labor specialization, which is employed to improve labor productivity.

[4] M. P. Groover, *Automation, Production Systems, and Computer-Aided Manufacturing*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980.

2. *Combined operations.* Production occurs as a sequence of operations. Complex parts may require dozens, or even hundreds, of processing steps. The strategy of combined operations involves reducing the number of distinct production machines or workstations through which the part must be routed. This is accomplished by performing more than one operation at a given machine, thereby reducing the number of separate machines needed. Since each machine typically involves a setup, setup time can usually be saved as a consequence of this strategy. Material handling effort and nonoperation time are also reduced. Manufacturing lead time is reduced for better customer service.
3. *Simultaneous operations.* A logical extension of the combined operations strategy is to simultaneously perform the operations that are combined at one workstation. In effect, two or more processing (or assembly) operations are being performed simultaneously on the same workpart, thus reducing total processing time.
4. *Integration of operations.* Another strategy is to link several workstations together into a single integrated mechanism, using automated work handling devices to transfer parts between stations. In effect, this reduces the number of separate machines through which the product must be scheduled. With more than one workstation, several parts can be processed simultaneously, thereby increasing the overall output of the system.
5. *Increased flexibility.* This strategy attempts to achieve maximum utilization of equipment for job shop and medium-volume situations by using the same equipment for a variety of parts or products. It involves the use of the flexible automation concepts (Section 1.3.1). Prime objectives are to reduce setup time and programming time for the production machine. This normally translates into lower manufacturing lead time and less work-in-process.
6. *Improved material handling and storage.* A great opportunity for reducing nonproductive time exists in the use of automated material handling and storage systems. Typical benefits include reduced work-in-process and shorter manufacturing lead times.
7. *On-line inspection.* Inspection for quality of work is traditionally performed after the process is completed. This means that any poor-quality product has already been produced by the time it is inspected. Incorporating inspection into the manufacturing process permits corrections to the process as the product is being made. This reduces scrap and brings the overall quality of the product closer to the nominal specifications intended by the designer.
8. *Process control and optimization.* This includes a wide range of control schemes intended to operate the individual processes and associated equipment more efficiently. By this strategy, the individual process times can be reduced and product quality improved.
9. *Plant operations control.* Whereas the previous strategy was concerned with the control of the individual manufacturing process, this strategy is concerned with control at the plant level. It attempts to manage and coordinate the aggregate operations in the plant more efficiently. Its implementation usually involves a high level of computer networking within the factory.
10. *Computer-integrated manufacturing* (CIM). Taking the previous strategy one level higher, we have the integration of factory operations with engineering design and the business functions of the firm. CIM involves extensive use of computer applications, computer data bases, and computer networking throughout the enterprise.

The ten strategies constitute a checklist of the possibilities for improving the production system through automation or simplification. They should not be considered as mutually exclusive. For most situations, multiple strategies can be implemented in one improvement project.

### 1.5.3 Automation Migration Strategy

Owing to competitive pressures in the marketplace, a company often needs to introduce a new product in the shortest possible time. As mentioned previously, the easiest and least expensive way to accomplish this objective is to design a manual production method, using a sequence of workstations operating independently. The tooling for a manual method can be fabricated quickly and at low cost. If more than a single set of workstations is required to make the product in sufficient quantities, as is often the case, then the manual cell is replicated as many times as needed to meet demand. If the product turns out to be successful, and high future demand is anticipated, then it makes sense for the company to automate production. The improvements are often carried out in phases. Many companies have an *automation migration strategy*, that is, a formalized plan for evolving the manufacturing systems used to produce new products as demand grows. A typical automation migration strategy is the following:

Phase 1: *Manual production* using single-station manned cells operating independently. This is used for introduction of the new product for reasons already mentioned: quick and low-cost tooling to get started.

Phase 2: *Automated production* using single-station automated cells operating independently. As demand for the product grows, and it becomes clear that automation can be justified, then the single stations are automated to reduce labor and increase production rate. Work units are still moved between workstations manually.

Phase 3: *Automated integrated production* using a multistation automated system with serial operations and automated transfer of work units between stations. When the company is certain that the product will be produced in mass quantities and for several years, then integration of the single-station automated cells is warranted to further reduce labor and increase production rate.

This strategy is illustrated in Figure 1.9. Details of the automation migration strategy vary from company to company, depending on the types of products they make and the manufacturing processes they perform. But well-managed manufacturing companies have policies like the automation migration strategy. Advantages of such a strategy include:

- It allows introduction of the new product in the shortest possible time, since production cells based on manual workstations are the easiest to design and implement.
- It allows automation to be introduced gradually (in planned phases), as demand for the product grows, engineering changes in the product are made, and time is allowed to do a thorough design job on the automated manufacturing system.
- It avoids the commitment to a high level of automation from the start, since there is always a risk that demand for the product will not justify it.

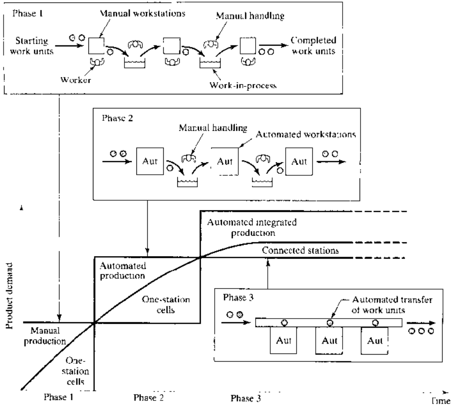



**Figure 1.9** A typical automation migration strategy. Phase 1: manual production with single independent workstations. Phase 2: automated production stations with manual handling between stations. Phase 3: automated integrated production with automated handling between stations. Key: Aut = automated workstation.

### 1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This chapter has provided an overview of production systems and how automation is sometimes used in these systems. We see that people are needed in manufacturing, even when the production systems are highly automated. Chapter 2 takes a look at manufacturing operations: the manufacturing processes and other activities that take place in the factory. We also develop several mathematical models that are intended to increase the reader's understanding of the issues and parameters in manufacturing operations and to underscore their quantitative nature.

The remaining 25 chapters are organized into five parts. Let us describe the five parts with reference to Figure 1.10, which shows how the topics fit together. Part I includes six

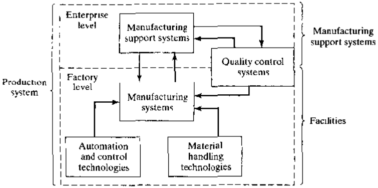



**Figure 1.10** Overview and relationships among the five parts of the book.

chapters that are concerned with automation technologies. Whereas Chapter 1 discusses automation in general terms. Part I describes the technical details. Automation relies heavily on control systems, so Part I is called *Automation and Control Technologies*. These technologies include numerical control, industrial robotics, and programmable logic controllers.

Part II is composed of four chapters on material handling technologies that are used primarily in factories and warehouses. This includes equipment for transporting materials, storing them, and automatically identifying them for material control purposes.

Part III is concerned with the integration of automation technologies and material handling technologies into manufacturing systems—those that operate in the factory and touch the product. Some of these manufacturing systems are highly automated, while others rely largely on manual labor. Part III contains seven chapters, covering such topics as production lines, assembly systems, group technology, and flexible manufacturing systems.

The importance of quality control must not be overlooked in modern production systems. Part IV covers this topic, dealing with statistical process control and inspection issues. We describe some of the significant inspection technologies here, such as machine vision and coordinate measuring machines. As suggested in Figure 1.10, quality control (QC) systems include elements of both facilities and manufacturing support systems. QC is an enterprise-level function, but it has equipment and procedures that operate in the factory.

Finally, Part V addresses the remaining manufacturing support functions in the production system. We include a chapter on product design and how it is supported by computer-aided design systems. The second chapter in Part V is concerned with process planning and how it is automated by computer-aided process planning. Here we also discuss concurrent engineering and design for manufacturing. Chapter 26 covers production planning and control, including topics such as material requirements planning (mentioned in Chapter 1), manufacturing resource planning, and just-in-time production systems. Our book concludes with a chapter on lean production and agile manufacturing, two production system paradigms that define the ways that modern manufacturing companies are attempting to run their businesses.

## REFERENCES


[1] BLACK, J. T.. *The Design of the Factory with a Future,* McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1991.

[2] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems,* Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[3] HARRINGTON, J., *Computer Integrated Manufacturing,* Industrial Press, Inc., New York, 1973.

[4] KAPP, K. M., "The USA Principle", *APICS - The Performance Advantage,* June 1997, pp 62–66

[5] NIEBEL, B., and A. FRIEVALDS, *Methods, Standards, and Work Design,* (10th Ed) WCB/McGraw-Hill, 1999.

[6] SPANGLER, T., R. MAHAJAN, S. PUCKETT, and D. STAKEM, "Manual Labor – Advantages, When and Where?" *MSE 427 Term Paper,* Lehigh University, 1998.

# chapter 2

# Manufacturing Operations[1]

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



*Manufacturing* can be defined as the application of physical and chemical processes to alter the geometry, properties, and/or appearance of a given starting material to make parts

[1] The chapter introduction and Sections 2.1 and 2.2 are based on M. P. Groover, *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Chapter 1.

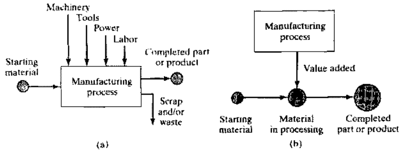



**Figure 2.1** Alternative definitions of manufacturing: (a) as a technological process and (b) as an economic process.

or products; manufacturing also includes the joining of multiple parts to make assembled products. The processes that accomplish manufacturing involve a combination of machinery, tools, power, and manual labor, as depicted in Figure 2.1(a). Manufacturing is almost always carried out as a sequence of operations. Each successive operation brings the material closer to the desired final state.

From an economic viewpoint, manufacturing is the transformation of materials into items of greater value by means of one or more processing and/or assembly operations, as depicted in Figure 2.1(b). The key point is that manufacturing ***adds value*** to the material by changing its shape or properties or by combining it with other materials that have been similarly altered. The material has been made more valuable through the manufacturing operations performed on it. When iron ore is converted into steel, value is added. When sand is transformed into glass, value is added. When petroleum is refined into plastic, value is added. And when plastic is molded into the complex geometry of a patio chair, it is made even more valuable.

In this chapter, we provide a survey of manufacturing operations. We begin by examining the industries that are engaged in manufacturing and the types of products they produce. We then discuss fabrication and assembly processes used in manufacturing as well as the activities that support the processes, such as material handling and inspection. The chapter concludes with descriptions of several mathematical models of manufacturing operations. These models help to define certain issues and parameters that are important in manufacturing and to provide a quantitative perspective on manufacturing operations.

We might observe here that the manufacturing operations, the processes in particular, emphasize the preceding technological definition of manufacturing, while the production systems discussed in Chapter 1 stress the economic definition. Our emphasis in this book is on the systems. The history of manufacturing includes both the development of manufacturing processes, some of which date back thousands of years, and the evolution of the production systems required to apply and exploit these processes (Historical Note 2.1).

### Historical Note 2.1 History of manufacturing

The history of manufacturing includes two related topics: (1) man's discovery and invention of materials and processes to make things and (2) the development of systems of production. The materials and processes predate the systems by several millennia. Systems of production refer to the ways of organizing people and equipment so that production can be performed more efficiently. Some of the basic processes date as far back as the Neolithic period (circa 8000–3000 B.C.), when operations such as the following were developed: *woodworking, forming,* and *firing* of clay pottery, *grinding* and *polishing* of stone, *spinning* and *weaving* of textiles, and *dyeing* of cloth. Metallurgy and metalworking also began during the Neolithic, in Mesopotamia and other areas around the Mediterranean. It either spread to, or developed independently in, regions of Europe and Asia. Gold was found by early man in relatively pure form in nature; it could be *hammered* into shape. Copper was probably the first metal to be extracted from ores, thus requiring *smelting* as a processing technique. Copper could not be readily hammered because it strain-hardened; instead, it was shaped by *casting*. Other metals used during this period were silver and tin. It was discovered that copper alloyed with tin produced a more workable metal than copper alone (casting and hammering could both be used). This heralded the important period known as the *Bronze Age* (circa 3500–1500 B.C.).

Iron was also first smelted during the Bronze Age. Meteorites may have been one source of the metal, but iron ore was also mined. The temperatures required to reduce iron ore to metal are significantly higher than for copper, which made furnace operations more difficult. Other processing methods were also more difficult for the same reason. Early blacksmiths learned that when certain irons (those containing small amounts of carbon) were sufficiently *heated* and then *quenched*, they became very hard. This permitted the grinding of very sharp cutting edges on knives and weapons, but it also made the metal brittle. Toughness could be increased by reheating at a lower temperature, a process known as *tempering*. What we have described is, of course, the *heat treatment* of steel. The superior properties of steel caused it to succeed bronze in many applications (weaponry, agriculture, and mechanical devices). The period of its use has subsequently been named the *Iron Age* (starting around 1000 B.C.). It was not until much later, well into the nineteenth century, that the demand for steel grew significantly and more modern steelmaking techniques were developed.

The early fabrication of implements and weapons was accomplished more as crafts and trades than by manufacturing as we know it today. The ancient Romans had what might be called factories to produce weapons, scrolls, pottery, glassware, and other products of the time, but the procedures were largely based on handicraft. It was not until the *Industrial Revolution* (circa 1760–1830) that major changes began to affect the systems for making things. This period marked the beginning of the change from an economy based on agriculture and handicraft to one based on industry and manufacturing. The change began in England, where a series of important machines were invented, and steam power began to replace water, wind, and animal power. Initially, these advances gave British industry significant advantages over other nations, but eventually the revolution spread to other European countries and to the United States. The Industrial Revolution contributed to the development of manufacturing in the following ways: (1) *Watt's steam engine,* a new power-generating technology; (2) development of *machine tools*, starting with John Wilkinson's boring machine around 1775, which was used to bore the cylinder on Watt's steam engine; (3) invention of the *spinning jenny, power loom,* and other machinery for the textile industry, which permitted significant increases in productivity; and (4) the *factory system,* a new way of organizing large numbers of production workers based on the division of labor.

Wilkinson's boring machine is generally recognized as the beginning of machine tool technology. It was powered by water wheel. During the period 1775–1850, other machine tools were developed for most of the conventional *machining processes,* such as *boring, turning, drilling, milling, shaping,* and *planing*. As steam power became more prevalent, it gradually became the preferred power source for most of these machine tools. It is of interest to note that many of the individual processes predate the machine tools by centuries; for example, drilling and sawing (of wood) date from ancient times and turning (of wood) from around the time of Christ.

Assembly methods were used in ancient cultures to make ships, weapons, tools, farm implements, machinery, chariots and carts, furniture, and garments. The processes included *binding* with twine and rope, *riveting* and *nailing*, and *soldering*. By around the time of Christ, *forge welding* and *adhesive bonding* had been developed. Widespread use of screws, bolts, and nuts—so common in today's assembly—required the development of machine tools, in particular, Maudsley's screw cutting lathe (1800), which could accurately form the helical threads. It was not until around 1900 that *fusion welding* processes started to be developed as assembly techniques.

While England was leading the Industrial Revolution, an important concept related to assembly technology was being introduced in the United States: *interchangeable parts* manufacture. Much credit for this concept is given to Eli Whitney (1765–1825), although its importance had been recognized by others [2]. In 1797, Whitney negotiated a contract to produce 10,000 muskets for the U.S. government. The traditional way of making guns at the time was to custom fabricate each part for a particular gun and then hand-fit the parts together by filing. Each musket was therefore unique, and the time to make it was considerable. Whitney believed that the components could be made accurately enough to permit parts assembly without fitting. After several years of development in his Connecticut factory, he traveled to Washington in 1801 to demonstrate the principle. Before government officials, including Thomas Jefferson, he laid out components for 10 muskets and proceeded to select parts randomly to assemble the guns. No special filing or fitting was required, and all of the guns worked perfectly. The secret behind his achievement was the collection of special machines, fixtures, and gages that he had developed in his factory. Interchangeable parts manufacture required many years of development and refinement before becoming a practical reality, but it revolutionized methods of manufacturing. It is a prerequisite for mass production of assembled products. Because its origins were in the United States, interchangeable parts production came to be known as the *American System* of manufacture.

The mid- and late-1800s witnessed the expansion of railroads, steam-powered ships, and other machines that created a growing need for iron and steel. New methods for producing steel were developed to meet this demand. Also during this period, several consumer products were developed, including the sewing machine, bicycle, and automobile. To meet the mass demand for these products, more efficient production methods were required. Some historians identify developments during this period as the *Second Industrial Revolution*, characterized in terms of its effects on production systems by the following: (1) mass production, (2) assembly lines, (3) scientific management movement, and (4) electrification of factories.

*Mass production* was primarily an American phenomenon. Its motivation was the mass market that existed in the United States. Population in the United States in 1900 was 76 million and growing. By 1920 it exceeded 106 million. Such a large population, larger than any western European country, created a demand for large numbers of products. Mass production provided those products. Certainly one of the important technologies of mass production was the *assembly line*, introduced by Henry Ford (1863–1947) in 1913 at his Highland Park plant (Historical Note 17.1). The assembly line made mass production of complex consumer products possible. Use of assembly line methods permitted Ford to sell a Model T automobile for less than $500 in 1916, thus making ownership of cars feasible for a large segment of the American population.

The *scientific management* movement started in the late 1800s in the United States in response to the need to plan and control the activities of growing numbers of production workers. The movement was led by Frederick W. Taylor (1856–1915), Frank Gilbreath (1868–1924) and his wife Lilian (1878–1972), and others. Scientific management included: (1) *motion study*, aimed at finding the best method to perform a given task; (2) *time study*, to establish work standards for a job; (3) extensive use of *standards* in industry; (4) the *piece rate system* and similar labor incentive plans; and (5) use of data collection, record keeping, and cost accounting in factory operations.

In 1881, *electrification* began with the first electric power generating station being built in New York City, and soon electric motors were being used as the power source to operate factory machinery. This was a far more convenient power delivery system than the steam engine, which required overhead belts to distribute power to the machines. By 1920, electricity had overtaken steam as the principal power source in U.S. factories. Electrification also motivated many new inventions that have affected manufacturing operations and production systems. The twentieth century has been a time of more technological advances than in all other centuries combined. Many of these developments have resulted in the *automation* of manufacturing. Historical notes on some of these advances in automation are covered in this book.

## 2.1 MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES AND PRODUCTS

Manufacturing is an important commercial activity, carried out by companies that sell products to customers. The type of manufacturing performed by a company depends on the kinds of products it makes. Let us first take a look at the scope of the manufacturing industries and then consider their products.

*Manufacturing Industries.* Industry consists of enterprises and organizations that produce and/or supply goods and/or services. Industries can be classified as primary, secondary, and tertiary. *Primary industries* are those that cultivate and exploit natural resources, such as agriculture and mining. *Secondary industries* convert the outputs of the primary industries into products. Manufacturing is the principal activity in this category, but the secondary industries also include construction and power utilities. *Tertiary industries* constitute the service sector of the economy. A list of specific industries in these categories is presented in Table 2.1.

**TABLE 2.1** Specific Industries in the Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Categories, Based Roughly on the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) Used by the United Nations

| *Primary* | *Secondary* | *Tertiary (Service)* |
|---|---|---|
| Agriculture | Aerospace | Banking |
| Forestry | Apparel | Communications |
| Fishing | Automotive | Education |
| Livestock | Basic metals | Entertainment |
| Quarries | Beverages | Financial services |
| Mining | Building materials | Government |
| Petroleum | Chemicals | Health and medical |
| | Computers | Hotel |
| | Construction | Information |
| | Consumer appliances | Insurance |
| | Electronics | Legal |
| | Equipment | Real estate |
| | Fabricated metals | Repair and maintenance |
| | Food processing | Restaurant |
| | Glass, ceramics | Retail trade |
| | Heavy machinery | Tourism |
| | Paper | Transportation |
| | Petroleum refining | Wholesale trade |
| | Pharmaceuticals | |
| | Plastics (shaping) | |
| | Power utilities | |
| | Publishing | |
| | Textiles | |
| | Tire and rubber | |
| | Wood and furniture | |

In this book, we are concerned with the secondary industries (middle column in Table 2.1), which are composed of the companies engaged in manufacturing. It is useful to distinguish the process industries from the industries that make discrete parts and products. The process industries include chemicals, pharmaceuticals, petroleum, basic metals, food, beverages, and electric power generation. The discrete product industries include automobiles, aircraft, appliances, computers, machinery, and the component parts that these products are assembled from. The International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) of industries according to types of products manufactured is listed in Table 2.2. In general, the process industries are included within ISIC codes 31–37, and the discrete product manufacturing industries are included in ISIC codes 38 and 39. However, it must be acknowledged that many of the products made by the process industries are finally sold to the consumer in discrete units. For example, beverages are sold in bottles and cans. Pharmaceuticals are often purchased as pills and capsules.

Production operations in the process industries and the discrete product industries can be divided into continuous production and batch production. The differences are shown in Figure 2.2. *Continuous production* occurs when the production equipment is used exclusively for the given product, and the output of the product is uninterrupted. In the process industries, continuous production means that the process is carried out on a continuous stream of material, with no interruptions in the output flow, as suggested by Figure 2.2(a). Once operating in steady state, the process does not depend on the length of time it is operating. The material being processed is likely to be in the form of a liquid, gas, powder, or similar physical state. In the discrete manufacturing industries, continuous production means 100% dedication of the production equipment to the part or product, with no breaks for product changeovers. The individual units of production are identifiable, as in Figure 2.2(b).

*Batch production* occurs when the materials are processed in finite amounts or quantities. The finite amount or quantity of material is called a *batch* in both the process and discrete manufacturing industries. Batch production is discontinuous because there are interruptions in production between batches. The reason for using batch production is

**TABLE 2.2** International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) Codes for Various Industries in the Manufacturing Sector

| *Basic Code* | *Products Manufactured* |
|---|---|
| 31 | Food, beverages (alcoholic and nonalcoholic), tobacco |
| 32 | Textiles, wearing apparel, leather goods, fur products |
| 33 | Wood and wood products (e.g., furniture), cork products |
| 34 | Paper, paper products, printing, publishing, bookbinding |
| 35 | Chemicals, coal, petroleum, plastic, rubber, products made from these materials, pharmaceuticals |
| 36 | Ceramics (including glass), nonmetallic mineral products (e.g., cement) |
| 37 | Basic metals (e.g., steel, aluminum, etc.) |
| 38 | Fabricated metal products, machinery, equipment (e.g., aircraft, cameras, computers and other office equipment, machinery, motor vehicles, tools, televisions) |
| 39 | Other manufactured goods (e.g., jewelry, musical instruments, sporting goods, toys) |

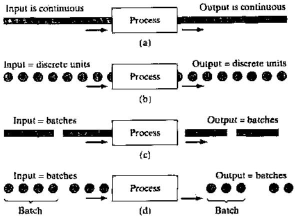



**Figure 2.2** Continuous and batch production in the process and discrete manufacturing industries: (a) continuous production in the process industries, (b) continuous production in the discrete manufacturing industries, (c) batch production in the process industries, and (d) batch production in the discrete manufacturing industries.

because the nature of the process requires that only a finite amount of material can be accommodated at one time (e.g., the amount of material might be limited by the size of the container used in processing) or because there are differences between the parts or products made in different batches (e.g., a batch of 20 units of part A followed by a batch of 50 units of part B in a machining operation, where a setup changeover is required between batches because of differences in tooling and fixturing required). The differences in batch production between the process and discrete manufacturing industries are portrayed in Figure 2.2(c) and (d). Batch production in the process industries generally means that the starting materials are in liquid or bulk form, and they are processed altogether as a unit. By contrast, in the discrete manufacturing industries, a batch is a certain quantity of work units, and the work units are usually processed one at a time rather than altogether at once. The number of parts in a batch can range from as few as one to as many as thousands of units.

*Manufactured Products.* As indicated in Table 2.2, the secondary industries include food, beverages, textiles, wood, paper, publishing, chemicals, and basic metals (ISIC codes 31–37). The scope of our book is primarily directed at the industries that produce discrete products (ISIC codes 38 and 39). The two groups interact with each other, and many of the concepts and systems discussed in the book are applicable to the process industries, but our attention is mainly on the production of discrete hardware, which ranges from nuts and bolts to cars, airplanes, and digital computers. Table 2.3 lists the manufacturing industries and corresponding products for which the production systems in this book are most applicable.

**TABLE 2.3** Manufacturing Industries Whose Products Are Likely to Be Produced by the Productio . Systems Discussed in This Book

| *Industry* | *Typical Products* |
|---|---|
| Aerospace | Commercial and military aircraft |
| Automotive | Cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles |
| Computers | Mainframe and personal computers |
| Consumer appliances | Large and small household appliances |
| Electronics | TVs, VCRs, audio equipment |
| Equipment | Industrial machinery, railroad equipment |
| Fabricated metals | Machined parts, metal stampings, tools |
| Glass, ceramics | Glass products, ceramic tools, pottery |
| Heavy machinery | Machine tools, construction equipment |
| Plastics (shaping) | Plastic moldings, extrusions |
| Tire and rubber | Tires, shoe soles, tennis balls |

Final products made by the industries listed in Table 2.3 can be divided into two major classes: consumer goods and capital goods. *Consumer goods* are products purchased directly by consumers, such as cars, personal computers, TVs, tires, toys, and tennis rackets. *Capital goods* are products purchased by other companies to produce goods and supply services. Examples of capital goods include commercial aircraft, mainframe computers, machine tools, railroad equipment, and construction machinery.

In addition to final products, which are usually assembled, there are companies in industry whose business is primarily to produce *materials, components,* and *supplies* for the companies that make the final products. Examples of these items include sheet steel, bar stock, metal stampings, machined parts, plastic moldings and extrusions, cutting tools, dies, molds, and lubricants. Thus, the manufacturing industries consist of a complex infrastructure with various categories and layers of intermediate suppliers that the final consumer never deals with.

## 2.2 MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

There are certain basic activities that must be carried out in a factory to convert raw materials into finished products. Limiting our scope to a plant engaged in making discrete products, the factory activities are: (1) processing and assembly operations, (2) material handling, (3) inspection and test, and (4) coordination and control.

The first three activities are the physical activities that "touch" the product as it is being made. Processing and assembly operations alter the geometry, properties, and/or appearance of the work unit. They add value to the product. The product must be moved from one operation to the next in the manufacturing sequence, and it must be inspected and/or tested to insure high quality. It is sometimes argued that these material handling and inspection activities do not add value to the product. However, our viewpoint is that value is added through the totality of manufacturing operations performed on the product. Unnecessary operations, whether they are processing, assembly, material handling, or inspection, must be eliminated from the sequence of steps performed to complete a given product.

### 2.2.1 Processing and Assembly Operations

Manufacturing processes can be divided into two basic types: (1) processing operations and (2) assembly operations. A *processing operation* transforms a work material from one state of completion to a more advanced state that is closer to the final desired part or product. It adds value by changing the geometry, properties, or appearance of the starting material. In general, processing operations are performed on discrete workparts, but some processing operations are also applicable to assembled items, for example, painting a welded sheet metal car body. An *assembly operation* joins two or more components to create a new entity, which is called an assembly, subassembly, or some other term that refers to the specific joining process.

*Processing Operations.* A processing operation uses energy to alter a workpart's shape, physical properties, or appearance to add value to the material. The forms of energy include mechanical, thermal, electrical, and chemical. The energy is applied in a controlled way by means of machinery and tooling. Human energy may also be required, but human workers are generally employed to control the machines, to oversee the operations, and to load and unload parts before and after each cycle of operation. A general model of a processing operation is illustrated in Figure 2.1(a). Material is fed into the process, energy is applied by the machinery and tooling to transform the material, and the completed workpart exits the process. As shown in our model, most production operations produce waste or scrap, either as a natural byproduct of the process (e.g., removing material as in machining) or in the form of occasional defective pieces. An important objective in manufacturing is to reduce waste in either of these forms.

More than one processing operation is usually required to transform the starting material into final form. The operations are performed in the particular sequence to achieve the geometry and/or condition defined by the design specification.

Three categories of processing operations are distinguished: (1) shaping operations, (2) property-enhancing operations, and (3) surface processing operations. *Shaping operations* apply mechanical force or heat or other forms and combinations of energy to effect a change in geometry of the work material. There are various ways to classify these processes. The classification used here is based on the state of the starting material, by which we have four categories:

1. *Solidification processes.* The important processes in this category are *casting* (for metals) and *molding* (for plastics and glasses), in which the starting material is a heated liquid or semifluid, in which state it can be poured or otherwise forced to flow into a mold cavity where it cools and solidifies, taking a solid shape that is the same as the cavity.
2. *Particulate processing.* The starting material is a powder. The common technique involves *pressing* the powders in a die cavity under high pressure to cause the powders to take the shape of the cavity. However, the compacted workpart lacks sufficient strength for any useful application. To increase strength, the part is then *sintered*—heated to a temperature below the melting point, which causes the individual particles to bond together. Both metals (powder metallurgy) and ceramics can be formed by particulate processing.
3. *Deformation processes.* In most cases, the starting material is a ductile metal that is shaped by applying stresses that exceed the metal's yield strength. To increase ductility, the metal is often heated prior to forming. Deformation processes include *forg-*

*ing*, *extrusion*, and *rolling*. Also included in this category are sheet metal processes such as *drawing*, *forming*, and *bending*.

4. *Material removal processes*. The starting material is solid (commonly a metal, ductile or brittle), from which excess material is removed from the starting workpiece so that the resulting part has the desired geometry. Most important in this category are *machining* operations such as *turning*, *drilling*, and *milling*, accomplished using cutting tools that are harder and stronger than the work metal. *Grinding* is another common process in this category, in which an abrasive grinding wheel is used to remove material. Other material removal processes are known as *nontraditional processes* because they do not use traditional cutting and grinding tools. Instead, they are based on lasers, electron beams, chemical erosion, electric discharge, or electrochemical energy.

*Property-enhancing operations* are designed to improve mechanical or physical properties of the work material. The most important property-enhancing operations involve *heat treatments*, which include various temperature-induced strengthening and/or toughening processes for metals and glasses. *Sintering* of powdered metals and ceramics, mentioned previously, is also a heat treatment, which strengthens a pressed powder workpart. Property-enhancing operations do not alter part shape, except unintentionally in some cases, for example, warping of a metal part during heat treatment or shrinkage of a ceramic part during sintering.

*Surface processing operations* include: (1) cleaning, (2) surface treatments, and (3) coating and thin film deposition processes. *Cleaning* includes both chemical and mechanical processes to remove dirt, oil, and other contaminants from the surface. *Surface treatments* include mechanical working, such as shot peening and sand blasting, and physical processes, like diffusion and ion implantation. *Coating* and *thin film deposition* processes apply a coating of material to the exterior surface of the workpart. Common coating processes include *electroplating*, *anodizing* of aluminum, and organic *coating* (call it *painting*). Thin film deposition processes include *physical vapor deposition* and *chemical vapor deposition* to form extremely thin coatings of various substances. Several surface processing operations have been adapted to fabricate semiconductor materials (most commonly silicon) into integrated circuits for microelectronics. These processes include chemical vapor deposition, physical vapor deposition, and oxidation. They are applied to very localized areas on the surface of a thin wafer of silicon (or other semiconductor material) to create the microscopic circuit.

*Assembly Operations.* The second basic type of manufacturing operation is assembly, in which two or more separate parts are joined to form a new entity. Components of the new entity are connected together either permanently or semipermanently. Permanent joining processes include *welding*, *brazing*, *soldering*, and *adhesive bonding*. They combine parts by forming a joint that cannot be easily disconnected. *Mechanical assembly* methods are available to fasten two (or more) parts together in a joint that can be conveniently disassembled. The use of *threaded fasteners* (e.g., screws, bolts, nuts) are important traditional methods in this category. Other mechanical assembly techniques that form a permanent connection include *rivets*, *press fitting*, and *expansion fits*. Special assembly methods are used in electronics. Some of the methods are identical to or adaptations of the above techniques. For example, soldering is widely used in electronics assembly. Electronics assembly is concerned primarily with the assembly of components (e.g., integrated circuit packages) to printed circuit boards to produce the complex circuits used in so many of today's products.

### 2.2.2 Other Factory Operations

Other activities that must be performed in the factory include material handling and storage, inspection and testing, and coordination and control.

*Material Handling and Storage.* A means of moving and storing materials between processing and/or assembly operations is usually required. In most manufacturing plants, materials spend more time being moved and stored than being processed. In some cases, the majority of the labor cost in the factory is consumed in handling, moving, and storing materials. It is important that this function be carried out as efficiently as possible. In Part II of our book, we consider the material handling and storage technologies that are used in factory operations.

Eugene Merchant, an advocate and spokesman for the machine tool industry for many years, observed that materials in a typical metal machining batch factory or job shop spend more time waiting or being moved than in processing [3]. His observation is illustrated in Figure 2.3. About 95% of a part's time is spent either moving or waiting (temporary storage). Only 5% of its time is spent on the machine tool. Of this 5%, less than 30% of the time on the machine (1.5% of the total time of the part) is time during which actual cutting is taking place. The remaining 70% (3.5% of the total) is required for loading and unloading, part handling and positioning, tool positioning, gaging, and other elements of nonprocessing time. These time proportions provide evidence of the significance of material handling and storage in a typical factory.

*Inspection and Test.* Inspection and test are quality control activities. The purpose of *inspection* is to determine whether the manufactured product meets the established design standards and specifications. For example, inspection examines whether the actual dimensions of a mechanical part are within the tolerances indicated on the engineering drawing for the part. *Testing* is generally concerned with the functional specifications of the final product rather than with the individual parts that go into the product. For example, final testing of the product ensures that it functions and operates in the manner specified by the product designer. In Part IV of this text, we examine the inspection and testing function.

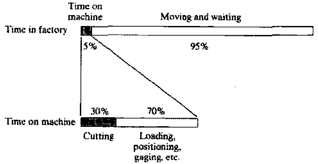



**Figure 2.3** How time is spent by a typical part in a batch production machine shop [3].

*Coordination and Control.* Coordination and control in manufacturing includes both the regulation of individual processing and assembly operations as well as the management of plant level activities. Control at the process level involves the achievement of certain performance objectives by properly manipulating the inputs and other parameters of the process. Control at the process level is discussed in Part I of the book.

Control at the plant level includes effective use of labor, maintenance of the equipment, moving materials in the factory, controlling inventory, shipping products of good quality on schedule, and keeping plant operating costs at a minimum possible level. The manufacturing control function at the plant level represents the major point of intersection between the physical operations in the factory and the information processing activities that occur in production. We discuss many of these plant and enterprise level control functions in Parts IV and V.

## 2.3 PRODUCT/PRODUCTION RELATIONSHIPS

Companies organize their manufacturing operations and production systems as a function of the particular products they make. It is instructive to recognize that there are certain product parameters that are influential in determining how the products are manufactured. Let us consider four key parameters: (1) production quantity, (2) product variety, (3) complexity of assembled products, and (4) complexity of individual parts.

### 2.3.1 Production Quantity and Product Variety

We previously discussed production quantity and product variety in Chapter 1 (Section 1.1). Let us develop a set of symbols to represent these important parameters. First, let $Q$ = production quantity and $P$ = product variety. Thus we can discuss product variety and production quantity relationships as $PQ$ relationships.

$Q$ refers to the number of units of a given part or product that are produced annually by a plant. Our interest includes both the quantities of each individual part or product style and the total quantity of all styles. Let us identify each part or product style by using the subscript $j$, so that $Q_j$ = annual quantity of style $j$. Then let $Q_f$ = total quantity of all parts or products made in the factory. $Q_j$ and $Q_f$ are related as follows:

$$Q_f = \sum_{j=1}^{P} Q_j \tag{2.1}$$

where $P$ = total number of different part or product styles, and $j$ is a subscript to identify products, $j = 1, 2, \ldots, P$.

$P$ refers to the different product designs or types that are produced in a plant. It is a parameter that can be counted, and yet we recognize that the difference between products can be great or small. In Chapter 1, we distinguished between hard product variety and soft product variety. *Hard product variety* is when the products differ substantially. *Soft product variety* is when there are only small differences between products. Let us divide the parameter $P$ into two levels, as in a tree structure. Call them P1 and P2. P1 refers to the number of distinct product lines produced by the factory, and P2 refers to the number of models in a product line. P1 represents hard product variety, and P2 is for soft variety.

**EXAMPLE 2.1 Product Lines P1 and Product Models P2**

A company specializes in consumer photographic products. It produces only cameras and projectors. Thus P1 = 2. In its camera line it offers 15 different models, and in its projector line it offers five models. Thus for cameras, $P2_1 = 15$, and for projectors, $P2_2 = 5$. The totality of product models offered is given by:

$$P = \sum_{j=1}^{P1} P2_j = \sum_{j=1}^{2} P2_j = 15 + 5 = 20 \tag{2.2}$$

### 2.3.2 Product and Part Complexity

How complex is each product made in the plant? Product complexity is a complicated issue. It has both qualitative and quantitative aspects. Let us deal with it using quantitative measures. For an assembled product, one possible indicator of *product complexity* is its number of components—the more parts, the more complex the product is. This is easily demonstrated by comparing the numbers of components in various assembled products, as in Table 2.4. Our list demonstrates that the more components a product has, the more complex it tends to be.

For a fabricated component, a possible measure of *part complexity* is the number of processing steps required to produce it. An integrated circuit, which is technically a monolithic silicon chip with localized alterations in its surface chemistry, requires hundreds of processing steps in its fabrication. Although it may measure only 9 mm (3/8 inch) on a side and is 0.5 mm (0.020 inch) thick, its complexity is orders of magnitude greater than a round washer of 9 mm (3/8 inch) outside diameter, stamped out of 0.80-mm (1/32-inch) thick stainless steel in one step. In Table 2.5, we have compiled a list of manufactured parts with the typical number of processing operations that would be required for each.

So, we have complexity of an assembled product defined as the number of distinct components; let $n_p$ = the number of parts per product. And we have processing complexity of each part as the number of operations required to make it; let $n_o$ = the number of operations or processing steps to make a part. We can draw some distinctions among production plants on the basis of $n_p$ and $n_o$. As defined in Table 2.6, three different types of plant can be identified: parts producers, pure assembly plants, and vertically integrated plants.

**TABLE 2.4** Typical Number of Separate Components in Various Assembled Products (Compiled from [2], [4], and Other Sources)

| *Product (Approx. Date or Circa)* | *Approx. Number of Components* |
|---|---|
| Mechanical pencil (modern) | 10 |
| Ball bearing (modern) | 20 |
| Rifle (1800) | 50 |
| Sewing machine (1875) | 150 |
| Bicycle chain | 300 |
| Bicycle (modern) | 750 |
| Early automobile (1910) | 2000 |
| Automobile (modern) | 20,000 |
| Commercial airplane (1930) | 100,000 |
| Commercial airplane (modern) | 1,000,000 |
| Space shuttle (modern) | 10,000,000 |

**TABLE 2.5** Typical Number of Processing Operations Required To Fabricate Various Parts

| *Part* | *Approx. Number of Processing Operations* | *Typical Processing Operations Used* |
|---|---|---|
| Plastic molded part | 1 | Injection molding |
| Washer (stainless steel) | 1 | Stamping |
| Washer (plated steel) | 2 | Stamping, electroplating |
| Forged part | 3 | Heating, forging, trimming |
| Pump shaft | 10 | Machining (from bar stock) |
| Coated carbide cutting tool | 15 | Pressing, sintering, coating, grinding |
| Pump housing, machined | 20 | Casting, machining |
| V-6 engine block | 50 | Casting, machining |
| Integrated circuit chip | 75 | Photolithography, various thermal and chemical processes |

**TABLE 2.6** Production Plants Distinguished by $n_p$ and $n_o$ Values

| *Type of Plant* | $n_p - n_o$ *Parameter Values* | *Description* |
|---|---|---|
| Parts producer | $n_p = 1, n_o > 1$ | This type of plant produces individual components, and each component requires multiple processing steps. |
| Assembly plant | $n_p > 1, n_o = 1$ | A pure assembly plant produces no parts. Instead, it purchases all parts from suppliers. In this pure case, we assume that one operation is required to assemble each part to the product (thus, $n_o = 1$). |
| Vertically integrated plant | $n_p > 1, n_o > 1$ | The pure plant of this type makes all its parts and assembles them into its final products. This plant type also includes intermediate suppliers that make assembled items such as ball bearings, car seats, and so on for final product assembly plants. |

Let us develop some simple relationships among the parameters $P$, $Q$, $n_p$, and $n_o$ that indicate the level of activity in a manufacturing plant. We will ignore the differences between P1 and P2 here. The total number of products made annually in a plant is the sum of the quantities of the individual product designs, as expressed in previous Eq. (2.1). Assuming that the products are all assembled and that all component parts used in these products are made in the plant (no purchased components), then the total number of parts manufactured by the plant per year is given by:

$$n_{pf} = \sum_{j=1}^{P} Q_j n_{pj} \tag{2.3}$$

where $n_{pf}$ = total number of parts made in the factory (pc/yr), $Q_j$ = annual quantity of product style $j$ (products/yr), and $n_{pj}$ = number of parts in product $j$ (pc/product).

Finally, if all parts are manufactured in the plant, then the total number of processing operations performed by the plant is given by:

$$n_{of} = \sum_{j=1}^{P} Q_j n_{pj} \sum_{k=1}^{n_{pj}} n_{ojk} \tag{2.4}$$

where $n_{of}$ = total number of operation cycles performed in the factory (ops/yr), and $n_{ojk}$ = number of processing operations for each part $k$, summed over the number of parts in product $j$, $n_{pj}$. Parameter $n_{of}$ provides a numerical value for the total activity level in the factory.

We might try to simplify this to better conceptualize the situation by assuming that the number of product designs $P$ are produced in equal quantities $Q$, all products have the same number of components $n_p$, and all components require an equal number of processing steps $n_o$. In this case, the total number of product units produced by the factory is given by:

$$Q_f = PQ \tag{2.5}$$

The total number of parts produced by the factory is given by:

$$n_{pf} = PQn_p \tag{2.6}$$

And the total number of manufacturing operation cycles performed by the factory is given by:

$$n_{of} = PQn_pn_o \tag{2.7}$$

Using these simplified equations, consider the following example.

**EXAMPLE 2.2 A Manufacturing Operations (and Production Systems) Problem**

Suppose a company has designed a new product line and is planning to build a new plant to manufacture this product line. The new line consists of 100 different product types, and for each product type the company wants to produce 10,000 units annually. The products average 1000 components each, and the average number of processing steps required for each component is 10. All parts will be made in the factory. Each processing step takes an average of 1 min. Determine: (a) how many products, (b) how many parts, and (c) how many production operations will be required each year, and (d) how many workers will be needed for the plant, if it operates one shift for 250 day/yr?

***Solution:*** (a) The total number of units to be produced by the factory is given by Eq (2.5):

$$Q = PQ = 100 \times 10{,}000 = 1{,}000{,}000 \text{ products annually.}$$

(b) The total number of parts produced is:

$$n_{pf} = PQn_p = 1{,}000{,}000 \times 1000 = 1{,}000{,}000{,}000 \text{ parts annually.}$$

(c) The number of distinct production operations is:

$$n_{of} = PQn_pn_o = 1{,}000{,}000{,}000 \times 10 = 10{,}000{,}000{,}000 \text{ operations.}$$

(d) Let us try to estimate the number of workers required. First consider the total time to perform these operations. If each operation takes 1 min (1/60 hr),

$$\text{Total time} = 10{,}000{,}000{,}000 \times 1/60 = 166{,}666{,}667 \text{ hr}$$

If each worker works 2000 hr/yr (40 hr/wk × 50 wk/yr), then the total number of workers required is:

$$w = \frac{166{,}666{,}667}{2000} = 83{,}333 \text{ workers.}$$

---

The factory in our example is a fully integrated factory. It would be a big factory. The number of workers we have calculated only includes direct labor. Add indirect labor, staff, and management, and the number increases to well over 100,000 employees. Imagine the parking lot. And inside the factory, the logistics problems of dealing with all of the products, parts, and operations would be overwhelming. No organization in its right mind would consider building or operating such a plant today—not even the federal government.

### 2.3.3 Limitations and Capabilities of a Manufacturing Plant

Companies do not attempt the kind of factory in our example. Instead, today's factory is designed with a much more specific mission. Referred to as a *focused factory* [6], it is a plant which concentrates "on a limited, concise, manageable set of products, technologies, volumes, and markets." It is a recognition that a manufacturing plant cannot do everything. It must limit its mission only to a certain scope of products and activities in which it can best compete. Its size is typically limited to about 500 workers, although that number may vary widely for different types of products and manufacturing operations.

Let us consider how a plant, or its parent company, limits the scope of its manufacturing operations and production systems. In limiting its scope, the plant in effect makes a set of deliberate decisions about what it will not try to do. Certainly one way to limit a plant's scope is by avoiding being a fully integrated factory, at least to the extent of our Example 2.2. Instead, it specializes in being either a parts producer or an assembly plant. Just as it decides what it will not do, the plant must also decide on the specific technologies, products, and volumes in which it will specialize. These decisions define the plant's intended manufacturing capability. *Manufacturing capability* refers to the technical and physical limitations of a manufacturing firm and each of its plants. We can identify several dimensions of this capability: (1) technological processing capability, (2) physical size and weight of product, and (3) production capacity.

*Technological Processing Capability.* The technological processing capability of a plant (or company) is its available set of manufacturing processes. Certain plants perform machining operations, others roll steel billets into sheet stock, and others build automobiles. A machine shop cannot roll steel, and a rolling mill cannot build cars. The underlying feature that distinguishes these plants is the set of processes they can perform. Technological processing capability is closely related to the material being processed. Certain manufacturing processes are suited to certain materials, while other processes are suited to other materials. By specializing in a certain process or group of processes, the plant is simultaneously specializing in a certain material type or range of materials.

Technological processing capability includes not only the physical processes, but also the expertise possessed by plant personnel in these processing technologies. Companies are limited by their available processes. They must focus on designing and manufacturing products for which their technological processing capability provides a competitive advantage.

*Physical Product Limitations.* A second aspect of manufacturing capability is imposed by the physical product. Given a plant with a certain set of processes, there are size and weight limitations on the products that can be accommodated in the plant. Big, heavy products are difficult to move. To move products about, the plant must be equipped with cranes of large load capacity. Smaller parts and products made in large quantities can be moved by conveyor or fork lift truck. The limitation on product size and weight extends to the physical capacity of the manufacturing equipment as well. Production machines come in different sizes. Larger machines can be used to process larger parts. Smaller machines limit the size of the work that can be processed. The set of production equipment, material handling, storage capability, and plant size must be planned for products that lie within a certain size and weight range.

*Production Capacity.* A third limitation on a plant's manufacturing capability is the production quantity that can be produced in a given time period (e.g., month or year). This quantity limitation is commonly called *plant capacity*, or *production capacity*, which is defined as the maximum rate of production per period that a plant can achieve under assumed operating conditions. The operating conditions refer to number of shifts per week, hours per shift, direct labor manning levels in the plant, and similar conditions under which the plant has been designed to operate. These factors represent inputs to the manufacturing plant. Given these inputs, how much output can the factory produce?

Plant capacity is often measured in terms of output units, such as annual tons of steel produced by a steel mill, or number of cars produced by a final assembly plant. In these cases, the outputs are homogeneous, more or less. In cases where the output units are not homogeneous, other factors may be more appropriate measures, such as available labor hours of productive capacity in a machine shop that produces a variety of parts.

## 2.4 PRODUCTION CONCEPTS AND MATHEMATICAL MODELS

A number of production concepts are quantitative, or they require a quantitative approach to measure them. The purpose of this section is to define some of these concepts. In subsequent chapters, we refer back to these production concepts in our discussion of specific topics in automation and production systems. The models developed in this section are ideal, in the sense that they neglect some of the realities and complications that are present in the factory. For example, our models do not include the effect of scrap rates. In some manufacturing operations, the percentage of scrap produced is high enough to adversely affect production rate, plant capacity, and product costs. Most of these issues are considered in later chapters as we focus on specific types of production systems.

### 2.4.1 Production Rate

The production rate for an individual processing or assembly operation is usually expressed as an hourly rate, that is, parts or products per hour. Let us consider how this rate is determined for the three types of production: job shop production, batch production, and mass production.

For any production operation, the *operation cycle time* $T_c$ is defined as the time that one work unit spends being processed or assembled. It is the time between when one work unit begins processing (or assembly) and when the next unit begins. $T_c$ is the time an individual part spends at the machine, but not all of this time is productive (recall the Merchant study, Section 2.2.2). In a typical processing operation, such as machining, $T_c$ consists of: (1) actual machining operation time, (2) workpart handling time, and (3) tool handling time per workpiece. As an equation, this can be expressed:

$$T_c = T_o + T_h + T_{th} \tag{2.8}$$

where $T_c$ = operation cycle time (min/pc), $T_o$ = time of the actual processing or assembly operation (min/pc), $T_h$ = handling time (min/pc), and $T_{th}$ = tool handling time (min/pc). The tool handling time consists of time spent changing tools when they wear out, time changing from one tool to the next, tool indexing time for indexable inserts or for tools on a turret lathe or turret drill, tool repositioning for a next pass, and so on. Some of these tool handling activities do not occur every cycle; therefore, they must be spread over the number of parts between their occurrences to obtain an average time per workpiece.

Each of the terms, $T_o$, $T_h$, and $T_{th}$, has its counterpart in other types of discrete-item production. There is a portion of the cycle when the part is actually being processed $(T_o)$; there is a portion of the cycle when the part is being handled $(T_h)$; and there is, on average, a portion when the tooling is being adjusted or changed $(T_{th})$. Accordingly, we can generalize Eq. (2.8) to cover most processing operations in manufacturing.

Let us first consider the batch production case and then consider the job shop and mass production. In *batch production*, the time to process one batch consisting of $Q$ work units is the sum of the setup time and processing time; that is,

$$T_b = T_{su} + QT_c \tag{2.9}$$

where $T_b$ = batch processing time (min), $T_{su}$ = setup time to prepare for the batch (min), $Q$ = batch quantity (pc), and $T_c$ = operation cycle time per work unit (min/cycle). We assume that one work unit is completed each cycle and so $T_c$ also has units of min/pc. If more than one part is produced each cycle, then Eq. (2.9) must be adjusted accordingly. Dividing batch time by batch quantity, we have the average production time per work unit $T_p$ for the given machine:

$$T_p = \frac{T_b}{Q} \tag{2.10}$$

The average production rate for the machine is simply the reciprocal of production time. It is usually expressed as an hourly rate:

$$R_p = \frac{60}{T_p} \tag{2.11}$$

where $R_p$ = hourly production rate (pc/hr), $T_p$ = average production time per minute (min/pc), and the constant 60 converts minutes to hours.

For *job shop production* when quantity $Q = 1$, the production time per work unit is the sum of setup and operation cycle times:

$$T_p = T_{su} + T_c \tag{2.12}$$

For job shop production when the quantity is greater than one, then this reverts to the batch production case discussed above.

For *quantity type mass production*, we can say that the production rate equals the cycle rate of the machine (reciprocal of operation cycle time) after production is underway and the effects of setup time become insignificant. That is, as $Q$ becomes very large, $(T_{su}/Q) \rightarrow 0$ and

$$R_p \rightarrow R_c = \frac{60}{T_c} \tag{2.13}$$

where $R_c$ = operation cycle rate of the machine (pc/hr), and $T_c$ = operation cycle time (min/pc).

For *flow line mass production*, the production rate approximates the cycle rate of the production line, again neglecting setup time. However, the operation of production lines is complicated by the interdependence of the workstations on the line. One complication is that it is usually impossible to divide the total work equally among all of the workstations on the line; therefore, one station ends up with the longest operation time, and this station sets the pace for the entire line. The term *bottleneck station* is sometimes used to refer to this station. Also included in the cycle time is the time to move parts from one station to the next at the end of each operation. In many production lines, all work units on the line are moved simultaneously, each to its respective next station. Taking these factors into account, the cycle time of a production line is the sum of the longest processing (or assembly) time plus the time to transfer work units between stations. This can be expressed:

$$T_c = T_r + \text{Max } T_o \tag{2.14}$$

where $T_c$ = cycle time of the production line (min/cycle), $T_r$ = time to transfer work units between stations each cycle (min/pc), and Max $T_o$ = operation time at the bottleneck station (the maximum of the operation times for all stations on the line, min/cycle). Theoretically, the production rate can be determined by taking the reciprocal of $T_c$ as follows:

$$R_c = \frac{60}{T_c} \tag{2.15}$$

where $R_c$ = theoretical or ideal production rate, but let us call it the cycle rate to be more precise (cycles/hr), and $T_c$ = ideal cycle time from Eq. (2.14) (min/cycle).

Production lines are of two basic types: (1) manual and (2) automated. In the operation of automated production lines, another complicating factor is reliability. Poor reliability reduces the available production time on the line. This results from the interdependence of workstations in an automated line, in which the entire line is forced to stop when one station breaks down. The actual average production rate $R_p$ is reduced to a value that is often substantially below the ideal $R_c$ given by Eq. (2.15). We discuss reliability and some of its terminology in Section 2.4.3. The effect of reliability on automated production lines is examined in Chapters 18 and 19.

It is important to design the manufacturing method to be consistent with the pace at which the customer is demanding the part or product, sometimes referred to as the *takt* time (a German word for cadence or pace). The takt time is the reciprocal of demand rate, but adjusted for the available shift time in the factory. For example, if 100 product units were demanded from a customer each day, and the factory operated one shift/day, with 400 min of time available per shift, then the takt time would be 400 min/100 units = 4.0 min/work unit.

### 2.4.2 Production Capacity

We mentioned production capacity in our discussion of manufacturing capabilities (Section 2.3.3). *Production capacity* is defined as the maximum rate of output that a production facility (or production line, work center, or group of work centers) is able to produce under a given set of assumed operating conditions. The production facility usually refers to a plant or factory, and so the term *plant capacity* is often used for this measure. As mentioned before, the assumed operating conditions refer to the number of shifts per day (one, two, or three), number of days in the week (or month) that the plant operates, employment levels, and so forth.

The number of hours of plant operation per week is a critical issue in defining plant capacity. For continuous chemical production in which the reactions occur at elevated temperatures, the plant is usually operated 24 hr/day, 7 day/wk. For an automobile assembly plant, capacity is typically defined as one or two shifts. In the manufacture of discrete parts and products, a growing trend is to define plant capacity for the full 7-day week, 24 hr/day. This is the maximum time available (168 hr/wk), and if the plant operates fewer hours than the maximum, then its maximum possible capacity is not being fully utilized.

Quantitative measures of plant capacity can be developed based on the production rate models derived earlier. Let $PC$ = the production capacity of a given facility under consideration. Let the measure of capacity = the number of units produced per week. Let $n$ = the number of machines or work centers in the facility. A *work center* is a manufacturing system in the plant typically consisting of one worker and one machine. It might also be one automated machine with no worker, or multiple workers working together on a production line. It is capable of producing at a rate $R_p$ unit/hr, as defined in Section 2.4.1. Each work center operates for $H$ hr/shift. Provision for setup time is included in $R_p$, according to Eq. (2.11). Let $S$ denote the number of shifts per week. These parameters can be combined to calculate the production capacity of the facility:

$$PC = n\,SHR_p \tag{2.16}$$

where $PC$ = production capacity of the facility (output units/wk), $n$ = number of work centers producing in the facility, $S$ = number of shifts per period (shift/wk), $H$ = hr/shift (hr), and $R_p$ = hourly production rate of each work center (output units/hr). Although we have used a week as the time period of interest, Eq. (2.16) can easily be revised to adopt other periods (months, years, etc.). As in previous equations, our assumption is that the units processed through the group of work centers are homogeneous, and therefore the value of $R_p$ is the same for all units produced.

**EXAMPLE 2.3 Production Capacity**

The turret lathe section has six machines, all devoted to the production of the same part. The section operates 10 shift/wk. The number of hours per shift averages 8.0. Average production rate of each machine is 17 unit/hr. Determine the weekly production capacity of the turret lathe section.

***Solution:*** From Eq. (2.16),

$$PC = 6(10)(8.0)(17) = 8160 \text{ output unit/wk}$$

If we include the possibility that each work unit is routed through $n_o$ operations, with each operation requiring a new setup on either the same or a different machine, then the plant capacity equation must be amended as follows:

$$PC = \frac{n\,SHR_p}{n_o} \tag{2.17}$$

where $n_o$ = number of distinct operations through which work units are routed, and the other terms have the same meaning as before.

Equation (2.17) indicates the operating parameters that affect plant capacity. Changes that can be made to increase or decrease plant capacity over the short term are:

1. Change the number of shifts per week ($S$). For example, Saturday shifts might be authorized to temporarily increase capacity.
2. Change the number of hours worked per shift ($H$). For example, overtime on each regular shift might be authorized to increase capacity.

Over the intermediate or longer term, the following changes can be made to increase plant capacity:

3. Increase the number of work centers, $n$, in the shop. This might be done by using equipment that was formerly not in use and hiring new workers. Over the long term, new machines might be acquired. Decreasing capacity is easier, except for the social and economic impact: Workers must be laid off and machines decommissioned.
4. Increase the production rate, $R_p$ by making improvements in methods or process technology.
5. Reduce the number of operations $n_o$ required per work unit by using combined operations, simultaneous operations, or integration of operations (Section 1.5.2: strategies 2, 3, and 4).

This capacity model assumes that all $n$ machines are producing 100% of the time, and there are no bottleneck operations due to variations in process routings to inhibit smooth flow of work through the plant. In real batch production machine shops where each product has a different operation sequence, it is unlikely that the work distribution among the productive resources (machines) can be perfectly balanced. Consequently, there are some operations that are fully utilized while other operations occasionally stand idle waiting for work. Let us examine the effect of utilization.

### 2.4.3 Utilization and Availability

*Utilization* refers to the amount of output of a production facility relative to its capacity. Expressing this as an equation,

$$U = \frac{Q}{PC} \tag{2.18}$$

where $U$ = utilization of the facility, $Q$ = actual quantity produced by the facility during a given time period (i.e., pc/wk), and $PC$ = production capacity for the same period (pc/wk).

Utilization can be assessed for an entire plant, a single machine in the plant, or any other productive resource (i.e., labor). For convenience, it is often defined as the proportion of time that the facility is operating relative to the time available under the definition of capacity. Utilization is usually expressed as a percentage.

**EXAMPLE 2.4 Utilization**

A production machine operates 80 hr/wk (two shifts, 5 days) at full capacity. Its production rate is 20 unit/hr. During a certain week, the machine produced 1000 parts and was idle the remaining time. (a) Determine the production capacity of the machine. (b) What was the utilization of the machine during the week under consideration?

***Solution:*** (a) The capacity of the machine can be determined using the assumed 80-hr week as follows:

$$PC = 80(20) = 1600 \text{ unit/wk}$$

(b) Utilization can be determined as the ratio of the number of parts made by the machine relative to its capacity.

$$U = 1000/1600 = 0.625 \qquad (62.5\%)$$

The alternative way of assessing utilization is by the time during the week that the machine was actually used. To produce 1000 units, the machine was operated

$$H = \frac{1000 \text{ pc}}{20 \text{ pc/hr}} = 50 \text{hr}$$

Utilization is defined relative to the 80 hr available.

$$U = 50/80 = 0.625 \qquad (62.5\%)$$

---

*Availability* is a common measure of reliability for equipment. It is especially appropriate for automated production equipment. Availability is defined using two other reliability terms, *mean time between failure* (MTBF) and *mean time to repair* (MTTR). The MTBF indicates the average length of time the piece of equipment runs between breakdowns. The MTTR indicates the average time required to service the equipment and put it back into operation when a breakdown occurs. Availability is defined as follows:

$$A = \frac{\text{MTBF} - \text{MTTR}}{\text{MTBF}} \tag{2.19}$$

where $A$ = availability, MTBF = mean time between failures (hr), and MTTR = mean time to repair (hr). Availability is typically expressed as a percentage. When a piece of equipment is brand new (and being debugged), and later when it begins to age, its availability tends to be lower.

**EXAMPLE 2.5 Effect of Utilization and Availability on Plant Capacity**

Consider previous Example 2.3. Suppose the same data from that example were applicable, but that the availability of the machines $A = 90\%$, and the utilization of the machines $U = 80\%$. Given this additional data, compute the expected plant output.

***Solution:*** Previous Eq. (2.16) can be altered to include availability and utilization as follows:

$$Q = AU(nSHR_p) \tag{2.20}$$

where $A$ = availability and $U$ = utilization. Combining the previous and new data, we have

$$Q = 0.90(0.80)(6)(10)(8.0)(17) = 5875 \text{ output unit/wk}$$

### 2.4.4 Manufacturing Lead Time

In the competitive environment of modern business, the ability of a manufacturing firm to deliver a product to the customer in the shortest possible time often wins the order. This time is referred to as the manufacturing lead time. Specifically, we define *manufacturing lead time* (MLT) as the total time required to process a given part or product through the plant. Let us examine the components of MLT.

Production usually consists of a series of individual processing and assembly operations. Between the operations are material handling, storage, inspections, and other nonproductive activities. Let us therefore divide the activities of production into two main categories, operations and nonoperation elements. An operation is performed on a work unit when it is in the production machine. The nonoperation elements include handling, temporary storage, inspections, and other sources of delay when the work unit is not in the machine. Let $T_c$ = the operation cycle time at a given machine or workstation, and $T_{no}$ = the nonoperation time associated with the same machine. Further, let us suppose that the number of separate operations (machines) through which the work unit must be routed to be completely processed $= n_o$. If we assume batch production, then there are Q work units in the batch. A setup is generally required to prepare each production machine for the particular product, which requires a time $= T_{su}$. Given these terms, we can define manufacturing lead time as:

$$\text{MLT}_j = \sum_{i=1}^{oj} (T_{suji} + Q_j T_{cji} + T_{noji}) \tag{2.21}$$

where $\text{MLT}_j$ = manufacturing lead time for part or product $j$ (min), $T_{suji}$ = setup time for operation $i$ (min), $Q_j$ = quantity of part or product $j$ in the batch being processed (pc), $T_{cji}$ = operation cycle time for operation $i$ (min/pc), $T_{noji}$ = nonoperation time associated with operation $i$ (min), and $i$ indicates the operation sequence in the processing; $i = 1, 2, ..., n_{oj}$. The MLT equation does not include the time the raw workpart spends in storage before its turn in the production schedule begins.

To simplify and generalize our model, let us assume that all setup times, operation cycle times, and nonoperation times are equal for the $n_{oj}$ machines. Further, let us suppose that the batch quantities of all parts or products processed through the plant are equal and that they are all processed through the same number of machines, so that $n_{oj} = n_o$. With these simplifications, Eq. (2.21) becomes:

$$\text{MLT} = n_o(T_{su} + QT_c + T_{no}) \tag{2.22}$$

where MLT = average manufacturing lead time for a part or product (min).

In an actual batch production factory, which this equation is intended to represent, the terms $n_o$, $Q$, $T_{su}$, $T_c$, and $T_{no}$ would vary by product and by operation. These variations can be accounted for by using properly weighted average values of the various terms. The averaging procedure is explained in the Appendix at the end of this chapter.

**EXAMPLE 2.6 Manufacturing Lead Time**

A certain part is produced in a batch size of 100 units. The batch must be routed through five operations to complete the processing of the parts. Average setup time is 3 hr/operation, and average operation time is 6 min (0.1 hr). Average nonoperation time due to handling, delays, inspections, etc., is 7 hours for each operation. Determine how many days it will take to complete the batch, assuming the plant runs one 8-hr shift/day.

***Solution:*** The manufacturing lead time is computed from Eq. (2.22)

$$\text{MLT} = 5(3 + 100 \times 0.1 + 7) = 100 \text{ hours}$$

At 8 hr/day, this amounts to 100/8 = 12.5 days.

---

Equation (2.22) can be adapted for job shop production and mass production by making adjustments in the parameter values. For a job shop in which the batch size is one ($Q = 1$). Eq. (2.22) becomes

$$\text{MLT} = n_o(T_{su} + T_c + T_{no}) \tag{2.23}$$

For mass production, the $Q$ term in Eq. (2.22) is very large and dominates the other terms. In the case of quantity type mass production in which a large number of units are made on a single machine ($n_o = 1$), the MLT simply becomes the operation cycle time for the machine after the setup has been completed and production begins.

For flow line mass production, the entire production line is set up in advance. Also, the nonoperation time between processing steps is simply the transfer time $T_r$ to move the part or product from one workstation to the next. If the workstations are integrated so that all stations are processing their own respective work units, then the time to accomplish all of the operations is the time it takes each work unit to progress through all of the stations on the line. The station with the longest operation time sets the pace for all stations.

$$\text{MLT} = n_o(T_r + \text{Max } T_o) = n_o T_c \tag{2.24}$$

where MLT = time between start and completion of a given work unit on the line (min), $n_o$ = number of operations on the line: $T_r$ = transfer time (min), Max $T_o$ = operation time at the bottleneck station (min) and $T_c$ = cycle time of the production line (min/pc). $T_c = T_r + \text{Max } T_o$ from Eq. (2.14). Since the number of stations is equal to the number of operations ($n = n_o$), Eq. (2.24) can also be stated as follows:

$$\text{MLT} = n(T_r + \text{Max } T_o) = nT_c \tag{2.25}$$

where the symbols have the same meaning as above, and we have substituted $n$ (number of workstations or machines) for number of operations $n_o$.

### 2.4.5 Work-in-Process

*Work-in-process* (WIP) is the quantity of parts or products currently located in the factory that are either being processed or are between processing operations. WIP is inventory that is in the state of being transformed from raw material to finished product. An approximate measure of work-in-process can be obtained from the following, using terms previously defined:

$$\text{WIP} = \frac{AU(PC)(\text{MLT})}{SH} \tag{2.26}$$

where WIP = work-in-process in the facility (pc), $A$ = availability, $U$ = utilization, $PC$ = production capacity of the facility (pc/wk), MLT = manufacturing lead time, (wk), $S$ = number of shifts per week (shift/wk), and $H$ = hours per shift (hr/shift). Equation (2.26) states that the level of WIP equals the rate at which parts flow through the factory multiplied by the length of time the parts spend in the factory. The units for $(PC)/SH$ (e.g., pc/wk) must be consistent with the units for MLT (e.g., weeks).

Work-in-process represents an investment by the firm, but one that cannot be turned into revenue until all processing has been completed. Many manufacturing companies sustain major costs because work remains in-process in the factory too long.

## 2.5 COSTS OF MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS

Decisions on automation and production systems are usually based on the relative costs of alternatives. In this section we examine how these costs and cost factors are determined.

### 2.2.1 Fixed and Variable Costs

Manufacturing costs can be classified into two major categories: (1) fixed costs and (2) variable costs. A *fixed cost* is one that remains constant for any level of production output. Examples include the cost of the factory building and production equipment, insurance, and property taxes. All of the fixed costs can be expressed as annual amounts. Expenses such as insurance and property taxes occur naturally as annual costs. Capital investments such as building and equipment can be converted to their equivalent uniform annual costs using interest rate factors.

A *variable cost* is one that varies in proportion to the level of production output. As output increases, variable cost increases. Examples include direct labor, raw materials, and electric power to operate the production equipment. The ideal concept of variable cost is that it is directly proportional to output level. When fixed cost and variable cost are added, we have the following total cost equation:

$$TC = FC + VC(Q) \tag{2.27}$$

where $TC$ = total annual cost (\$/yr), $FC$ = fixed annual cost (\$/yr), $VC$ = variable cost (\$/pc), and $Q$ = annual quantity produced (pc/yr).

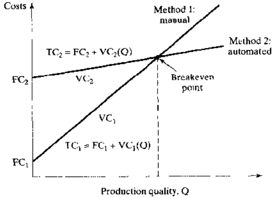



**Figure 2.4** Fixed and variable costs as a function of production output for manual and automated production methods.

When comparing automated and manual production methods (Section 1.4), it is typical that the fixed cost of the automated method is high relative to the manual method, and the variable cost of automation is low relative to the manual method, as pictured in Figure 2.4. Consequently, the manual method has a cost advantage in the low quantity range, while automation has an advantage for high quantities. This reinforces the arguments presented in Section 1.4.1 on the appropriateness of manual labor for certain production situations.

### 2.5.2 Direct Labor, Material, and Overhead

Fixed versus variable are not the only possible classifications of costs in manufacturing. An alternative classification separates costs into: (1) direct labor, (2) material, and (3) overhead. This is often a more convenient way to analyze costs in production. The *direct labor cost* is the sum of the wages and benefits paid to the workers who operate the production equipment and perform the processing and assembly tasks. The *material cost* is the cost of all raw materials used to make the product. In the case of a stamping plant, the raw material consists of the steel sheet stock used to make stampings. For the rolling mill that made the sheet stock, the raw material is the iron ore or scrap iron out of which the sheet is rolled. In the case of an assembled product, materials include component parts manufactured by supplier firms. Thus, the definition of "raw material" depends on the company. The final product of one company can be the raw material for another company. In terms of fixed and variable costs, direct labor and material must be considered as variable costs.

*Overhead costs* are all of the other expenses associated with running the manufacturing firm. Overhead divides into two categories: (1) factory overhead and (2) corporate overhead. *Factory overhead* consists of the costs of operating the factory other than direct labor and materials. The types of expenses included in this category are listed in Table 2.7. Factory overhead is treated as fixed cost, although some of the items in our list could be correlated with the output level of the plant. *Corporate overhead* is the cost of running the company other than its manufacturing activities. A list of typical corporate overhead expenses is presented in Table 2.8. Many companies operate more than one factory, and this is one of the reasons for dividing overhead into factory and corporate categories. Different factories may have significantly different factory overhead expenses.

**TABLE 2.7** Typical Factory Overhead Expenses

| | |
|---|---|
| Plant supervision | Applicable taxes |
| Line foreman | Insurance |
| Maintenance crew | Heat and air conditioning |
| Custodial services | Light |
| Security personnel | Power for machinery |
| Tool crib attendant | Factory depreciation |
| Material handling | Equipment depreciation |
| Shipping and receiving | Fringe benefits |

**TABLE 2.8** Typical Corporate Overhead Expenses

| | |
|---|---|
| Corporate executives | Applicable taxes |
| Sales and marketing | Cost of office space |
| Accounting department | Security personnel |
| Finance department | Heat and air conditioning |
| Legal counsel | Light |
| Engineering | Insurance |
| Research and development | Fringe benefits |
| Other support personnel | Other office costs |

J. T. Black [2] provides some typical percentages for the different types of manufacturing and corporate expenses. These are presented in Figure 2.5. We might make several observations about these data. First, total manufacturing cost represents only about 40% of the product's selling price. Corporate overhead expenses and total manufacturing cost are about equal. Second, materials (and parts) make up the largest percentage of total manufacturing cost, at around 50%. And third, direct labor is a relatively small proportion of total manufacturing cost: 12% of manufacturing cost and only about 5% of final selling price.

Overhead costs can be allocated according to a number of different bases, including direct labor cost, material cost, direct labor hours, and space. Most common in industry is

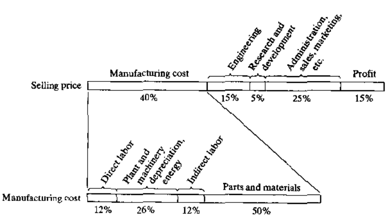



**Figure 2.5** Breakdown of costs for a manufactured product [6].

direct labor cost, which we will use here to illustrate how overheads are allocated and subsequently used to compute factors such as selling price of the product.

The allocation procedure (simplified) is as follows. For the most recent year (or most recent several years), all costs are compiled and classified into four categories: (1) direct labor, (2) material, (3) factory overhead, and (4) corporate overhead. The objective is to determine an *overhead rate* (also called *burden rate*) that could be used in the following year to allocate overhead costs to a process or product as a function of the direct labor costs associated with that process or product. In our treatment, separate overhead rates will be developed for factory and corporate overheads. The *factory overhead rate* is calculated as the ratio of factory overhead expenses (category 3) to direct labor expenses (category 1); that is,

$$\text{FOHR} = \frac{\text{FOHC}}{\text{DLC}} \tag{2.28}$$

where FOHR = factory overhead rate, FOHC = annual factory overhead costs ($/yr); and DLC = annual direct labor costs ($/yr).

The *corporate overhead rate* is the ratio of corporate overhead expenses (category 4) to direct labor expenses:

$$\text{COHR} = \frac{\text{COHC}}{\text{DLC}} \tag{2.29}$$

where COHR = corporate overhead rate, COHC = annual corporate overhead costs ($/yr), and DLC = annual direct labor costs ($/yr). Both rates are often expressed as percentages. If material cost were used as the allocation basis, then material cost would be used as the denominator in both ratios. Let us present two examples to illustrate (1) how overhead rates are determined and (2) how they are used to estimate manufacturing cost and establish selling price.

**EXAMPLE 2.7 Determining Overhead Rates**

Suppose that all costs have been compiled for a certain manufacturing firm for last year. The summary is shown in the table below. The company operates two different manufacturing plants plus a corporate headquarters. Determine: (a) the factory overhead rate for each plant and (b) the corporate overhead rate. These rates will be used by the firm in the following year.

| *Expense Category* | *Plant 1 ($)* | *Plant 2 ($)* | *Corporate Headquarters (#)* | *Totals ($)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Direct labor | 800,000 | 400,000 | | 1,200,000 |
| Materials | 2,500,000 | 1,500,000 | | 4,000,000 |
| Factory expense | 2,000,000 | 1,100,000 | | 3,100,000 |
| Corporate expense | | | 7,200,000 | 7,200,000 |
| Totals | 5,300,000 | 3,000,000 | 3,000,000 | 15,500,000 |

***Solution:*** (a) A separate factory overhead rate must be determined for each plant. For plant 1, we have:

$$\text{FOHR}_1 = \frac{\$2{,}000{,}000}{\$800{,}000} = 2.5 = 250\%$$

For plant 2,

$$\text{FOHR}_2 = \frac{\$1{,}100{,}000}{\$400{,}000} = 2.75 = 275\%$$

(b) The corporate overhead rate is based on the total labor cost at both plants.

$$\text{COHR} = \frac{\$7{,}200{,}000}{\$1{,}200{,}000} = 6.0 = 600\%$$

---

**EXAMPLE 2.8 Estimating Manufacturing Costs and Establishing Selling Price**

A customer order of 50 parts is to be processed through plant 1 of the previous example. Raw materials and tooling are supplied by the customer. The total time for processing the parts (including setup and other direct labor) is 100 hr. Direct labor cost is \$10.00/hr. The factory overhead rate is 250% and the corporate overhead rate is 600%. Compute the cost of the job.

***Solution:*** (a) The direct labor cost for the job is (100 hr)(\$10.00/hr) = \$1000.

(b) The allocated factory overhead charge, at 250% of direct labor, is (\$1000)(2.50) = \$2500.

(c) The allocated corporate overhead charge, at 600% of direct labor, is (\$1000)(6.00) = \$6000.

***Interpretation:*** (a) The direct labor cost of the job, representing actual cash spent on the customer's order = \$1000. (b) The total factory cost of the job, including allocated factory overhead = \$1000 + \$2500 = \$3500. (c) The total cost of the job including corporate overhead = \$3500 + \$6000 = \$9500. To price the job for the customer and to earn a profit over the long run on jobs like this, the price would have to be greater than \$9500. For example, if the company uses a 10% mark-up, the price quoted to the customer would be (1.10)(\$9500) = \$10,450.

---

### 2.5.3 Cost of Equipment Usage

The trouble with overhead rates as we have developed them here is that they are based on labor cost alone. A machine operator who runs an old, small engine lathe whose book value is zero will be costed at the same overhead rate as an operator running a new CNC turning center just purchased for \$500,000. Obviously, the time on the machining center is more productive and should be valued at a higher rate. If differences in rates of different production machines are not recognized, manufacturing costs will not be accurately measured by the overhead rate structure.

To deal with this difficulty, it is appropriate to divide the cost of a worker running a machine into two components: (1) direct labor and (2) machine. Associated with each is an applicable overhead rate. These costs apply not to the entire factory operations, but to individual work centers. A *work center* is a production cell consisting of (1) one worker and one machine, (2) one worker and several machines, (3) several workers operating one machine, or (4) several workers and machines. In any of these cases, it is advantageous to separate the labor expense from the machine expense in estimating total production costs.

The direct labor cost consists of the wages and benefits paid to operate the work center. Applicable factory overhead expenses allocated to direct labor cost might include state taxes, certain fringe benefits, and line supervision. The machine annual cost is the initial cost of the machine apportioned over the life of the asset at the appropriate rate of return used by the firm. This is done using the capital recovery factor, as follows:

$$\text{UAC} = IC(A/P,i,n) \tag{2.30}$$

where UAC = equivalent uniform annual cost (\$/yr); $IC$ = initial cost of the machine (\$); and $(A/P,i,n)$ = capital recovery factor that converts initial cost at year 0 into a series of equivalent uniform annual year-end values, where $i$ = annual interest rate and $n$ = number of years in the service life of the equipment. For given values of $i$ and $n$, $(A/P,i,n)$ can be computed as follows:

$$(A/P, i, n) = \frac{i(1 + i)^n}{(1 + i)^n - 1} \tag{2.31}$$

Values of $(A/P, i, n)$ can also be found in interest tables that are widely available.

The uniform annual cost can be expressed as an hourly rate by dividing the annual cost by the number of annual hours of equipment use. The machine overhead rate is based on those factory expenses that are directly assignable to the machine. These include power to drive the machine, floor space, maintenance and repair expenses, and so on. In separating the factory overhead items in Table 2.7 between labor and machine, judgment must be used; admittedly, the judgment is sometimes arbitrary. Total cost rate for the work center is the sum of labor and machine costs. This can be summarized as follows:

$$C_o = C_L(1 + \text{FOHR}_L) + C_m(1 + \text{FOHR}_m) \tag{2.32}$$

where $C_o$ = hourly rate to operate the work center (\$/hr), $C_L$ = direct labor wage rate (\$/hr), $\text{FOHR}_L$ = factory overhead rate for labor, $C_m$ = machine hourly rate (\$/hr), and $\text{FOHR}_m$ = factory overhead rate applicable to machines.

It is the author's opinion that corporate overhead expenses should not be included in the analysis when comparing production methods. Including them serves no purpose other than to dramatically increase the costs of the alternatives. The fact is that these corporate overhead expenses are present whether or not either or none of the alternatives is selected. On the other hand, when estimating costs for pricing decisions, corporate overhead should be included because over the long run, these costs must be recovered through revenues generated from selling products.

**EXAMPLE 2.9 Hourly Cost of a Work Center**

The following data are given: direct labor rate = \$10.00/hr; applicable factory overhead rate on labor = 60%; capital investment in machine = \$100,000; service life of the machine = 8 yr; rate of return = 20%; salvage value in 8 yr = 0; and applicable factory overhead rate on machine = 50%. The work center will be operated one 8-hr shift, 250 day/yr. Determine the appropriate hourly rate for the work center.

***Solution:*** Labor cost per hour $= C_L(1 + \text{FOHR}_L) = \$10.00(1 + 0.60) = \$16.00/\text{hr}$. The investment cost of the machine must be annualized, using an 8-yr service life and a rate of return = 20%. First we compute the capital recovery factor:

$$(A/P,20\%,8) = \frac{0.20(1 + 0.20)^8}{(1 + 0.20)^8 - 1} = \frac{0.20(4.2998)}{4.2998 - 1} = 0.2606$$

Now the uniform annual cost for the \$100,000 initial cost can be determined:

$$\text{UAC} = \$100{,}000(A/P, 20\%, 8) = 100{,}000(0.2606) = \$26{,}060.00/\text{yr}$$

The number of hours per year = (8 hr/day)(250 day/yr) = 2000 hr/yr. Dividing this into UAC gives 26,060/2000 = \$13.03/hr. Then applying the factory overhead rate, we have

$$C_m(1 + \text{FOHR}_m) = \$13.03(1 + 0.50) = \$19.55/\text{hr}$$

Total cost rate is

$$C_o = 16.00 + 19.55 = \$35.55/\text{hr}.$$

## REFERENCES

[1] AYRES, R. U., *Computer Integrated Manufacturing*, Volume I: *Revolution in Progress*, Chapman & Hall, London, United Kingdom, 1991.

[2] BLACK, J T., *The Design of the Factory with a Future*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1991.

[3] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[4] HOUNSHELL, D. A., *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800–1932*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1984.

[5] MERCHANT, M. E., The Inexorable Push for Automated Production, *Production Engineering*, January 1977, pp 45–46.

[6] SKINNER, W., "The Focused Factory," *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1974, pp 113 121.

## APPENDIX AVERAGING PROCEDURES FOR PRODUCTION MODELS

As indicated in our presentation of the production models in Section 2.4, special averaging procedures are required to reduce the inherent variations in actual factory data to single parameter values used in our equations. This appendix explains the averaging procedures.

A straight arithmetic average is used to compute the value of batch quantity $Q$ and the number of operations (machines) in the process routing $n_o$. Let $n_Q$ = number of batches of the various part or product styles to be considered. This might be the number of batches processed through the plant during a certain time period (i.e., week, month, year), or it might be a sample of size $n_Q$ taken from this time period for analysis purposes. The average batch quantity is given by:

$$Q = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n_Q} Q_j}{n_Q} \tag{A2.1}$$

where $Q$ = average batch quantity, pc; $Q_j$ = batch quantity for part or product style $j$ of the total $n_Q$ batches or styles being considered, pc, where $j = 1, 2, \ldots, n_Q$. The average number of operations in the process routing is a similar computation:

$$n_o = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n_Q} n_{oj}}{n_Q} \tag{A2.2}$$

where $n_o$ = average number of operations in all process routings under consideration; $n_{oj}$ = number of operations in the process routing of part or product style $j$; and $n_Q$ = number of batches under consideration.

When factory data are used to assess the terms $T_{su}$, $T_c$, and $T_{no}$, weighted averages must be used. To calculate the grand average setup time for $n_Q$ different part or product styles, we first compute the average setup time for each style; that is,

$$T_{suj} = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^{n_{oj}} T_{sujk}}{n_{oj}} \tag{A2.3}$$

where $T_{suj}$ = average setup time for part or product style $j$, min; $T_{sujk}$ = setup time for operation $k$ in the processing sequence for part or product style $j$, min; where $k = 1, 2, \ldots, n_{oj}$; and $n_{oj}$ = number of operations in the processing sequence for part or product style $j$. Using the $n_Q$ values of $T_{suj}$ calculated from the above equation, we can now compute the grand average setup time for all styles, given by:

$$T_{su} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n_Q} n_{oj} T_{suj}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n_Q} n_{oj}} \tag{A2.4}$$

where $T_{su}$ = setup time grand average for all $n_Q$ part or product styles included in the group of interest, min; and the other terms are defined above.

A similar procedure is used to obtain grand averages for operation cycle time $T_c$ and nonoperation time $T_{no}$. Considering cycle time first,

$$T_{cj} = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^{n_{oj}} T_{cjk}}{n_{oj}} \tag{A2.5}$$

where $T_{cj}$ = average operation cycle time for part or product style $j$, min; $T_{cjk}$ = cycle time for operation $k$ in the processing sequence for part or product style $j$, where $k = 1, 2, \ldots, n_{oj}$, min; and $n_{oj}$ = number of operations in the processing sequence for style $j$. The grand average cycle time for all $n_Q$ styles is given by:

$$T_c = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n_Q} n_{oj} T_{cj}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n_Q} n_{oj}} \tag{A2.6}$$

where $T_c$ = operation cycle time grand average for all $n_Q$ part or product styles being considered, min; and the other terms are defined above. The same forms of equation apply for nonoperation time $T_{no}$.

$$T_{noj} = \frac{\sum_{k=1}^{n_{oj}} T_{nojk}}{n_{oj}} \tag{A2.7}$$

where $T_{noj}$ = average nonoperation time for part or product style $j$, min; $T_{nojk}$ = nonoperation time for operation $k$ in the processing sequence for part or product style $j$, min. The grand average for all styles (batches) is:

$$T_{no} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n_Q} n_{oj} T_{noj}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n_Q} n_{oj}} \tag{A2.8}$$

where $T_{no}$ = nonoperation time grand average for all parts or products considered, min; and other terms are defined above.

## PROBLEMS

### Product/Production Relationships

2.1 The ABC Company is planning a new product line and will build a new plant to manufacture the parts for a new product line. The product line will include 50 different models. Annual production of each model is expected to be 1000 units. Each product will be assembled of 400 components. All processing of parts will be accomplished in one factory. There are an average of 6 processing steps required to produce each component, and each processing step takes 1.0 min (includes an allowance for setup time and part handling). All processing operations are performed at workstations, each of which includes a production machine and a human worker. If each workstation requires a floor space of 250 $ft^2$, and the factory operates one shift (2000 hr/yr), determine (a) how many production operations, (b) how much floorspace, and (c) how many workers will be required in the plant.

2.2 The XYZ Company is planning to introduce a new product line and will build a new factory to produce the parts and assemble the final products for the product line. The new product line will include 100 different models. Annual production of each model is expected to be 1000 units. Each product will be assembled of 600 components. All processing of parts and assembly of products will be accomplished in one factory. There are an average of 10 processing steps required to produce each component, and each processing step takes 30 sec (includes an allowance for setup time and part handling). Each final unit of product takes 3.0 hr to assemble. All processing operations are performed at work cells that each includes a production machine and a human worker. Products are assembled on single workstations consisting of two workers each. If each work cell and each workstation require 200 $ft^2$, and the factory operates one shift (2000 hr/yr), determine: (a) how many production operations, (b) how much floorspace, and (c) how many workers will be required in the plant.

**2.3** If the company in Problem 2.2 were to operate three shifts (6000 hr/yr) instead of one shift, determine the answers to (a), (b), and (c).

## Production Concepts and Mathematical Models

**2.4** Consider the batch production rate equations in Sect 2.4.1, Eqs. (2.9), (2.10), and (2.11). Suppose each cycle produced $n_{pc}$ parts. Revise the equations accordingly to compute $T_b$, and $R_p$.

**2.5** A certain part is routed through six machines in a batch production plant. The setup and operation times for each machine are given in the table below. The batch size is 100 and the average nonoperation time per machine is 12 hr. Determine: (a) manufacturing lead time and (b) production rate for operation 3.

| *Machine* | *Setup Time (hr)* | *Operation Time (min)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 5.0 |
| 2 | 2 | 3.5 |
| 3 | 8 | 10.0 |
| 4 | 3 | 1.9 |
| 5 | 3 | 4.1 |
| 6 | 4 | 2.5 |

**2.6** Suppose the part in previous Problem 2.5 is made in very large quantities on a production line in which an automated work handling system is used to transfer parts between machines. Transfer time between stations = 15 s. The total time required to set up the entire line is 150 hr. Assume that the operation times at the individual machines remain the same. Determine: (a) manufacturing lead time for a part coming off the line, (b) production rate for operation 3, (c) theoretical production rate for the entire production line?

**2.7** The average part produced in a certain batch manufacturing plant must be processed through an average six machines. Twenty (20) new batches of parts are launched each week. Average operation time = 6 min, average setup time = 5 hr, average batch size = 25 parts, and average nonoperation time per batch = 10 hr/machine. There are 18 machines in the plant. The plant operates an average of 70 production hours per week. Scrap rate is negligible. Determine: (a) manufacturing lead time for an average part, (b) plant capacity, (c) plant utilization. (d) How would you expect the nonoperation time to be affected by the plant utilization?

**2.8** Based on the data in previous Problem 2.7 and your answers to that problem, determine the average level of work-in-process (number of parts-in-process) in the plant.

**2.9** An average of 20 new orders are started through a certain factory each month. On average, an order consists of 50 parts to be processed through 10 machines in the factory. The operation time per machine for each part = 15 min. The nonoperation time per order at each machine averages 8 hr, and the required setup time per order = 4 hr. There are 25 machines in the factory, 80% of which are operational at any time (the other 20% are in repair or maintenance). The plant operates 160 hr/mon. However, the plant manager complains that a total of 100 overtime machine-hours must be authorized each month to keep up with the production schedule. (a) What is the manufacturing lead time for an average order? (b) What is the plant capacity (on a monthly basis) and why must the overtime be authorized? (c) What is the utilization of the plant according to the definition given in the text? (d) Determine the average level of work-in-process (number of parts-in-process) in the plant.

**2.10** The mean time between failure for a certain production machine is 250 hr, and the mean time to repair is 6 hr. Determine the availability of the machine.

**2.11** One million units of a certain product are to be manufactured annually on dedicated production machines that run 24 hr/day, 5 day/wk, 50 wk/yr. (a) If the cycle time of a machine to produce one part is 1.0 min, how many of the dedicated machines will be required to keep up with demand? Assume that availability, utilization, and worker efficiency = 100%, and that no setup time will be lost. (b) Solve part (a) except that availability = 0.90.

**2.12** The mean time between failures and mean time to repair in a certain department of the factory are 400 hr and 8 hr, respectively. The department operates 25 machines during one 8 hr shift/day, 5 day/wk, 52 wk/yr. Each time a machine breaks down, it costs the company \$200/hr (per machine) in lost revenue. A proposal has been submitted to install a preventive maintenance program in this department. In this program, preventive maintenance would be performed on the machines during the evening so that there will be no interruptions to production during the regular shift. The effect of this program is expected to be that the average MTBF will double, and half of the emergency repair time normally accomplished during the day shift will be performed during the evening shift. The cost of the maintenance crew will be \$1500/wk. However, a reduction of maintenance personnel on the day shift will result in a savings during the regular shift of \$700/wk. (a) Compute the availability of machines in the department both before and after the preventive maintenance program is installed. (b) Determine how many total hours per year the 25 machines in the department are under repair both before and after the preventive maintenance program is installed. In this part and in part (c), ignore effects of queueing of the machines that might have to wait for a maintenance crew. (c) Will the preventive maintenance program pay for itself in terms of savings in the cost of lost revenues?

**2.13** There are nine machines in the automatic lathe section of a certain machine shop. The setup time on an automatic lathe averages 6 hr. The average batch size for parts processed through the section is 90. The average operation time = 8.0 min. Under shop rules, an operator is permitted to be assigned to run up to three machines. Accordingly, there are three operators in the section for the nine lathes. In addition to the lathe operators, there are two setup workers who perform machine setups exclusively. These setup workers are kept busy the full shift. The section runs one 8 hr shift/day, 6 day/wk. However, an average of 15% of the production time is lost due to machine breakdowns. Scrap losses are negligible. The production control manager claims that the capacity of the section should be 1836 piece/wk. However, the actual output averages only 1440 unit/wk. What is the problem? Recommend a solution.

**2.14** A certain job shop specializes in one-of-a-kind orders dealing with parts of medium-to-high complexity. A typical part is processed through ten machines in batch sizes of one. The shop contains eight conventional machine tools and operates 35 hr/wk of production time. Average time values on the part are: machining time per machine = 0.5 hr, work handling time per machine = 0.3 hr, tool change time per machine = 0.2 hr, setup time per machine = 6 hr, and nonoperation time per machine = 12 hr. A new programmable machine has been purchased by the shop which is capable of performing all ten operations in a single setup. The programming of the machine for this part will require 20 hr; however, the programming can be done off-line, without tying up the machine. The setup time will be 10 hr. The total machining time will be reduced to 80% of its previous value due to advanced tool control algorithms; the work handling time will be the same as for one machine; and the total tool change time will be reduced by 50% because it will be accomplished automatically under program control. For the one machine, nonoperation time is expected to be 12 hr. (a) Determine the manufacturing lead time for the traditional method and for the new method. (b) Compute the plant capacity for the following alternatives: (i) a job shop containing the eight traditional machines, and (ii) a job shop containing two of the new programmable machines. Assume the typical jobs are represented by the data given above. (c) Determine the average level of work-in-process for the two alternatives in part (b), if the alternative shops operate at full capacity. (d) Identify which of the ten automation strategies (Sect 1.5.2) are represented (or probably represented) by the new machine.

**2.15** A factory produces cardboard boxes. The production sequence consists of three operations: (1) cutting, (2) indenting, and (3) printing. There are three machines in the factory, one for each operation. The machines are 100% reliable and operate as follows when operating at 100% utilization: (1) In ***cutting***, large rolls of cardboard are fed into the cutting machine and cut into blanks. Each large roll contains enough material for 4,000 blanks. Production cycle time = 0.03 min/blank during a production run, but it takes 35 min to change rolls between runs. (2) In ***indenting***, indentation lines are pressed into the blanks to allow the blanks to later be bent into boxes. The blanks from the previous cutting operation are divided and consolidated into batches whose starting quantity = 2,000 blanks. Indenting is performed at 4.5 min/100 blanks. Time to change dies on the indentation machine = 30 min. (3) In ***printing***, the indented blanks are printed with labels for a particular customer. The blanks from the previous indenting operation are divided and consolidated into batches whose starting quantity = 1,000 blanks. Printing cycle rate = 30 blanks/min. Between batches, changeover of the printing plates is required, which takes 20 min. In-process inventory is allowed to build up between machines 1 and 2, and between machines 2 and 3, so that the machines can operate independently as much as possible. Based on this data and information, determine the maximum possible output of this factory during a 40 hr week, in completed blanks/wk (completed blanks have been cut, indented, and printed)? Assume steady state operation, not startup.

## Costs of Manufacturing Operations

**2.16** Theoretically, any given production plant has an optimum output level. Suppose a certain production plant has annual fixed costs $FC = \$2{,}000{,}000$. Variable cost $VC$ is functionally related to annual output $Q$ in a manner that can be described by the function $VC = \$12 + \$0.005Q$. Total annual cost is given by $TC = FC + VC \times Q$. The unit sales price for one production unit $P = \$250$. (a) Determine the value of $Q$ that minimizes unit cost $UC$, where $UC = TC/Q$; and compute the annual profit earned by the plant at this quantity. (b) Determine the value of $Q$ that maximizes the annual profit earned by the plant; and compute the annual profit earned by the plant at this quantity.

**2.17** Costs have been compiled for a certain manufacturing company for the most recent year. The summary is shown in the table below. The company operates two different manufacturing plants, plus a corporate headquarters. Determine: (a) the factory overhead rate for each plant, and (b) the corporate overhead rate. These rates will be used by the firm in the following year.

| *Expense Category* | *Plant 1 ($)* | *Plant 2 ($)* | *Corporate Headquarters ($)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Direct labor | 1,000,000 | 1,750,000 | |
| Materials | 3,500,000 | 4,000,000 | |
| Factory expense | 1,300,000 | 2,300,000 | |
| Corporate expense | | | 5,000,000 |

**2.18** The hourly rate for a certain work center is to be determined based on the following data: direct labor rate = \$15.00/hr; applicable factory overhead rate on labor = 35%; capital investment in machine = \$200,000; service life of the machine = 5 years; rate of return = 15%; salvage value in five years = zero; and applicable factory overhead rate on machine = 40%. The work center will be operated two 8-hr shifts, 250 day/yr. Determine the appropriate hourly rate for the work center.

**2.19** In previous Problem 2.18, if the work load for the cell can only justify a one-shift operation, determine the appropriate hourly rate for the work center.

**2.20** In the operation of a certain production machine, one worker is required at a direct labor rate = \$10/hr. Applicable labor factory overhead rate = 50%. Capital investment in the system = \$250,000, expected service life = 10 years, no salvage value at the end of that period, and the applicable machine factory overhead rate = 30%. The work cell will operate 2000 hr/yr. Use a rate of return of 25% to determine the appropriate hourly rate for this work cell.

**2.21** Same as previous Problem 2.20, except that the machine will be operated three shifts, or 6000 hr/yr. Note the effect of increased machine utilization on the hourly rate compared to the rate determined in Problem 2.20.

**2.22** The break-even point is to be determined for two production methods, one a manual method and the other automated. The manual method requires two workers at \$9.00/hr each. Together, they produce at a rate of 36 units/hr. The automated method has an initial cost of \$125,000, a 4-year service life, no salvage value, and annual maintenance costs = \$3000. No labor (except for maintenance) is required to operate the machine, but the power required to run the machine is 50 kW (when running). Cost of electric power is \$0.05/kWh. If the production rate for the automated machine is 100 units/hr, determine the break-even point for the two methods, using a rate of return = 25%.

# PART I
# Automotion and Control Technologies

## chapter 3

# Introduction to Automation

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



*Automation* is the technology by which a process or procedure is accomplished without human assistance. It is implemented using a *program of instructions* combined with a *control system* that executes the instructions. To automate a process, *power* is required, both to drive the process itself and to operate the program and control system. Although automation can be applied in a wide variety of areas, it is most closely associated with the manufacturing industries. It was in the context of manufacturing that the term was originally coined by an engineering manager at Ford Motor Company in 1946 to describe the variety of automatic transfer devices and feed mechanisms that had been installed in Ford's production plants (Historical Note 3.1). It is ironic that nearly all modern applications of automation are controlled by computer technologies that were not available in 1946.

In this part of the book, we examine technologies that have been developed to automate manufacturing operations. The position of automation and control technologies in the larger production system is shown in Figure 3.1. In the present chapter, we provide an

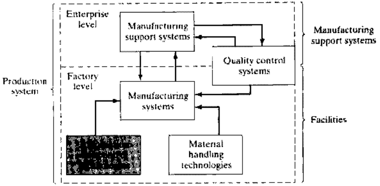



**Figure 3.1** Automation and control technologies in the production system.

overview of automation: What are the elements of an automated system? What are some of the advanced features beyond the basic elements? And what are the levels in an enterprise where automation can be applied? In the following two chapters, we discuss industrial control systems and the hardware components of these systems. These two chapters serve as a foundation for the remaining chapters in our coverage of automation and control technologies. These technologies are: (1) numerical control (Chapter 6), (2) industrial robotics (Chapter 7), and (3) programmable logic controllers (Chapter 8).

### Historical Note 3.1 History of automation[1]

The history of automation can be traced to the development of basic mechanical devices, such as the wheel (circa 3200 B.C.), lever, winch (circa 600 B.C.), cam (circa A.D. 1000), screw (A.D. 1405), and gear in ancient and medieval times. These basic devices were refined and used to construct the mechanisms in waterwheels, windmills (circa A.D. 650), and steam engines (A.D. 1765). These machines generated the power to operate other machinery of various kinds, such as flour mills (circa 85 B.C.), weaving machines (flying shuttle, 1733), machine tools (boring mill, 1775), steamboats (1787), and railroad locomotives (1803). *Power*, and the capacity to generate it and transmit it to operate a process, is one of the three basic elements of an automated system.

After his first steam engine in 1765, James Watt and his partner, Matthew Boulton, made several improvements in the design. One of the improvements was the flying-ball governor (around 1785), which provided feedback to control the throttle of the engine. The governor consisted of a ball on the end of a hinged lever attached to the rotating shaft. The lever was connected to the throttle valve. As the speed of the rotating shaft increased, the ball was forced to move outward by centrifugal force; this in turn caused the lever to reduce the valve opening and slow the motor speed. As rotational speed decreased, the ball and lever relaxed, thus allowing the valve to open. The flying-ball governor was one of the first examples in engineering of feedback control, an important type of *control system*—the second basic element of an automated system.

The third basic element of an automated system is for the actions of the system or machine to be directed by a *program of instructions*. One of the first examples of machine pro-

[1] Sources of most of the dates in this Historical Note: (1) R. Platt, ***Smithsonian Visual Timeline of Inventions*** (London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd., 1994); and (2) "The Power of Invention," ***Newsweek Special Issue***, Winter 1997–98 (pp. 6–79).

gramming was the Jacquard loom, invented around 1800. This loom was a machine for weaving cloth from yarn. The program of instructions that determined the weaving pattern of the cloth consisted of a metal plate containing holes. The hole pattern in the plate directed the shuttle motions of the loom, which in turn determined the weaving pattern. Different hole patterns yielded different cloth patterns. Thus, the Jacquard loom was a programmable machine, one of the first of its kind.

By the early 1800s, the three basic elements of automated systems—power source, controls, and programmable machines—had been developed, although these elements were primitive by today's standards. It took many years of refinement and many new inventions and developments, both in these basic elements as well as in the enabling infrastructure of the manufacturing industries, before fully automated production systems were to become a common reality. Important examples of these inventions and developments include *interchangeable parts* (circa 1800, Historical Note 2.1); *electrification* (starting in 1881); the *moving assembly line* (1913, Historical Note 17.1); mechanized *transfer lines* for mass production, whose programs were fixed by their hardware configuration (1924, Historical Note 18.1); a mathematical theory of *control systems* (1930s and 1940s); and the MARK I electromechanical *computer* at Harvard University (1944). These inventions and developments had all been realized by the end of World War II.

Since 1945, many new inventions and developments have contributed significantly to automation technology. Del Harder coined the word *automation* around 1946 in reference to the many automatic devices that the Ford Motor Company had developed for its production lines. The first electronic digital computer was developed at University of Pennsylvania in 1946. The first *numerical control* machine tool was developed and demonstrated in 1952 at Massachusetts Institute of Technology based on a concept proposed by John Parsons and Frank Stulen (Historical Note 6.1). By the late 1960s and early 1970s, digital computers were being connected to machine tools. In 1954, the first *industrial robot* was designed and patented (issued 1961) by George Devol (Historical Note 7.1). The first commercial robot was installed to unload parts in a die casting operation in 1961. In the late 1960s, the first *flexible manufacturing system* in the United States was installed at Ingersoll Rand Company to perform machining operations on a variety of parts (Historical Note 16.1). Around 1969, the first *programmable logic controller* was introduced (Historical Note 8.1). In 1978, the first commercial *personal computer* (PC) had been introduced by Apple Computer, although a similar product had been introduced in kit form as early as 1975.

Developments in computer technology were made possible by advances in electronics, including the *transistor* (1948), *hard disk* for computer memory (1956), *integrated circuits* (1960), the *microprocessor* (1971), *random access memory* (1984), megabyte capacity memory chips (circa 1990), and the *Pentium* microprocessors (1993). Software developments related to automation have been equally important, including the *FORTRAN* computer programming language (1955), the *APT* programming language for numerical control (NC) machine tools (1961), the *UNIX* operating system (1969), the *VAL* language for robot programming (1979), Microsoft *Windows* (1985), and the *JAVA* programming language (1995). Advances and enhancements in these technologies continue.

## 3.1 BASIC ELEMENTS OF AN AUTOMATED SYSTEM

An automated system consists of three basic elements: (1) *power* to accomplish the process and operate the system, (2) a *program of instructions* to direct the process, and (3) a *control system* to actuate the instructions. The relationship amongst these elements is illustrated in Figure 3.2. All systems that qualify as being automated include these three basic elements in one form or another.

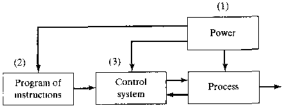



**Figure 3.2** Elements of an automated system: (1) power, (2) program of instructions, and (3) control systems.

### 3.1.1 Power to Accomplish the Automated Process

An automated system is used to operate some process, and power is required to drive the process as well as the controls. The principal source of power in automated systems is electricity. Electric power has many advantages in automated as well as nonautomated processes:

- Electrical power is widely available at moderate cost. It is an important part of our industrial infrastructure.
- Electrical power can be readily converted to alternative energy forms: mechanical, thermal, light, acoustic, hydraulic, and pneumatic.
- Electrical power at low levels can be used to accomplish functions such as signal transmission, information processing, and data storage and communication.
- Electrical energy can be stored in long-life batteries for use in locations where an external source of electrical power is not conveniently available.

Alternative power sources include fossil fuels, solar energy, water, and wind. However, their exclusive use is rare in automated systems. In many cases when alternative power sources are used to drive the process itself, electrical power is used for the controls that automate the operation. For example, in casting or heat treatment, the furnace may be heated by fossil fuels, but the control system to regulate temperature and time cycle is electrical. In other cases, the energy from these alternative sources is converted to electric power to operate both the process and its automation. When solar energy is used as a power source for an automated system, it is generally converted in this way.

*Power for the Process.* In production, the term *process* refers to the manufacturing operation that is performed on a work unit. In Table 3.1, a list of common manufacturing processes is compiled along with the form of power required and the resulting action on the work unit. Most of the power in manufacturing plants is consumed by these kinds of operations. The "power form" indicated in the middle column of the table refers to the energy that is applied directly to the process. As indicated above, the power source for each operation is usually converted from electricity.

In addition to driving the manufacturing process itself, power is also required for the following material handling functions:

- *Loading and unloading the work unit.* All of the processes listed in Table 3.1 are accomplished on discrete parts. These parts must be moved into the proper position

**TABLE 3.1** Common Manufacturing Processes and Their Power Requirements

| *Process* | *Power Form* | *Action Accomplished* |
|---|---|---|
| Casting | Thermal | Melting the metal before pouring into a mold cavity where solidification occurs. |
| Electric discharge machining (EDM) | Electrical | Metal removal is accomplished by a series of discrete electrical discharges between electrode (tool) and workpiece. The electric discharges cause very high localized temperatures that melt the metal. |
| Forging | Mechanical | Metal workpart is deformed by opposing dies. Workparts are often heated in advance of deformation, thus thermal power is also required. |
| Heat treating | Thermal | Metallic work unit is heated to temperature below melting point to effect microstructural changes. |
| Injection molding | Thermal and mechanical | Heat is used to raise temperature of polymer to highly plastic consistency, and mechanical force is used to inject the polymer melt into a mold cavity. |
| Laser beam cutting | Light and thermal | A highly coherent light beam is used to cut material by vaporization and melting. |
| Machining | Mechanical | Cutting of metal is accomplished by relative motion between tool and workpiece. |
| Sheet metal punching and blanking | Mechanical | Mechanical power is used to shear metal sheets and plates. |
| Welding | Thermal (maybe mechanical) | Most welding processes use heat to cause fusion and coalescence of two (or more) metal parts at their contacting surfaces. Some welding processes also apply mechanical pressure to the surfaces. |

and orientation for the process to be performed, and power is required for this transport and placement function. At the conclusion of the process, the work unit must similarly be removed. If the process is completely automated, then some form of mechanized power is used. If the process is manually operated or semiautomated, then human power may be used to position and locate the work unit.

- *Material transport between operations.* In addition to loading and unloading at a given operation, the work units must be moved between operations. We consider the material handling technologies associated with this transport function in Chapter 10.

*Power for Automation.* Above and beyond the basic power requirements for the manufacturing operation, additional power is required for automation. The additional power is used for the following functions:

- *Controller unit.* Modern industrial controllers are based on digital computers, which require electrical power to read the program of instructions, make the control calculations, and execute the instructions by transmitting the proper commands to the actuating devices.
- *Power to actuate the control signals.* The commands sent by the controller unit are carried out by means of electromechanical devices, such as switches and motors, called *actuators* (Section 5.2). The commands are generally transmitted by means of low-voltage control signals. To accomplish the commands, the actuators require more power,

and so the control signals must be amplified to provide the proper power level for the actuating device.

- *Data acquisition and information processing.* In most control systems, data must be collected from the process and used as input to the control algorithms. In addition, a requirement of the process may include keeping records of process performance or product quality. These data acquisition and record keeping functions require power, although in modest amounts.

### 3.1.2 Program of Instructions

The actions performed by an automated process are defined by a program of instructions. Whether the manufacturing operation involves low, medium, or high production (Section 1.1), each part or product style made in the operation requires one or more processing steps that are unique to that style. These processing steps are performed during a work cycle. A new part is completed during each work cycle (in some manufacturing operations, more than one part is produced during the work cycle; e.g., a plastic injection molding operation may produce multiple parts each cycle using a multiple cavity mold). The particular processing steps for the work cycle are specified in a *work cycle program*. Work cycle programs are called *part programs* in numerical control (Chapter 6). Other process control applications use different names for this type of program.

*Work Cycle Programs.* In the simplest automated processes, the work cycle consists of essentially one step, which is to maintain a single process parameter at a defined level, for example, maintain the temperature of a furnace at a designated value for the duration of a heat treatment cycle. (We assume that loading and unloading of the work units into and from the furnace is performed manually and is therefore not part of the automatic cycle.) In this case, programming simply involves setting the temperature dial on the furnace. To change the program, the operator simply changes the temperature setting. An extension of this simple case is when the single-step process is defined by more than one process parameter, for example, a furnace in which both temperature and atmosphere are controlled.

In more complicated systems, the process involves a work cycle consisting of multiple steps that are repeated with no deviation from one cycle to the next. Most discrete part manufacturing operations are in this category. A typical sequence of steps (simplified) is: (1) load the part into the production machine, (2) perform the process, and (3) unload the part. During each step, there are one or more activities that involve changes in one or more process parameters. *Process parameters* are inputs to the process, such as temperature setting of a furnace, coordinate axis value in a positioning system, valve opened or closed in a fluid flow system, and motor on or off. Process parameters are distinguished from *process variables*, which are outputs from the process; for example, the actual temperature of the furnace, the actual position of the axis, the actual flow rate of the fluid in the pipe, and the rotational speed of the motor. As our list of examples suggests, the changes in process parameter values may be continuous (gradual changes during the processing step; for example, gradually increasing temperature during a heat treatment cycle) or discrete (stepwise changes; for example, on/off). Different process parameters may be involved in each step.

**EXAMPLE 3.1 An Automated Turning Operation**

Consider an automated turning operation in which a cone-shaped geometry is generated. Assume the system is automated and that a robot is used to load and unload the work unit. The work cycle consists of the following steps: (1) load starting workpiece, (2) position cutting tool prior to turning, (3) turn, (4) reposition tool to a safe location at end of turning, and (5) unload finished workpiece. Identify the activity(ies) and process parameter(s) in each step of the operation.

***Solution:*** In step (1), the activities consist of the robot manipulator reaching for the raw workpart, lifting and positioning the part into the chuck jaws of the lathe, then removing the manipulator to a safe position to await unloading. The process parameters for these activities are the axis values of the robot manipulator (which change continuously), the gripper value (open or closed), and the chuck jaw value (open or closed).

In step (2), the activity involves the movement of the cutting tool to a "ready" position. The process parameters associated with this activity are the $x$- and $z$-axis position of the tool.

Step (3) is the turning operation. It requires the simultaneous control of three process parameters: rotational speed of the workpiece (rev/min), feed (mm/rev), and radial distance of the cutting tool from the axis of rotation. To cut the conical shape, radial distance must be changed continuously at a constant rate for each revolution of the workpiece. For a consistent finish on the surface, the rotational speed must be continuously adjusted to maintain a constant surface speed (m/min); and for equal feed marks on the surface, the feed must be set at a constant value. Depending on the angle of the cone, multiple turning passes may be required to gradually generate the desired contour. Each pass represents an additional step in the sequence.

Steps (4) and (5) involve the reverse activities as steps (2) and (1), respectively, and the process parameters are the same.

---

Many production operations consist of multiple steps, sometimes more complicated than our turning example. Examples of these operations include automatic screw machine cycles, sheet metal stamping operations, plastic injection molding, and die casting. Each of these manufacturing processes has been used for many decades. In earlier versions of these operations, the work cycles were controlled by hardware components, such as limit switches, timers, cams, and electromechanical relays. In effect, the hardware components and their arrangements served as the program of instructions that directed the sequence of steps in the processing cycle. Although these devices were quite adequate in performing their sequencing function, they suffered from the following disadvantages: (1) They often required considerable time to design and fabricate, thus forcing the production equipment to be used for batch production only; (2) making even minor changes in the program was difficult and time consuming; and (3) the program was in a physical form that is not readily compatible with computer data processing and communication.

Modern controllers used in automated systems are based on digital computers. Instead of cams, timers, relays, and other hardware devices, the programs for computer-controlled equipment are contained in magnetic tape, diskettes, compact disks (CD-ROMs), computer memory, and other modern storage technologies. Virtually all new equipment that perform the above mass production operations are designed with some type of computer controller to execute their respective processing cycles. The use of digital computers as the process controller allows improvements and upgrades to be made in the control programs, such as the addition of control functions not foreseen during initial equipment design. These kinds of control changes are often difficult to make with the previous hardware devices.

The work cycle may include manual steps, where the operator performs certain activities during the work cycle, and the automated system performs the rest. A common example is the loading and unloading of parts by the operator into and from a numerical control machine between machining cycles, where the machine performs the cutting operation under part program control. Initiation of the cutting operation of each cycle is triggered by the operator activating a "start" button after the part has been loaded.

*Decision-Making in the Programmed Work Cycle.* In our previous discussion of automated work cycles, the only two features of the work cycle are (1) the number and sequence of processing steps and (2) the process parameter changes in each step. Each work cycle consists of the same steps and associated process parameter changes with no variation from one cycle to the next. The program of instructions is repeated each work cycle without deviation. In fact, many automated manufacturing operations require decisions to be made during the programmed work cycle to cope with variations in the cycle. In many cases, the variations are routine elements of the cycle, and the corresponding instructions for dealing with them are incorporated into the regular part program. These cases include:

- *Operator interaction.* Although the program of instructions is intended to be carried out without human interaction, the controller unit may require input data from a human operator in order to function. For example, in an automated engraving operation, the operator may have to enter the alphanumeric characters that are to be engraved on the work unit (e.g., plaque, trophy, belt buckle). Having entered the characters, the engraving operation is accomplished automatically by the system. (An everyday example of operator interaction with an automated system is a bank customer using an automated teller machine. The customer must enter the codes indicating what transaction is to be accomplished by the teller machine.)
- *Different part or product styles processed by the system.* In this instance, the automated system is programmed to perform different work cycles on different part or product styles. An example is an industrial robot that performs a series of spot welding operations on car bodies in a final assembly plant. These plants are often designed to build different body styles on the same automated assembly line, such as two-door and four-door sedans. As each car body enters a given welding station on the line, sensors identify which style it is, and the robot performs the correct series of welds for that style.
- *Variations in the starting work units.* In many manufacturing operations the starting work units are not consistent. A good example is a sand casting as the starting work unit in a machining operation. The dimensional variations in the raw castings sometimes necessitate an extra machining pass to bring the machined dimension to the specified value. The part program must be coded to allow for the additional pass when necessary.

In all of these examples, the routine variations can be accommodated in the regular work cycle program. The program can be designed to respond to sensor or operator inputs by executing the appropriate subroutine corresponding to the input. In other cases, the variations in the work cycle are not routine at all. They are infrequent and unexpected, such as the failure of an equipment component. In these instances, the program must include contingency procedures or modifications in the sequence to cope with conditions that lie outside the normal routine. We discuss these measures later in the chapter in the context of advanced automation functions (Section 3.2).

**TABLE 3.2** Features of Work Cycle Programs Used in Automated Systems

| *Program Feature* | *Examples or Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| Steps in work cycle | Example: • Typical sequence of steps: (1) load, (2), process, (3) unload |
| Process parameters (inputs) in each step | Alternatives: • One parameter versus multiple parameters that must be changed during the step • Continuous parameters versus discrete parameters • Parameters that change during the step; for example, a positioning system whose axes values change during the processing step |
| Manual steps in work cycle | Alternatives: • Manual steps versus no manual steps (completely automated work cycle) Example: • Operator loading and unloading parts to and from machine |
| Operator interaction | Alternatives: • Operator interaction versus completely automated work cycle Example: • Operator entering processing information for current workpart |
| Different part or product styles | Alternatives: • Identical part or product style each cycle (mass or batch production) versus different part or product styles each cycle (flexible automation) |
| Variations in starting work units | Example: • Variations in starting dimensions or part features |

A variety of production situations and work cycle programs has been discussed here. The features of work cycle programs (part programs) used to direct the operations of an automated system are summarized as in Table 3.2.

### 3.1.3 Control System

The control element of the automated system executes the program of instructions. The control system causes the process to accomplish its defined function, which for our purpose is to carry out some manufacturing operation. Let us provide a brief introduction to control systems here. The following chapter describes this important industrial technology in more detail.

The controls in an automated system can be either closed loop or open loop. A *closed loop control system*, also known as a *feedback control system*, is one in which the output variable is compared with an input parameter, and any difference between the two is used to drive the output into agreement with the input. As shown in Figure 3.3, a closed loop control system consists of six basic elements: (1) input parameter, (2) process, (3) output variable, (4) feedback sensor, (5) controller, and (6) actuator. The *input parameter*, often referred to as the *set point*, represents the desired value of the output. In a home temperature control system, the set point is the desired thermostat setting. The *process* is the operation or function being controlled. In particular, it is the *output variable* that is being controlled in the loop. In the present discussion, the process of interest is usually a manufacturing operation, and the output variable is some process variable, perhaps a critical performance

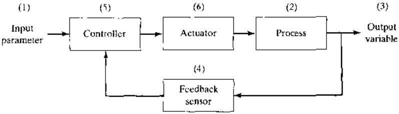



**Figure 3.3** A feedback control system.

measure in the process, such as temperature or force or flow rate. A *sensor* is used to measure the output variable and close the loop between input and output. Sensors perform the feedback function in a closed loop control system. The *controller* compares the output with the input and makes the required adjustment in the process to reduce the difference between them. The adjustment is accomplished using one or more *actuators*, which are the hardware devices that physically carry out the control actions, such as an electric motor or a flow valve. It should be mentioned that our model in Figure 3.3 shows only one loop. Most industrial processes require multiple loops, one for each process variable that must be controlled.

In contrast to the closed loop control system, an *open loop control system* operates without the feedback loop, as in Figure 3.4. In this case, the controls operate without measuring the output variable, so no comparison is made between the actual value of the output and the desired input parameter. The controller relies on an accurate model of the effect of its actuator on the process variable. With an open loop system, there is always the risk that the actuator will not have the intended effect on the process, and that is the disadvantage of an open loop system. Its advantage is that it is generally simpler and less expensive than a closed loop system. Open loop systems are usually appropriate when the following conditions apply: (1) The actions performed by the control system are simple, (2) the actuating function is very reliable, and (3) any reaction forces opposing the actuation are small enough to have no effect on the actuation. If these characteristics are not applicable, then a closed loop control system may be more appropriate.

Consider the difference between a closed loop and open loop system for the case of a positioning system. Positioning systems are common in manufacturing to locate a workpart relative to a tool or workhead. Figure 3.5 illustrates the case of a closed loop posi-

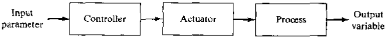



**Figure 3.4** An open loop control system.

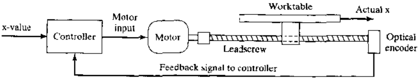



**Figure 3.5** A (one-axis) positioning system consisting of a leadscrew driven by a dc servomotor.

tioning system. In operation, the system is directed to move the worktable to a specified location as defined by a coordinate value in a Cartesian (or other) coordinate system. Most positioning systems have at least two axes (e.g., an $x - y$ positioning table) with a control system for each axis, but our diagram only illustrates one of these axes. A dc servomotor connected to a leadscrew is a common actuator for each axis. A signal indicating the coordinate value (e.g., $x$-value) is sent from the controller to the motor that drives the leadscrew, whose rotation is converted into linear motion of the positioning table. As the table moves closer to the desired $x$-coordinate value, the difference between the actual $x$-position and the input $x$-value is reduced. The actual $x$-position is measured by a feedback sensor (e.g., an optical encoder). The controller continues to drive the motor until the actual table position corresponds to the input position value.

For the open loop case, the diagram for the positioning system would be similar to the preceding, except that no feedback loop is present and a stepper motor is used in place of the dc servomotor. A stepper motor is designed to rotate a precise fraction of a turn for each pulse received from the controller. Since the motor shaft is connected to the leadscrew, and the leadscrew drives the worktable, each pulse converts into a small constant linear movement of the table. To move the table a desired distance, the number of pulses corresponding to that distance is sent to the motor. Given the proper application, whose characteristics match the preceding list of operating conditions, an open loop positioning system works with high reliability.

We consider the engineering analysis of closed loop and open loop positioning systems in the context of numerical control in a subsequent chapter (Section 6.6).

## 3.2 ADVANCED AUTOMATION FUNCTIONS

In addition to executing work cycle programs, an automated system may be capable of executing advanced functions that are not specific to a particular work unit. In general, the functions are concerned with enhancing the performance and safety of the equipment. Advanced automation functions include the following: (1) safety monitoring, (2) maintenance and repair diagnostics, and (3) error detection and recovery.

Advanced automation functions are made possible by special subroutines included in the program of instructions. In some cases, the functions provide information only and do not involve any physical actions by the control system. An example of this case includes reporting a list of preventive maintenance tasks that should be accomplished. Any actions taken on the basis of this report are decided by the human operators and managers of the system and not by the system itself. In other cases, the program of instructions must be physically executed by means of the control system using available actuators. A simple example of this case is a safety monitoring system that sounds an alarm when a human worker gets dangerously close to the automated system.

### 3.2.1 Safety Monitoring

One of the significant reasons for automating a manufacturing operation is to remove worker(s) from a hazardous working environment. An automated system is often installed to perform a potentially dangerous operation that would otherwise be accomplished manually by human workers. However, even in automated systems, workers are still needed to service the system, at periodic time intervals if not full-time. Accordingly, it is important that the automated system be designed to operate safely when workers are in attendance. In addition, it is essential that the automated system carry out its process in a way that is not self-destructive. Thus, there are two reasons for providing an automated system with a safety monitoring capability: (1) to protect human workers in the vicinity of the system and (2) to protect the equipment associated with the system.

Safety monitoring means more than the conventional safety measures taken in a manufacturing operation, such as protective shields around the operation or the kinds of manual devices that might be utilized by human workers, such as emergency stop buttons. *Safety monitoring* in an automated system involves the use of sensors to track the system's operation and identify conditions and events that are unsafe or potentially unsafe. The safety monitoring system is programmed to respond to unsafe conditions in some appropriate way. Possible responses to various hazards might include one or more of the following:

- complete stoppage of the automated system
- sounding an alarm
- reducing the operating speed of the process
- taking corrective actions to recover from the safety violation

This last response is the most sophisticated and is suggestive of an intelligent machine performing some advanced strategy. This kind of response is applicable to a variety of possible mishaps, not necessarily confined to safety issues, and is called error detection and recovery (Section 3.2.3).

Sensors for safety monitoring range from very simple devices to highly sophisticated systems. The topic of sensor technology is discussed in Chapter 5 (Section 5.1). The following list suggests some of the possible sensors and their applications for safety monitoring:

- Limit switches to detect proper positioning of a part in a workholding device so that the processing cycle can begin.
- Photoelectric sensors triggered by the interruption of a light beam; this could be used to indicate that a part is in the proper position or to detect the presence of a human intruder into the work cell.
- Temperature sensors to indicate that a metal workpart is hot enough to proceed with a hot forging operation. If the workpart is not sufficiently heated, then the metal's ductility may be too low, and the forging dies might be damaged during the operation.
- Heat or smoke detectors to sense fire hazards.
- Pressure-sensitive floor pads to detect human intruders into the work cell.
- Machine vision systems to supervise the automated system and its surroundings.

It should be mentioned that a given safety monitoring system is limited in its ability to respond to hazardous conditions by the possible irregularities that have been foreseen by the system designer. If the designer has not anticipated a particular hazard, and consequently has not provided the system with the sensing capability to detect that hazard, then the safety monitoring system cannot recognize the event if and when it occurs.

### 3.2.2 Maintenance and Repair Diagnostics

Modern automated production systems are becoming increasingly complex and sophisticated, thus complicating the problem of maintaining and repairing them. *Maintenance and repair diagnostics* refers to the capabilities of an automated system to assist in the identification of the source of potential or actual malfunctions and failures of the system. Three modes of operation are typical of a modern maintenance and repair diagnostics subsystem:

1. *Status monitoring.* In the status monitoring mode, the diagnostic subsystem monitors and records the status of key sensors and parameters of the system during normal operation. On request, the diagnostics subsystem can display any of these values and provide an interpretation of current system status, perhaps warning of an imminent failure.
2. *Failure diagnostics.* The failure diagnostics mode is invoked when a malfunction or failure occurs. Its purpose is to interpret the current values of the monitored variables and to analyze the recorded values preceding the failure so that the cause of the failure can be identified.
3. *Recommendation of repair procedure.* In the third mode of operation, the subsystem provides a recommended procedure to the repair crew as to the steps that should be taken to effect repairs. Methods for developing the recommendations are sometimes based on the use of expert systems in which the collective judgments of many repair experts are pooled and incorporated into a computer program that uses artificial intelligence techniques.

Status monitoring serves two important functions in machine diagnostics: (1) providing information for diagnosing a current failure and (2) providing data to predict a future malfunction or failure. First, when a failure of the equipment has occurred, it is usually difficult for the repair crew to determine the reason for the failure and what steps should be taken to make repairs. It is often helpful to reconstruct the events leading up to the failure. The computer is programmed to monitor and record the variables and to draw logical inferences from their values about the reason for the malfunction. This diagnosis helps the repair personnel make the necessary repairs and replace the appropriate components. This is especially helpful in electronic repairs where it is often difficult to determine on the basis of visual inspection which components have failed.

The second function of status monitoring is to identify signs of an impending failure, so that the affected components can be replaced before failure actually causes the system to go down. These part replacements can be made during the night shift or other time when the process is not operating, with the result that the system experiences no loss of regular operation.

### 3.2.3 Error Detection and Recovery

In the operation of any automated system, there are hardware malfunctions and unexpected events that occur during operation. These events can result in costly delays and loss of production until the problem has been corrected and regular operation is restored. Traditionally, equipment malfunctions are corrected by human workers, perhaps with the aid of a maintenance and repair diagnostics subroutine. With the increased use of computer control for manufacturing processes, there is a trend toward using the control computer not only to diagnose the malfunctions but also to automatically take the necessary corrective action to restore the system to normal operation. The term *error detection and recovery* is used when the computer performs these functions.

*Error Detection.* As indicated by the term, error detection and recovery consists of two steps: (1) error detection and (2) error recovery. The *error detection* step uses the automated system's available sensor systems to determine when a deviation or malfunction has occurred, correctly interpret the sensor signal(s), and classify the error. Design of the error detection subsystem must begin with a classification of the possible errors that can occur during system operation. The errors in a manufacturing process tend to be very application specific. They must be anticipated in advance in order to select sensors that will enable their detection.

In analyzing a given production operation, the possible errors can be classified into one of three general categories: (1) random errors, (2) systematic errors, and (3) aberrations. *Random errors* occur as a result of the normal stochastic nature of the process. These errors occur when the process is in statistical control (Section 21.1). Large variations in part dimensions, even when the production process is in statistical control, can cause problems in downstream operations. By detecting these deviations on a part-by-part basis, corrective action can be taken in subsequent operations. *Systematic errors* are those that result from some assignable cause such as a change in raw material properties or a drift in an equipment setting. These errors usually cause the product to deviate from specifications so as to be unacceptable in quality terms. Finally, the third type of error, *aberrations*, results from either an equipment failure or a human mistake. Examples of equipment failures include fracture of a mechanical shear pin, bursts in a hydraulic line, rupture of a pressure vessel, and sudden failure of a cutting tool. Examples of human mistakes include errors in the control program, improper fixture setups, and substitution of the wrong raw materials.

The two main design problems in error detection are: (1) to anticipate all of the possible errors that can occur in a given process and (2) to specify the appropriate sensor systems and associated interpretive software so that the system is capable of recognizing each error. Solving the first problem requires a systematic evaluation of the possibilities under each of the three error classifications. If the error has not been anticipated, then the error detection subsystem cannot correctly detect and identify it.

**EXAMPLE 3.2 Error Detection in an Automated Machining Cell**

Consider an automated cell consisting of a CNC machine tool, a parts storage unit, and a robot for loading and unloading the parts between the machine and the storage unit. Possible errors that might affect this system can be divided into the following categories: (1) machine and process, (2) cutting tools, (3) workholding fixture, (4) part storage unit, and (5) load/unload robot. Develop a list of possible errors (deviations and malfunctions) that might be included in each of these five categories.

***Solution:*** A list of possible errors in the machining cell is presented in Table 3.3.

---

*Error Recovery.* *Error recovery* is concerned with applying the necessary corrective action to overcome the error and bring the system back to normal operation. The problem of designing an error recovery system focuses on devising appropriate strategies and procedures that will either correct or compensate for the variety of errors that can occur in the process. Generally, a specific recovery strategy and procedure must be designed for each different error. The types of strategies can be classified as follows:

1. *Make adjustments at the end of the current work cycle.* When the current work cycle is completed, the part program branches to a corrective action subroutine specifically

**TABLE 3.3** Error Detection Step in an Automated Machining Cell: Error Categories and Possible Malfunctions Within Each Category

| *Error Categories* | *Possible Malfunctions* |
|---|---|
| 1. Machine and process | Loss of power, power overload, thermal deflection, cutting temperature too high, vibration, no coolant, chip fouling, wrong part program, defective part |
| 2. Cutting tools | Tool breakage, tool wear-out, vibration, tool not present, wrong tool |
| 3. Workholding fixture | Part not in fixture, clamps not actuated, part dislodged during machining, part deflection during machining, part breakage, chips causing location problems |
| 4. Part storage unit | Workpart not present, wrong workpart, oversized or undersized workpart |
| 5. Load/unload robot | Improper grasping of workpart, robot drops workpart, no part present at pickup |

designed for the error detected, executes the subroutine, and then returns to the work cycle program. This action reflects a low level of urgency and is most commonly associated with random errors in the process.

2. *Make adjustments during the current cycle.* This generally indicates a higher level of urgency than the preceding type. In this case, the action to correct or compensate for the detected error is initiated as soon as the error is detected. However, it must be possible to accomplish the designated corrective action while the work cycle is still being executed.
3. *Stop the process to invoke corrective action.* In this case, the deviation or malfunction requires that the execution of the work cycle be suspended during corrective action. It is assumed that the system is capable of automatically recovering from the error without human assistance. At the end of the corrective action, the regular work cycle is continued.
4. *Stop the process and call for help.* In this case, the error requiring stoppage of the process cannot be resolved through automated recovery procedures. This situation arises because: (1) the automated cell is not enabled to correct the problem or (2) the error cannot be classified into the predefined list of errors. In either case, human assistance is required to correct the problem and restore the system to fully automated operation.

Error detection and recovery requires an interrupt system (Section 4.3.2). When an error in the process is sensed and identified, an interrupt in the current program execution is invoked to branch to the appropriate recovery subroutine. This is done either at the end of the current cycle (type 1 above) or immediately (types 2, 3, and 4). At the completion of the recovery procedure, program execution reverts back to normal operation.

**EXAMPLE 3.3 Error Recovery in an Automated Machining Cell**

For the automated cell of Example 3.2, develop a list of possible corrective actions that might be taken by the system to address certain of the errors.

***Solution:*** A list of possible corrective actions is presented in Table 3.4.

**TABLE 3.4** Error Recovery in an Automated Machining Cell: Possible Corrective Actions That Might Be Taken in Response to Errors Detected During the Operation

| *Errors Detected* | *Possible Corrective Actions to Recover* |
|---|---|
| Part dimensions deviating due to thermal deflection of machine tool | Adjust coordinates in part program to compensate (category 1 corrective action) |
| Part dropped by robot during pickup | Reach for another part (category 2 corrective action) |
| Part is dimensionally oversized | Adjust part program to take a preliminary machining pass across the work surface (category 2 corrective action) |
| Chatter (tool vibration) | Increase or decrease cutting speed to change harmonic frequency (category 2 corrective action) |
| Cutting temperature too high | Reduce cutting speed (category 2 corrective action) |
| Failure of cutting tool | Replace cutting tool with another sharp tool (category 3 corrective action). |
| No more parts in parts storage unit | Call operator to resupply starting workparts (category 4 corrective action) |
| Chips fouling machining operation | Call operator to clear chips from work area (category 4 corrective action) |

## 3.3 LEVELS OF AUTOMATION

The concept of automated systems can be applied to various levels of factory operations. One normally associates automation with the individual production machines. However, the production machine itself is made up of subsystems that may themselves be automated. For example, one of the important automation technologies we discuss in this part of the book is numerical control (Chapter 6). A modern numerical control (NC) machine tool is an automated system. However, the NC machine itself is composed of multiple control systems. Any NC machine has at least two axes of motion, and some machines have up to five axes. Each of these axes operates as a positioning system, as described in Section 3.1.3, and is, in effect, itself an automated system. Similarly, a NC machine is often part of a larger manufacturing system, and the larger system may itself be automated. For example, two or three machine tools may be connected by an automated part handling system operating under computer control. The machine tools also receive instructions (e.g., part programs) from the computer. Thus we have three levels of automation and control included here (the positioning system level, the machine tool level, and the manufacturing system level). For our purposes in this text, we can identify five possible levels of automation in a production plant. They are defined next, and their hierarchy is depicted in Figure 3.6.

1. *Device level.* This is the lowest level in our automation hierarchy. It includes the actuators, sensors, and other hardware components that comprise the machine level. The devices are combined into the individual control loops of the machine; for example, the feedback control loop for one axis of a CNC machine or one joint of an industrial robot.
2. *Machine level.* Hardware at the device level is assembled into individual machines. Examples include CNC machine tools and similar production equipment, industrial robots, powered conveyors, and automated guided vehicles. Control functions at this

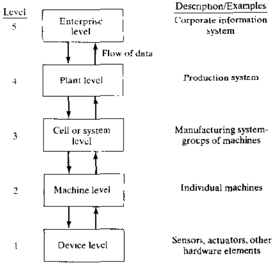



**Figure 3.6** Five levels of automation and control in manufacturing.

level include performing the sequence of steps in the program of instructions in the correct order and making sure that each step is properly executed.

3. *Cell or system level.* This is the manufacturing cell or system level, which operates under instructions from the plant level. A manufacturing cell or system is a group of machines or workstations connected and supported by a material handling system, computer, and other equipment appropriate to the manufacturing process. Production lines are included in this level. Functions include part dispatching and machine loading, coordination among machines and material handling system, and collecting and evaluating inspection data.
4. *Plant level.* This is the factory or production systems level. It receives instructions from the corporate information system and translates them into operational plans for production. Likely functions include: order processing, process planning, inventory control, purchasing, material requirements planning, shop floor control, and quality control.
5. *Enterprise level.* This is the highest level, consisting of the corporate information system. It is concerned with all of the functions necessary to manage the company: marketing and sales, accounting, design, research, aggregate planning, and master production scheduling.

Most of the technologies discussed in this part of the book are at level 2 (the machine level), although we discuss level 1 automation technologies (the devices that make up a control system) in Chapter 5. The level 2 technologies include the individual controllers (e.g., programmable logic controllers and digital computer controllers), numerical control machines, and industrial robots. The material handling equipment discussed in Part II also represent technologies at level 2, although some of the handling equipment are themselves sophisticated automated systems. The automation and control issues at level 2 are concerned with the basic operation of the equipment and the physical processes they perform.

Controllers, machines, and material handling equipment are combined into manufacturing cells, or production lines, or similar systems, which make up level 3, considered in Part III. A *manufacturing system* is defined in this book as a collection of integrated equipment designed for some special mission, such as machining a defined part family or assembly of a certain product. Manufacturing systems also include people. Certain highly automated manufacturing systems can operate for extended periods of time without humans present to attend to their needs. But most manufacturing systems include workers as important elements of the system: for example, assembly workers on a conveyorized production line or part loaders/unloaders in a machining cell. Thus, manufacturing systems are designed with varying degrees of automation; some are highly automated, others are completely manual, and there is a wide range between.

The manufacturing systems in a factory are components of a larger system, which we refer to as a production system. We define a *production system* as the people, equipment, and procedures that are organized for the combination of materials and processes that comprise a company's manufacturing operations. Production systems are at level 4, the plant level, while manufacturing systems are at level 3 in our automation hierarchy. Production systems include not only the groups of machines and workstations in the factory but also the support procedures that make them work. These procedures include production control, inventory control, material requirements planning, shop floor control, and quality control. These systems are discussed in Parts IV and V. They are often implemented not only at the plant level but also at the corporate level (level 5).

## REFERENCES


[1] BOUCHER, T. O., *Computer Automation in Manufacturing*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1996.

[2] GROOVER, M. P., "Automation," *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia*, 15th Edition, Chicago, 1992. Vol. 14, pp. 548–557.

[3] GROOVER, M. P., "Automation," *Handbook of Design, Manufacturing, and Automation*, R. C. Dorf and A. Kusiak, Editors, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1994, pp. 3–21.

[4] GROOVER, M. P., "Industrial Control Systems," *Maynard's Industrial Engineering Handbook*, Fifth Edition, Kjell Zandin, Editor, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, (forthcoming, 2001).

chapter 4

# Industrial Control Systems

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



The control system is one of the three basic components of an automation system (Section 3.1). In this chapter, we examine industrial control systems, in particular how digital computers are used to implement the control function in production. *Industrial control* is defined here as the automatic regulation of unit operations and their associated equipment as well as the integration and coordination of the unit operations into the larger production system. In the context of our book, the term *unit operations* usually refers to manufacturing operations; however, the term also applies to the operation of material handling and other industrial equipment. Let us begin our chapter by comparing industrial control as it is applied in the processing industries and how it is applied in the discrete manufacturing industries.

## 4.1 PROCESS INDUSTRIES VERSUS DISCRETE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

In our previous discussion of industry types in Chapter 2, we divided industries and their production operations into two basic categories: (1) process industries and (2) discrete manufacturing industries (Section 2.1). Process industries perform their production operations on *amounts* of materials, because the materials tend to be liquids, gases, powders, and similar materials, whereas discrete manufacturing industries perform their operations on *quantities* of materials, because the materials tend to be discrete parts and products. The kinds of unit operations performed on the materials are different in the two industry categories. Some of the typical unit operations in each category are listed in Table 4.1.

### 4.1.1 Levels of Automation in the Two Industries

The levels of automation (Section 3.3) in the two industries are compared in Table 4.2. The significant differences are seen in the low and intermediate levels. At the device level, there are differences in the types of actuators and sensors used in the two industry categories, simply because the processes and equipment are different. In the process industries, the devices are used mostly for the control loops in chemical, thermal, or similar processing operations, whereas in discrete manufacturing, the devices control the mechanical actions of machines. At the next level above, the difference is that unit operations are controlled in the process industries, and machines are controlled in the discrete manufacturing operations. At the third level, the difference is between control of interconnected unit processing operations and interconnected machines. At the upper levels (plant and enterprise), the control issues are similar, allowing for the fact that the products and processes are different.

**TABLE 4.1** Typical Unit Operations in the Process Industries and Discrete Manufacturing Industries

| *Typical Unit Operations in the Process Industries* | *Typical Unit Operations in the Discrete Manufacturing Industries* |
|---|---|
| Chemical reactions | Casting |
| Comminution | Forging |
| Deposition (e.g., chemical vapor deposition) | Extrusion |
| Distillation | Machining |
| Heating | Mechanical assembly |
| Mixing and blending of ingredients | Plastic molding |
| Separation of ingredients | Sheet metal stamping |

**TABLE 4.2** Levels of Automation in the Process Industries and Discrete Manufacturing Industries

| *Level* | *Level of Automation in the Process Industries* | *Level of Automation in the Discrete Manufacturing Industries* |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | *Corporate level*—management information system, strategic planning, high-level management of enterprise | *Corporate level*—management information system, strategic planning, high-level management of enterprise |
| 4 | *Plant level*—scheduling, tracking materials, equipment monitoring | *Plant or factory level*—scheduling, tracking work-in-process, routing parts through machines, machine utilization |
| 3 | *Supervisory control level*—control and coordination of several interconnected unit operations that make up the total process | *Manufacturing cell or system level*—control and coordination of groups of machines and supporting equipment working in coordination, including material handling equipment |
| 2 | *Regulatory control level*—control of unit operations | *Machine level*—production machines and workstations for discrete part and product manufacture |
| 1 | *Device level*—sensors and actuators comprising the basic control loops for unit operations | *Device level*—sensors and actuators to accomplish control of machine actions |

### 4.1.2 Variables and Parameters in the Two Industries

The distinction between process industries and discrete manufacturing industries extends to the variables and parameters that characterize the respective production operations. The reader will recall from the previous chapter (Section 3.1.2) that we defined variables as outputs of the process and parameters as inputs to the process. In the process industries, the variables and parameters of interest tend to be continuous, whereas in discrete manufacturing, they tend to be discrete. Let us explain the differences with reference to Figure 4.1.

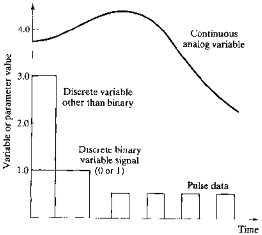



**Figure 4.1** Continuous and discrete variables and parameters in manufacturing operations.

A *continuous variable* (or parameter) is one that is uninterrupted as time proceeds, at least during the manufacturing operation. A continuous variable is generally considered to be *analog*, which means it can take on any value within a certain range. The variable is not restricted to a discrete set of values. Production operations in both the process industries and discrete parts manufacturing are characterized by continuous variables. Examples include force, temperature, flow rate, pressure, and velocity. All of these variables (whichever ones apply to a given production process) are continuous over time during the process, and they can take on any of an infinite number of possible values within a certain practical range.

A *discrete variable* (or parameter) is one that can take on only certain values within a given range. The most common type of discrete variable is *binary*, meaning it can take on either of two possible values, ON or OFF, open or closed, and so on. Examples of discrete binary variables and parameters in manufacturing include: limit switch open or closed, motor on or off, and workpart present or not present in a fixture. Not all discrete variables (and parameters) are binary. Other possibilities are variables that can take on more than two possible values but less than an infinite number, that is, *discrete variables other than binary*. Examples include daily piece counts in a production operation and the display of a digital tachometer. A special form of discrete variable (and parameter) is *pulse data*, which consist of a train of pulses as shown in Figure 4.1. As a discrete variable, a pulse train might be used to indicate piece counts; for example, parts passing on a conveyor activate a photocell to produce a pulse for each part detected. As a process parameter, a pulse train might be used to drive a stepper motor.

## 4.2 CONTINUOUS VERSUS DISCRETE CONTROL

Industrial control systems used in the process industries have tended to emphasize the control of continuous variables and parameters. By contrast, the manufacturing industries produce discrete parts and products, and the controllers used here have tended to emphasize discrete variables and parameters. Just as we have two basic types of variables and parameters that characterize production operations, we also have two basic types of control: (1) *continuous control*, in which the variables and parameters are continuous and analog; and (2) *discrete control*, in which the variables and parameters are discrete, mostly binary discrete. Some of the differences between continuous control and discrete control are summarized in Table 4.3.

In reality, most operations in the process and discrete manufacturing industries tend to include both continuous as well as discrete variables and parameters. Consequently, many industrial controllers are designed with the capability to receive, operate on, and transmit both types of signals and data. In Chapter 5, we discuss the various types of signals and data in industrial control systems and how the data are converted for use by digital computer controllers.

To complicate matters, with the substitution of the digital computer to replace analog controllers in continuous process control applications starting around 1960 (Historical Note 4.1), continuous process variables are no longer measured continuously. Instead, they are sampled periodically, in effect creating a discrete sampled-data system that approximates the actual continuous system. Similarly, the control signals sent to the process are typically stepwise functions that approximate the previous continuous control signals transmitted by analog controllers. Hence, in digital computer process control, even continuous vari-

**TABLE 4.3** Comparison Between Continuous Control and Discrete Control

| *Comparison Factor* | *Continuous Control in Process Industries* | *Discrete Control in Discrete Manufacturing Industries* |
|---|---|---|
| Typical measures of product output | Weight measures, liquid volume measures, solid volume measures | Number of parts, number of products |
| Typical quality measures | Consistency, concentration of solution, absence of contaminants, conformance to specification | Dimensions, surface finish, appearance, absence of defects, product reliability |
| Typical variables and parameters | Temperature, volume flow rate, pressure | Position, velocity, acceleration, force |
| Typical sensors | Flow meters, thermocouples, pressure sensors | Limit switches, photoelectric sensors, strain gages, piezoelectric sensors |
| Typical actuators | Valves, heaters, pumps | Switches, motors, pistons |
| Typical process time constants | Seconds, minutes, hours | Less than a second |

ables and parameters possess characteristics of discrete data, and these characteristics must be considered in the design of the computer-process interface and the control algorithms used by the controller.

### 4.2.1 Continuous Control Systems

In continuous control, the usual objective is to maintain the value of an output variable at a desired level, similar to the operation of a feedback control system as defined in the previous chapter (Section 3.1.3). However, most continuous processes in the practical world consist of many separate feedback loops, all of which have to be controlled and coordinated to maintain the output variable at the desired value. Examples of continuous processes are the following:

- Control of the output of a chemical reaction that depends on temperature, pressure, and input flow rates of several reactants. All of these variables and/or parameters are continuous.
- Control of the position of a workpart relative to a cutting tool in a contour milling operation in which complex curved surfaces are generated. The position of the part is defined by $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-coordinate values. As the part moves, the $x$, $y$, and $z$ values can be considered as continuous variables and/or parameters that change over time to machine the part.

There are several approaches by which the control objective is achieved in a continuous process control system. In the following paragraphs, we survey the most prominent categories.

*Regulatory Control.* In *regulatory control*, the objective is to maintain process performance at a certain level or within a given tolerance band of that level. This is appropriate, for example, when the performance attribute is some measure of product quality, and it is

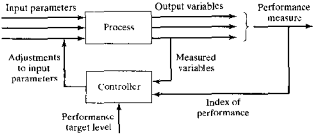



**Figure 4.2** Regulatory control.

important to keep the quality at the specified level or within a specified range. In many applications, the performance measure of the process, sometimes called the *index of performance*, must be calculated based on several output variables of the process. Except for this feature, regulatory control is to the overall process what feedback control is to an individual control loop in the process, as suggested by Figure 4.2.

The trouble with regulatory control (the same problem exists with a simple feedback control loop) is that compensating action is taken only after a disturbance has affected the process output. An error must be present for any control action to be taken. The presence of an error means that the output of the process is different from the desired value. The following control mode, feedforward control, addresses this issue.

*Feedforward Control.* The strategy in *feedforward control* is to anticipate the effect of disturbances that will upset the process by sensing them and compensating for them before they can affect the process. As shown in Figure 4.3, the feedforward control elements sense the presence of a disturbance and take corrective action by adjusting a process parameter that compensates for any effect the disturbance will have on the process. In the ideal case, the compensation is completely effective. However, complete compensation is unlikely because of imperfections in the feedback measurements, actuator operations, and control algorithms, so feedforward control is usually combined with feedback control, as shown in our figure. Regulatory and feedforward control are more closely associated with the process industries than with discrete product manufacturing.

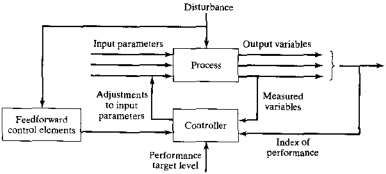



**Figure 4.3** Feedforward control, combined with feedback control.

*Steady-State Optimization.* This term refers to a class of optimization techniques in which the process exhibits the following characteristics: (1) there is a well-defined index of performance, such as product cost, production rate, or process yield; (2) the relationship between the process variables and the index of performance is known; and (3) the values of the system parameters that optimize the index of performance can be determined mathematically. When these characteristics apply, the control algorithm is designed to make adjustments in the process parameters to drive the process toward the optimal state. The control system is open-loop, as seen in Figure 4.4. Several mathematical techniques are available for solving steady-state optimal control problems, including differential calculus, calculus of variations, and a variety of mathematical programming methods.

*Adaptive Control.* Steady-state optimal control operates as an open-loop system. It works successfully when there are no disturbances that invalidate the known relationship between process parameters and process performance. When such disturbances are present in the application, a self-correcting form of optimal control can be used, called adaptive control. *Adaptive control* combines feedback control and optimal control by measuring the relevant process variables during operation (as in feedback control) and using a control algorithm that attempts to optimize some index of performance (as in optimal control).

Adaptive control is distinguished from feedback control and steady-state optimal control by its unique capability to cope with a time-varying environment. It is not unusual for a system to operate in an environment that changes over time and for the changes to have a potential effect on system performance. If the internal parameters or mechanisms of the system are fixed, as in feedback control or optimal control, the system may perform quite differently in one type of environment than in another. An adaptive control system is designed to compensate for its changing environment by monitoring its own performance and altering some aspect of its control mechanism to achieve optimal or near-optimal performance. In a production process, the "time-varying environment" consists of the day-to-day variations in raw materials, tooling, atmospheric conditions, and the like, any of which may affect performance.

The general configuration of an adaptive control system is illustrated in Figure 4.5. To evaluate its performance and respond accordingly, an adaptive control system performs three functions, as shown in the figure:

1. *Identification function.* In this function, the current value of the index of performance of the system is determined, based on measurements collected from the process. Since

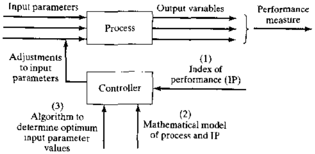



**Figure 4.4** Steady-state (open-loop) optimal control.

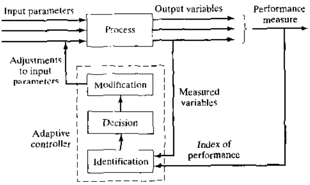



**Figure 4.5** Configuration of an adaptive control system.

the environment changes over time, system performance also changes. Accordingly, the identification function must be accomplished more or less continuously over time during system operation.

2. *Decision function.* Once system performance has been determined, the next function is to decide what changes should be made to improve performance. The decision function is implemented by means of the adaptive system's programmed algorithm. Depending on this algorithm, the decision may be to change one or more input parameters to the process, to alter some of the internal parameters of the controller, or other changes.
3. *Modification function.* The third function of adaptive control is to implement the decision. Whereas decision is a logic function, modification is concerned with physical changes in the system. It involves hardware rather than software. In modification, the system parameters or process inputs are altered using available actuators to drive the system toward a more optimal state.

Adaptive control is most applicable at levels 2 and 3 in our automation hierarchy (Table 4.2). Adaptive control has been the subject of research and development for several decades, originally motivated by problems of high-speed flight control in the age of jet aircraft. The principles have been applied in other areas as well, including manufacturing. One notable effort is adaptive control machining.

*On-Line Search Strategies.* On-line search strategies can be used to address a special class of adaptive control problem in which the decision function cannot be sufficiently defined; that is, the relationship between the input parameters and the index of performance is not known, or not known well enough to use adaptive control as previously described. Therefore, it is not possible to decide on the changes in the internal parameters of the system to produce the desired performance improvement. Instead, experiments must be performed on the process. Small systematic changes are made in the input parameters of the process to observe what effect these changes will have on the output variables. Based on the results of these experiments, larger changes are made in the input parameters to drive the process toward improved performance.

On-line search strategies include a variety of schemes to explore the effects of changes in process parameters, ranging from trial-and-error techniques to gradient methods. All of the schemes attempt to determine which input parameters cause the greatest positive effect on the index of performance and then move the process in that direction. There is little evidence that on-line search techniques are used much in discrete parts manufacturing. Their applications are more common in the continuous process industries.

*Other Specialized Techniques.* Other specialized techniques include strategies that are currently evolving in control theory and computer science. Examples include learning systems, expert systems, neural networks, and other artificial intelligence methods for process control.

### 4.2.2 Discrete Control Systems

In *discrete control*, the parameters and variables of the system are changed at discrete moments in time. The changes involve variables and parameters that are also discrete, typically binary (ON/OFF). The changes are defined in advance by means of a program of instructions, for example, a work cycle program (Section 3.1.2). The changes are executed either because the state of the system has changed or because a certain amount of time has elapsed. These two cases can be distinguished as (1) event-driven changes or (2) time-driven changes [3].

An *event-driven change* is executed by the controller in response to some event that has caused the state of the system to be altered. The change can be to initiate an operation or terminate an operation, start a motor or stop it, open a valve or close it, and so forth. Examples of event-driven changes are:

- A robot loads a workpart into the fixture, and the part is sensed by a limit switch. Sensing the part's presence is the event that alters the system state. The event-driven change is that the automatic machining cycle can now commence.
- The diminishing level of plastic molding compound in the hopper of an injection molding machine triggers a low-level switch, which in turn triggers a valve to open that starts the flow of new plastic into the hopper. When the level of plastic reaches the high-level switch, this triggers the valve to close, thus stopping the flow of pellets into the hopper.
- Counting parts moving along a conveyor past an optical sensor is an event-driven system. Each part moving past the sensor is an event that drives the counter.

A *time-driven change* is executed by the control system either at a specific point in time or after a certain time lapse has occurred. As before, the change usually consists of starting something or stopping something, and the time when the change occurs is important. Examples of time-driven changes are:

- In factories with specific starting times and ending times for the shift and uniform break periods for all workers, the "shop clock" is set to sound a bell at specific moments during the day to indicate these start and stop times.
- Heat treating operations must be carried out for a certain length of time. An automated heat treating cycle consists of automatic loading of parts into the furnace (perhaps by a robot) and then unloading after the parts have been heated for the specified length of time.

- In the operation of a washing machine, once the laundry tub has been filled to the preset level, the agitation cycle continues for a length of time set on the controls. When this time is up, the timer stops the agitation and initiates draining of the tub. (By comparison with the agitation cycle, filling the laundry tub with water is event-driven. Filling continues until the proper level has been sensed, which causes the inlet valve to close.)

The two types of change correspond to two different types of discrete control, called combinational logic control and sequential control. *Combinational logic control* is used to control the execution of event-driven changes, and *sequential control* is used to manage time-driven changes. These types of control are discussed in our expanded coverage of discrete control in Chapter 8.

Discrete control is widely used in discrete manufacturing as well as the process industries. In discrete manufacturing, it is used to control the operation of conveyors and other material transport systems (Chapter 10), automated storage systems (Chapter 11), stand-alone production machines (Chapter 14), flexible manufacturing systems (Chapter 16), automated transfer lines (Chapter 18), and automated assembly systems (Chapter 19). All of these systems operate by following a well-defined sequence of start-and-stop actions, such as powered feed motions, parts transfers between workstations, and on-line automated inspections, which are well-suited to discrete control.

In the process industries, discrete control is associated more with batch processing than with continuous processes. In a typical batch processing operation, each batch of starting ingredients is subjected to a cycle of processing steps that involves changes in process parameters (e.g., temperature and pressure changes), possible flow from one container to another during the cycle, and finally packaging. The packaging step differs depending on the product. For foods, packaging may involve canning or boxing. For chemicals, it means filling containers with the liquid product. And for pharmaceuticals, it may involve filling bottles with medicine tablets. In batch process control, the objective is to manage the sequence and timing of processing steps as well as to regulate the process parameters in each step. Accordingly, batch process control typically includes both continuous control as well as discrete control.

## 4.3 COMPUTER PROCESS CONTROL

The use of digital computers to control industrial processes had its origins in the continuous process industries in the late 1950s (Historical Note 4.1). Prior to then, analog controllers were used to implement continuous control, and relay systems were used to implement discrete control. At that time, computer technology was in its infancy, and the only computers available for process control were large, expensive mainframes. Compared with today's technology, the digital computers of the 1950s were slow, unreliable, and not well suited to process control applications. The computers that were installed sometimes cost more than the processes they controlled. Around 1960, digital computers started replacing analog controllers in continuous process control applications; and around 1970, programmable logic controllers started replacing relay banks in discrete control applications. Advances in computer technology since the 1960s and 1970s have resulted in the development of the microprocessor. Today, virtually all industrial processes, certainly new installations, are controlled by digital computers based on microprocessor technology. Microprocessor-based controllers are discussed in Section 4.4.6.

### **Historical Note 4.1** Computer process control [2], [12].

Control of industrial processes by digital computers can be traced to the process industries in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These industries, such as oil refineries and chemicals, use high-volume continuous production processes characterized by many variables and associated control loops. The processes had traditionally been controlled by analog devices, each loop having its own set point value and in most instances operating independently of other loops. Any coordination of the process was accomplished in a central control room, where workers adjusted the individual settings, attempting to achieve stability and economy in the process. The cost of the analog devices for all of the control loops was considerable, and the human coordination of the process was less than optimal. The commercial development of the digital computer in the 1950s offered the opportunity to replace some of the analog control devices with the computer.

The first known attempt to use a digital computer for process control was at a Texaco refinery in Port Arthur, Texas in the late 1950s. Texaco had been contacted in 1956 by computer manufacturer Thomson Ramo Wooldridge (TRW), and a feasibility study was conducted on a polymerization unit at the refinery. The computer control system went on-line in March 1959. The control application involved 26 flows, 72 temperatures, 3 pressures, and 3 compositions. This pioneering work did not escape the notice of other companies in the process industries as well as other computer companies. The process industries saw computer process control as a means of automation, and the computer companies saw a potential market for their products.

The available computers in the late 1950s were not reliable, and most of the subsequent process control installations operated by either printing out instructions for the operator or by making adjustments in the set points of analog controllers, thereby reducing the risk of process downtime due to computer problems. The latter mode of operation was called *set point control*. By March 1961, a total of 37 computer process control systems had been installed. Much experience was gained from these early installations. The *interrupt feature* (Section 4.3.2), by which the computer suspends current program execution to quickly respond to a process need, was developed during this period.

The first *direct digital control* (DDC) system (Section 4.4.2), in which certain analog devices are replaced by the computer, was installed by Imperial Chemical Industries in England in 1962. In this implementation, 224 process variables were measured, and 129 actuators (valves) were controlled. Improvements in DDC technology were made, and additional systems were installed during the 1960s. Advantages of DDC noted during this time included: (1) cost savings from elimination of analog instrumentation for large systems, (2) simplified operator display panels, and (3) flexibility through reprogramming capability.

Computer technology was advancing, leading to the development of the *minicomputer* in the late 1960s. Process control applications were easier to justify using these smaller, less-expensive computers. Development of the *microcomputer* in the early 1970s continued this trend. Lower cost process control hardware and interface equipment (such as analog-to-digital converters) were becoming available due to the larger markets made possible by low-cost computer controllers.

Most of the developments in computer process control up to this time were biased toward the process industries rather than discrete part and product manufacturing. Just as analog devices had been used to automate process industry operations, relay banks were widely used to satisfy the discrete process control (ON/OFF) requirements in manufacturing automation. The *programmable logic controller* (PLC), a control computer designed for discrete process control, was developed in the early 1970s (Historical Note 8.1). Also, *numerical control* (NC) machine tools (Historical Note 6.1) and industrial *robots* (Historical Note 7.1), technologies that preceded computer control, started to be designed with digital computers as their controllers.

The availability of low-cost microcomputers and programmable logic controllers resulted in a growing number of installations in which a process was controlled by multiple computers networked together. The term *distributed control* was used for this kind of system, the first of which was a product offered by Honeywell in 1975. In the early 1990s, *personal computers* (PCs) began being utilized on the factory floor, sometimes to provide scheduling and engineering data to shop floor personnel, in other cases as the operator interface to processes controlled by PLCs. Today, a growing number of PCs are being used to directly control manufacturing operations.

Let us consider the requirements placed on the computer in industrial control applications. We then examine the capabilities that have been incorporated into the control computer to address these requirements, and finally we observe the hierarchical structure of the functions performed by the control computer.

### 4.3.1 Control Requirements

Whether the application involves continuous control, discrete control, or both, there are certain basic requirements that tend to be common to nearly all process control applications. By and large, they are concerned with the need to communicate and interact with the process on a real-time basis. A *real-time controller* is able to respond to the process within a short enough time period that process performance is not degraded. Factors that determine whether a computer controller can operate in real-time include: (1) the speed of the controller's central processing unit (CPU) and its interfaces, (2) the controller's operating system, (3) the design of the application software, and (4) the number of different input/output events to which the controller is designed to respond. Real-time control usually requires the controller to be capable of *multitasking*, which means coping with multiple tasks concurrently without the tasks interfering with one another.

There are two basic requirements that must be managed by the controller to achieve real-time control:

1. *Process-initiated interrupts.* The controller must be able to respond to incoming signals from the process. Depending on the relative importance of the signals, the computer may need to interrupt execution of a current program to service a higher priority need of the process. A process-initiated interrupt is often triggered by abnormal operating conditions, indicating that some corrective action must be taken promptly.
2. *Timer-initiated actions.* The controller must be capable of executing certain actions at specified points in time. Timer-initiated actions can be generated at regular time intervals, ranging from very low values (e.g., 100 $\mu s$) to several minutes, or they can be generated at distinct points in time. Typical timer-initiated actions in process control include: (1) scanning sensor values from the process at regular sampling intervals, (2) turning on and off switches, motors, and other binary devices associated with the process at discrete points in time during the work cycle, (3) displaying performance data on the operator's console at regular times during a production run, and (4) recomputing optimal process parameter values at specified times.

These two requirements correspond to the two types of changes mentioned previously in the context of discrete control systems: (1) event-driven changes and (2) time-driven changes.

In addition to these basic requirements, the control computer must also deal with other types of interruptions and events. These include:

3. *Computer commands to process.* In addition to incoming signals from the process, the control computer must be able to send control signals to the process to accom-

plish a corrective action. These output signals may actuate a certain hardware device or readjust a set point in a control loop.

4. *System- and program-initiated events.* These are events related to the computer system itself. They are similar to the kinds of computer operations associated with business and engineering applications of computers. A *system-initiated event* involves communications among computers and peripheral devices linked together in a network. In these multiple computer networks, feedback signals, control commands, and other data must be transferred back and forth among the computers in the overall control of the process. A *program-initiated event* is when some non-process-related action is called for in the program, such as the printing or display of reports on a printer or monitor. In process control, system- and program-initiated events generally occupy a low level of priority compared with process interrupts, commands to the process, and timer-initiated events.
5. *Operator-initiated events.* Finally, the control computer must be able to accept input from operating personnel. Operator-initiated events include: (1) entering new programs; (2) editing existing programs; (3) entering customer data, order number, or startup instructions for the next production run; (4) request for process data; and (5) emergency stop.

### 4.3.2 Capabilities of Computer Control

The above requirements can be satisfied by providing the controller with certain capabilities that allow it to interact on a real-time basis with the process and the operator. The capabilities are: (1) polling, (2) interlocks, (3) interrupt system, and (4) exception handling.

*Polling (Data Sampling).* In computer process control, *polling* refers to the periodic sampling of data that indicates the status of the process. When the data consist of a continuous analog signal, sampling means that the continuous signal is substituted with a series of numerical values that represent the continuous signal at discrete moments in time. The same kind of substitution holds for discrete data, except that the number of possible numerical values the data can take on is more limited—certainly the case with binary data. We discuss the techniques by which continuous and discrete data are entered into and transmitted from the computer in Chapter 5. Other names used for polling include *sampling* and *scanning*.

In some systems, the polling procedure simply requests whether any changes have occurred in the data since the last polling cycle and then collects only the new data from the process. This tends to shorten the cycle time required for polling. Issues related to polling include:

1. *Polling frequency.* This is the reciprocal of the time interval between when data are collected
2. *Polling order.* The polling order is the sequence in which the different data collection points of the process are sampled.
3. *Polling format.* This refers to the manner in which the sampling procedure is designed. The alternatives include: (a) entering all new data from all sensors and other devices every polling cycle; (b) updating the control system only with data that have changed since the last polling cycle; or (c) using *high-level and low-level scanning*, or *conditional scanning*, in which only certain key data are normally collected each

polling cycle (high-level scanning), but if the data indicates some irregularity in the process, a low-level scan is undertaken to collect more-complete data to ascertain the source of the irregularity.

These issues become increasingly critical with very dynamic processes in which changes in process status occur rapidly.

*Interlocks.* An *interlock* is a safeguard mechanism for coordinating the activities of two or more devices and preventing one device from interfering with the other(s). In process control, interlocks provide a means by which the controller is able to sequence the activities in a work cell, ensuring that the actions of one piece of equipment are completed before the next piece of equipment begins its activity. Interlocks work by regulating the flow of control signals back and forth between the controller and the external devices.

There are two types of interlocks, input interlocks and output interlocks, where input and output are defined relative to the controller. An *input interlock* is a signal that originates from an external device (e.g., a limit switch, sensor, or production machine) and is sent to the controller. Input interlocks can be used for either of the following functions:

1. To *proceed* with the execution of the work cycle program. For example, the production machine communicates a signal to the controller that it has completed its processing of the part. This signal constitutes an input interlock indicating that the controller can now proceed to the next step in the work cycle, which is to unload the part.
2. To *interrupt* the execution of the work cycle program. For example, while unloading the part from the machine, the robot accidentally drops the part. The sensor in its gripper transmits an interlock signal to the controller indicating that the regular work cycle sequence should be interrupted until corrective action is taken.

An *output interlock* is a signal sent from the controller to some external device. It is used to control the activities of each external device and to coordinate its operation with that of the other equipment in the cell. For example, an output interlock can be used to send a control signal to a production machine to begin its automatic cycle after the workpart has been loaded into it.

*Interrupt System.* Closely related to interlocks is the interrupt system. As suggested by our discussion of input interlocks, there are occasions when it becomes necessary for the process or operator to interrupt the regular controller operation to deal with more-pressing matters. All computer systems are capable of being interrupted; if nothing else, by turning off the power. A more-sophisticated interrupt system is required for process control applications. An *interrupt system* is a computer control feature that permits the execution of the current program to be suspended to execute another program or subroutine in response to an incoming signal indicating a higher priority event. Upon receipt of an interrupt signal, the computer system transfers to a predetermined subroutine designed to deal with the specific interrupt. The status of the current program is remembered so that its execution can be resumed when servicing of the interrupt has been completed.

Interrupt conditions can be classified as internal or external. *Internal interrupts* are generated by the computer system itself. These include timer-initiated events, such as polling of data from sensors connected to the process, or sending commands to the process at specific points in clock time. System- and program-initiated interrupts are also classified as

**TABLE 4.4** Possible Priority Levels in an Interrupt System

| *Priority Level* | *Computer Function* |
|---|---|
| 1 (lowest priority) | Most operator inputs |
| 2 | System and program interrupts |
| 3 | Timer interrupts |
| 4 | Commands to process |
| 5 | Process interrupts |
| 6 (highest priority) | Emergency stop (operator input) |

internal because they are generated within the system. *External interrupts* are external to the computer system; they include process-initiated interrupts and operator inputs.

An interrupt system is required in process control because it is essential that more-important programs (ones with higher priority) be executed before less-important programs (ones with lower priorities). The system designer must decide what level of priority should be attached to each control function. A higher priority function can interrupt a lower priority function. A function at a given priority level cannot interrupt a function at the same priority level. The number of priority levels and the relative importance of the functions depend on the requirements of the individual process control situation. For example, emergency shutdown of a process because of safety hazards would occupy a very high priority level, even though it may be an operator-initiated interrupt. Most operator inputs would have low priorities.

One possible organization of priority rankings for process control functions is shown in Table 4.4. Of course, the priority system may have more or less than the number of levels shown here, depending on the control situation. For example, some process interrupts may be more important than others, and some system interrupts may take precedence over certain process interrupts, thus requiring more than the six levels indicated in our table.

To respond to the various levels of priority defined for a given control application, an interrupt system can have one or more interrupt levels. A *single-level interrupt system* has only two modes of operation: normal mode and interrupt mode. The normal mode can be interrupted, but the interrupt mode cannot. This means that overlapping interrupts are serviced on a first-come, first-served basis, which could have potentially hazardous consequences if an important process interrupt was forced to wait its turn while a series of less-important operator and system interrupts were serviced. A *multilevel interrupt system* has a normal operating mode plus more than one interrupt level. The normal mode can be interrupted by any interrupt level, but the interrupt levels have relative priorities that determine which functions can interrupt others. Example 4.1 illustrates the difference between the single-level and multilevel interrupt systems.

**EXAMPLE 4.1 Single-Level Versus Multilevel Interrupt Systems**

Three interrupts representing tasks of three different priority levels arrive for service in the reverse order of their respective priorities. Task 1 with the lowest priority, arrives first. Shortly later, higher priority Task 2 arrives. And shortly later, highest priority Task 3 arrives. How would the computer control system respond under (a) a single-level interrupt system and (b) a multilevel interrupt system?

***Solution:*** The response of the system for the two interrupt systems is shown in Figure 4.6.

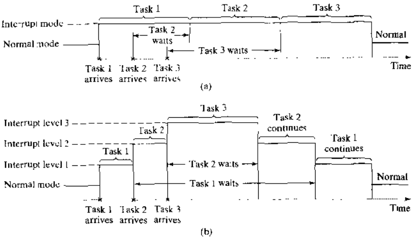



**Figure 4.6** Response of the computer control system in Example 4.1 to three different priority interrupts for (a) a single-level interrupt system and (b) a multilevel interrupt system. Task 3 has the highest level priority. Task 1 has the lowest level. Tasks arrive for servicing in the order 1, then 2, then 3. In (a), Task 3 must wait until Tasks 1 and 2 have been completed. In (b), Task 3 interrupts execution of Task 2, whose priority level allowed it to interrupt Task 1.

*Exception Handling.* In process control, an *exception* is an event that is outside the normal or desired operation of the process or control system. Dealing with the exception is an essential function in industrial process control and generally occupies a major portion of the control algorithm. The need for exception handling may be indicated through the normal polling procedure or by the interrupt system. Examples of events that may invoke exception handling routines include:

- product quality problem
- process variables operating outside their normal ranges
- shortage of raw materials or supplies necessary to sustain the process
- hazardous conditions such as a fire
- controller malfunction

In effect, exception handling is a form of error detection and recovery, discussed in the context of advanced automation capabilities (Section 3.2.3).

### 4.3.3 Levels of Industrial Process Control

In general, industrial control systems possess a hierarchical structure consisting of multiple levels of functions, similar to our levels of automation described in the previous chapter (Table 4.2). *ANSI/ISA-S88.01-1995*[1] [1] divides process control functions into three

[1] This standard [1] was prepared for batch process control but most of the concepts and terminology are applicable to discrete parts manufacturing and continuous process control.

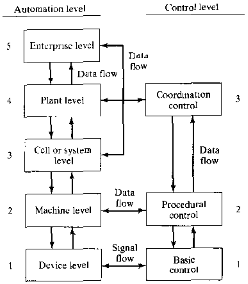



**Figure 4.7** Mapping of *ANSI/ISA S88.01-1995* [1] control levels into the levels of automation in a factory.

levels: (1) basic control, (2) procedural control, and (3) coordination control. These control levels map into our automation hierarchy as shown in Figure 4.7. We now describe the three control levels, perhaps adapting the standard to fit our own models of continuous and discrete control (the reader is referred to the original standard [1], available from the Instrument Society of America).

*Basic Control.* This is the lowest level of control defined in the standard, corresponding to the device level in our automation hierarchy. In the process industries, this level is concerned with feedback control in the basic control loops. In the discrete manufacturing industries, basic control is concerned with directing the servomotors and other actuators of the production machines. Basic control includes functions such as feedback control, polling, interlocking, interrupts, and certain exception handling actions. Basic control functions may be activated, deactivated, or modified by either of the higher control levels (procedural or coordination control) or by operator commands.

*Procedural Control.* This intermediate level of control maps into regulatory control of unit operations in the process industries and into the machine level in discrete manufacturing automation (Table 4.2). In continuous control, procedural control functions include using data collected during polling to compute some process parameter value, changing setpoints and other process parameters in basic control, and changing controller gain constants. In discrete control, the functions are concerned with executing the work cycle program, that is, directing the machine to perform actions in an ordered sequence to accomplish some productive task. Procedural control may also involve executing error detection and recovery procedures and making decisions regarding safety hazards that occur during the process.

*Coordination Control.* This is the highest level in the control hierarchy in the ANSI/ISA standard. It corresponds to the supervisory level in the process industries and the cell or system level in discrete manufacturing. It is also likely to involve the plant and possibly the enterprise levels of automation. Coordination control initiates, directs, or alters the execution of programs at the procedural control level. Its actions and outcomes change over time, as in procedural control, but its control algorithms are not structured for a specific process-oriented task. It is more reactive and adaptive. Functions of coordination control at the cell level include: coordinating the actions of groups of equipment or machines, coordinating material handling activities between machines in a cell or system, allocating production orders to machines in the cell, and selecting among alternative work cycle programs.

At the plant and enterprise levels, coordination control is concerned with manufacturing support functions, including production planning and scheduling; coordinating common resources, such as equipment used in more than one production cell; and supervising availability, utilization, and capacity of equipment. These control functions are accomplished through the company's integrated computer and information system.

## 4.4 FORMS OF COMPUTER PROCESS CONTROL

There are various ways in which computers can be used to control a process. First, we can distinguish between process monitoring and process control as illustrated in Figure 4.8. In *process monitoring*, the computer is used to simply collect data from the process, while in *process control*, the computer regulates the process. In some process control implementations, certain actions are implemented by the control computer that require no feedback data to be collected from the process. This is open-loop control. However, in most cases, some form of feedback or interlocking is required to ensure that the control instructions have been properly carried out. This more common situation is closed-loop control.

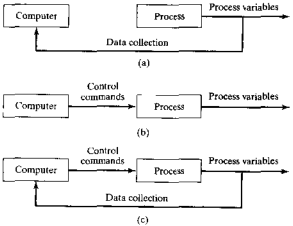



**Figure 4.8** (a) Process monitoring, (b) open-loop process control, and (c) closed-loop process control.

In this section, we survey the various forms of computer process monitoring and control, all but one of which are commonly used in industry today. The survey covers the following categories. (1) computer process monitoring, (2) direct digital control, (3) numerical control and robotics, (4) programmable logic controllers, (5) supervisory control, and (6) distributed control systems and personal computers. The second category, direct digital control, represents a transitory phase in the evolution of computer control technology. In its pure form, it is no longer used today. However, we briefly describe DDC to expose the opportunities it contributed. The sixth category, distributed control systems and personal computers, represents the most recent means of implementing computer process control.

### 4.4.1 Computer Process Monitoring

Computer process monitoring is one of the ways in which the computer can be interfaced with a process. *Computer process monitoring* involves the use of the computer to observe the process and associated equipment and to collect and record data from the operation. The computer is not used to directly control the process. Control remains in the hands of humans who use the data to guide them in managing and operating the process.

The data collected by the computer in computer process monitoring can generally be classified into three categories:

1. *Process data.* These are measured values of input parameters and output variables that indicate process performance. When the values are found to indicate a problem, the human operator takes corrective action.
2. *Equipment data.* These data indicate the status of the equipment in the work cell. Functions served by the data include monitoring machine utilization, scheduling tool changes, avoiding machine breakdowns, diagnosing equipment malfunctions, and planning preventive maintenance
3. *Product data.* Government regulations require certain manufacturing industries to collect and preserve production data on their products. The pharmaceutical and medical supply industries are prime examples. Computer monitoring is the most convenient means of satisfying these regulations. A firm may also want to collect product data for its own use.

Collecting data from factory operations can be accomplished by any of several means. Shop data can be entered by workers through manual terminals located throughout the plant or can be collected automatically by means of limit switches, sensor systems, bar code readers, or other devices. Sensors are described in Chapter 5 (Section 5.1). Bar codes and similar *automatic identification* technologies are discussed in Chapter 12. The collection and use of production data in factory operations for scheduling and tracking purposes is called *shop floor control*, explained in Chapter 26.

### 4.4.2 Direct Digital Control

Direct digital control was certainly one of the important steps in the development of computer process control. Let us briefly examine this computer control mode and its limitations, which motivated improvements leading to modern computer control technology. *Direct digital control* (DDC) is a computer process control system in which certain components in a conventional analog control system are replaced by the digital computer. The regulation of the process is accomplished by the digital computer on a time-shared, sampled-data basis rather than by the many individual analog components working in a dedicated continuous manner. With DDC, the computer calculates the desired values of the input parameters and set points, and these values are applied through a direct link to the process; hence the name "direct digital" control.

The difference between direct digital control and analog control can be seen by comparing Figures 4.9 and 4.10. The first figure shows the instrumentation for a typical analog control loop. The entire process would have many individual control loops, but only one is shown here. Typical hardware components of the analog control loop include the sensor and transducer, an instrument for displaying the output variable (such an instrument is not always included in the loop), some means for establishing the set point of the loop (shown as a dial in the figure, suggesting that the setting is determined by a human operator), a comparator (to compare set point with measured output variable), the analog controller, amplifier, and actuator that determines the input parameter to the process.

In the DDC system (Figure 4.10), some of the control loop components remain unchanged, including (probably) the sensor and transducer as well as the amplifier and actuator. Components likely to be replaced in DDC include the analog controller, recording

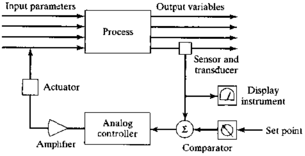



**Figure 4.9** A typical analog control loop.

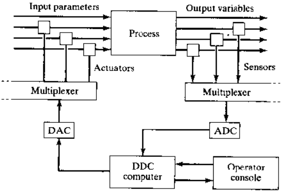



**Figure 4.10** Components of a DDC system.

and display instruments, set point dials, and comparator. New components in the loop include the digital computer, analog-to-digital and digital-to-analog converters (ADCs and DACs), and multiplexers to share data from different control loops with the same computer.

DDC was originally conceived as a more-efficient means of performing the same kinds of control actions as the analog components it replaced. However, the practice of simply using the digital computer to imitate the operation of analog controllers seems to have been a transitional phase in computer process control. Additional opportunities for the control computer were soon recognized, including:

- *More control options than traditional analog.* With digital computer control, it is possible to perform more-complex control algorithms than with the conventional proportional-integral-derivative control modes used by analog controllers; for example, on/off control or nonlinearities in the control functions can be implemented.
- *Integration and optimization of multiple loops.* This is the ability to integrate feedback measurements from multiple loops and to implement optimizing strategies to improve overall process performance.
- *Editing the control programs.* Using a digital computer makes it relatively easy to change the control algorithm if that becomes necessary by simply reprogramming the computer. Reprogramming the analog control loop is likely to require hardware changes that are more costly and less convenient.

These enhancements have rendered the original concept of direct digital control more or less obsolete. In addition, computer technology itself has progressed dramatically so that much smaller and less-expensive yet more-powerful computers are available for process control than the large mainframes available in the early 1960s. This has allowed computer process control to be economically justified for much smaller scale processes and equipment. It has also motivated the use of *distributed control systems,* in which a network of microcomputers is utilized to control a complex process consisting of multiple unit operations and/or machines.

### 4.4.3 Numerical Control and Robotics

Numerical control (NC) is another form of industrial computer control. It involves the use of the computer (again, a microcomputer) to direct a machine tool through a sequence of processing steps defined by a program of instructions that specifies the details of each step and their sequence. The distinctive feature of NC is control of the relative position of a tool with respect to the object (workpart) being processed. Computations must be made to determine the trajectory that must be followed by the cutting tool to shape the part geometry. Hence, NC requires the controller to execute not only sequence control but geometric calculations as well. Because of its importance in manufacturing automation and industrial control, we devote Chapter 6 to the topic of NC.

Closely related to NC is industrial robotics, in which the joints of the manipulator (robot arm) are controlled to move the end-of-arm through a sequence of positions during the work cycle. As in NC, the controller must perform calculations during the work cycle to implement motion interpolation, feedback control, and other functions. In addition, a robotic work cell usually includes other equipment besides the robot, and the activities of the other equipment in the work cell must be coordinated with those of the robot. This coordination is achieved using interlocks. We discuss industrial robotics in Chapter 7.

### 4.4.4 Programmable Logic Controllers

Programmable logic controllers (PLCs) were introduced around 1970 as an improvement on the electromechanical relay controllers used at the time to implement discrete control in the discrete manufacturing industries. The evolution of PLCs has been facilitated by advances in computer technology, and present-day PLCs are capable of much more than the 1970s-era controllers. We can define a modern *programmable logic controller* as a microprocessor-based controller that uses stored instructions in programmable memory to implement logic, sequencing, timing, counting, and arithmetic control functions for controlling machines and processes. Today's PLCs are used for both continuous control and discrete control applications in both the process industries and discrete manufacturing. We cover PLCs and the kinds of control they are used to implement in Chapter 8.

### 4.4.5 Supervisory Control

The term supervisory control is usually associated with the process industries, but the concept applies equally well to discrete manufacturing automation, where it corresponds to the cell or system level. Thus, supervisory control coincides closely with coordination control in the ANSI/ISA-S88 Standard (Section 4.3.3). Supervisory control represents a higher level of control than the preceding forms of process control that we have surveyed in this section (i.e., DDC, NC, and PLCs). In general, these other types of control systems are interfaced directly to the process. By contrast, supervisory control is often superimposed on these process-level control systems and directs their operations. The relationship between supervisory control and the process-level control techniques is illustrated in Figure 4.11.

In the context of the process industries, *supervisory control* denotes a control system that manages the activities of a number of integrated unit operations to achieve certain economic objectives for the process. In some applications, supervisory control is not much more than regulatory control or feedforward control. In other applications, the supervisory control system is designed to implement optimal or adaptive control. It seeks to optimize some well-defined objective function, which is usually based on economic criteria such as yield, production rate, cost, quality, or other objectives that pertain to process performance.

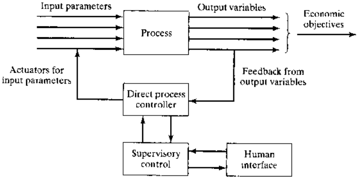



**Figure 4.11** Supervisory control superimposed on other process-level control systems.

In the context of discrete manufacturing, supervisory control can be defined as the control system that directs and coordinates the activities of several interacting pieces of equipment in a manufacturing cell or system, such as a group of machines interconnected by a material handling system. Again, the objectives of supervisory control are motivated by economic considerations. The control objectives might include: to minimize part or product costs by determining optimum operating conditions, to maximize machine utilization through efficient scheduling, to minimize tooling costs by tracking tool lives and scheduling tool changes, and similar supervisory goals. In NC, supervisory control takes the form of *direct numerical control* (Section 6.3), now more commonly referred to as *distributed numerical control*.

It is tempting to conceptualize a supervisory control system as being completely automated, that is, implemented so that the system operates with no human interference or assistance. But in virtually all cases, supervisory control systems are designed to allow for interaction with human operators, and the responsibility for control is shared between the controller and the human. The relative proportions of responsibility differ, depending on the application.

### 4.4.6 Distributed Control Systems and Personal Computers

Development of the microprocessor has had a significant impact on the design of control systems. In this section, we consider two related aspects of this impact: (1) distributed control systems and (2) the use of personal computers in control systems. Before discussing these topics, let us provide a brief background of the microprocessor and its uses.

***Microprocessors.*** A *microprocessor* is an integrated circuit chip containing the digital logic elements needed to perform arithmetic calculations, execute instructions stored in memory, and carry out other data processing tasks. The digital logic elements and their interconnections in the circuit form a built-in set of instructions that determines the function of the microprocessor. A very common function is to serve as the central processing unit (CPU) of a microcomputer. By definition, a *microcomputer* is simply a small digital computer whose CPU is a microprocessor and which performs the basic functions of a computer. These basic functions consist of data manipulation and computation, carried out according to software stored in memory to accomplish user applications. The most familiar and widely used example of a microcomputer is the *personal computer* (PC), usually programmed with software for business and personal applications.

Microprocessors are also widely used as controllers in industrial control systems. An important distinction between a PC and a controller is that the controller must be capable of interacting with the process being controlled, as discussed in Section 4.3.1. It must be able to accept data from sensors connected to the process, and it must be able to send command signals to actuators attached to the process. These transactions are made possible by providing the controller with an extensive input/output (I/O) capability and by designing its microprocessor so that it can make use of this I/O capability. The number and type of I/O ports are important specifications of a microprocessor-based controller. By type of I/O ports, we are referring to whether the type of data and signals communicated between the controller and the process are continuous or discrete. We discuss I/O techniques in Chapter 5. In contrast, PCs are usually specified on the basis of memory size and execution speed, and the microprocessors used in them are designed with this in mind.

*Distributed Control Systems.* With the development of the microprocessor, it became feasible to connect multiple microcomputers together to share and distribute the process control workload. The term *distributed control system* (DCS) is used to describe such a configuration, which consists of the following components and features [13]:

- Multiple *process control stations* located throughout the plant to control the individual loops and devices of the process.
- A *central control room* equipped with operator stations, where supervisory control of the plant is accomplished.
- *Local operator stations* distributed throughout the plant. This provides the DCS with redundancy. If a control failure occurs in the central control room, the local operator stations take over the central control functions. If a local operator station fails, the other local operator stations assume the functions of the failed station.
- All process and operator stations interact with each other by means of a *communications network*, or *data highway*, as it is often called.

These components are illustrated in a typical configuration of a distributed process control system presented in Figure 4.12. There are a number of benefits and advantages of the DCS: (1) A DCS can be installed for a given application in a very basic configuration, then enhanced and expanded as needed in the future; (2) since the system consists of multiple computers, this facilitates parallel multitasking; (3) because of its multiple computers, a DCS has built-in redundancy; (4) control cabling is reduced compared with a central computer control configuration; and (5) networking provides process information throughout the enterprise for more-efficient plant and process management.

Development of DCSs started around 1970. One of the first commercial systems was Honeywell's TDC 2000, introduced in 1975 [2]. The first DCS applications were in the process industries. In the discrete manufacturing industries, programmable logic controllers were introduced about the same time. The concept of distributed control applies equally well to PLCs; that is, multiple PLCs located throughout a factory to control individual

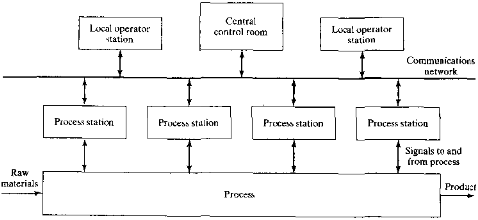



**Figure 4.12** Distributed control system.

pieces of equipment but integrated by means of a common communications network. Introduction of the PC shortly after the DCS and PLC, and its subsequent increase in computing power and reduction in cost over the years, have stimulated a significant growth in the adoption of PC-based DCSs for process control applications.

*PCs in Process Control.* Today, PCs dominate the computer world. They have become the standard tool by which business is conducted, whether in manufacturing or in the service sector. Thus, it is no surprise that PCs are being used in growing numbers in process control applications. Two basic categories of PC applications in process control can be distinguished: (1) operator interface and (2) direct control. Whether used as the operator interface or for direct control, PCs are likely to be networked with other computers to create DCSs.

When used as the *operator interface*, the PC is interfaced to one or more PLCs or other devices (possibly other microcomputers) that directly control the process. Personal computers have been used to perform the operator interface function since the early 1980s. In this function, the computer performs certain monitoring and supervisory control functions, but it does not directly control the process. Advantages of using a PC as only the operator interface include: (1) The PC provides a user-friendly interface for the operator; (2) the PC can be used for all of the conventional computing and data processing functions that PCs traditionally perform; (3) the PLC or other device that is directly controlling the process is isolated from the PC, so a PC failure will not disrupt control of the process; and (4) the computer can be easily upgraded as PC technology advances and capabilities improve, while the PLC control software and connections with the process can remain in place.

*Direct control* means that the PC is interfaced directly to the process and controls its operations in real time. The traditional thinking has been that it is too risky to permit the PC to directly control the production operation. If the computer were to fail, the uncontrolled operation might stop working, produce a defective product, or become unsafe. Another factor is that conventional PCs, equipped with the usual business-oriented operating system and applications software, are designed for computing and data processing functions, not for process control. They are not intended to be interfaced with an external process in the manner necessary for real-time process control. Finally, most PCs are designed to be used in an office environment, not in the harsh factory atmosphere.

Recent advances in both PC technology and available software have challenged this traditional thinking. Starting in the early 1990s, PCs have been installed at an accelerating pace for direct control of industrial processes. Several factors can be identified that have enabled this trend:

- widespread *familiarity with PCs*
- availability of *high-performance PCs*
- trend toward *open architecture* philosophy in control systems design
- Microsoft's *Windows NT*™ (the latest version is Windows 2000™) as the operating system of choice.

The PC is widely known to the general population in the United States and other industrialized nations. A large and growing number of individuals own them. Many others who do not personally own them use them at work. User-friendly software for the home and business has certainly contributed to the popularity of PCs. There is a growing expectation by workers that they be provided with a computer in their workplace, even if that workplace is in the factory.

High-performance CPUs are available in the latest PCs, and the next generation of PCs will be even more powerful. For the last 20 years, it has been observed that processor speed doubles every 12–18 months. This trend, called *Moore's Law*, is expected to continue for at least another 15 years. At the same time, processor costs have decreased by several orders of magnitude, and this trend is expected to continue as well. The projected results are seen in Table 4.5, in which performance is measured in millions of instructions per second (mips), and cost is measured in dollars per mips. In the early-to-mid 1990s, PC performance surpassed that of most digital signal processors and other components used in proprietary controllers [16]. New generations of PCs are currently being introduced more rapidly than PLCs are, allowing cycle speeds of PCs to exceed those of the latest PLCs.

Another important factor in the use of PCs for control applications is the availability of control products designed with an *open architecture* philosophy, in which vendors of control hardware and software agree to comply with published standards that allow their products to be interoperable. This means that components from different vendors can be interconnected in the same control system. The traditional philosophy had been for each vendor to design proprietary systems, requiring the user to purchase the complete hardware and software package from one supplier. Open architecture allows the user a wider choice of products in the design of a given process control system, including the PCs used in the system.

For process control applications, the PC's operating system must facilitate real-time control and networking. At time of writing, Microsoft's *Windows NT*™ (now Windows 2000™) is being adopted increasingly as the operating system of choice for control and networking applications. Windows NT provides a multitasking environment with sufficient security, reliability, and fault tolerance for many if not most process control applications. At the same time, it provides the user friendliness of the desktop PC and most of the power of an engineering workstation. Installed in the factory, a PC equipped with Windows NT can perform multiple functions simultaneously, such as data logging, trend analysis, tool life monitoring, and displaying an animated view of the process as it proceeds, all while reserving a portion of its CPU capacity for direct control of the process.

Not all control engineers agree that Windows NT can be used for critical process control tasks. For applications requiring microsecond response times, such as real-time motion control for machine tools, many control engineers are reluctant to rely on Windows NT. A common solution to this dilemma is to install a dedicated coprocessor in the PC. The motion servo loops are controlled in real time using the coprocessor motion control card, but the overall operating system is Windows NT.

**TABLE 4.5** Trends in Processor Performance and Cost: Moore's Law

| *Year* | *Mips** | *Cost per Mips ($)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1978 | 125 | 9,600.00 |
| 1998 | 333 | 8.00 |
| 2011 | 100,000 | .02 |

* Mips = millions of instructions per second.

*Source:* Studebaker [18].

Regarding the factory environment issue, this can be addressed by using industrial-grade PC's, which are equipped with enclosures designed for the rugged plant environment. Compared with the previously discussed PC/PLC configuration, in which the PC is used only as the operator interface, there is a cost savings from installing one PC for direct control rather than a PC plus a PLC. A related issue is data integration: Setting up a data link between a PC and a PLC is more complex than when the data are all in one PC.

*Enterprise-Wide Integration of Factory Data.* The most recent progression in PC-based distributed control is enterprise-wide integration of factory operations data, as depicted in Figure 4.13. This is a trend that is consistent with modern information management and worker empowerment philosophies. These philosophies assume fewer levels of company management and greater responsibilities for front-line workers in sales, order scheduling, and production. The networking technologies that allow such integration are available. Windows 2000™ provides a number of built-in and optional features for connecting the industrial control system in the factory to enterprise-wide business systems and supporting data exchange between various applications (e.g., allowing data collected in the plant to be used in analysis packages, such as Excel spreadsheets). Following are some of the capabilities that are enabled by making process data available throughout the enterprise:

1. Managers can have more direct access to factory floor operations.
2. Production planners can use the most current data on times and production rates in scheduling future orders.

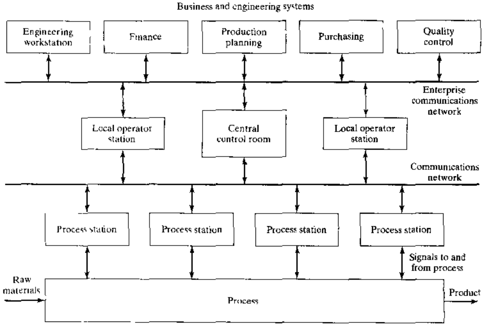



**Figure 4.13** Enterprise-wide PC-based DCS.

3. Sales personnel can provide realistic estimates on delivery dates to customers, based on current shop loading.
4. Order trackers are able to provide inquiring customers with current status information on their orders.
5. Quality control personnel are made aware of real or potential quality problems on current orders, based on access to quality performance histories from previous orders.
6. Cost accounting has access to the most recent production cost data.
7. Production personnel can access part and product design details to clarify ambiguities and do their job more effectively.

## REFERENCES

[1] AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD, *ANSI/ISA-S88.01, Batch Control, Part 1: Models and Terminology*, Instrument Society of America, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, 1995.

[2] ASTROM, K. J., and WITTENMARK, B., *Computer-Controlled Systems-Theory and Design*, Third Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1997.

[3] BATESON, R. N., *Introduction to Control System Technology*, Sixth Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1999.

[4] BOUCHER, T. O., *Computer Automation in Manufacturing*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1996.

[5] CAWLFIELD, D., "PC-based direct control flattens control hierarchy, opens information flow," *Instrumentation & Control Systems*, September 1997, pp 61–67.

[6] CLARK, D. C., "A case for Windows NT in distributed process control applications," *Instrumentation & Control Systems*, September 1997, pp 41–50.

[7] CLEVELAND, P., "Windows NT for real-time control: Which way to go?" *Instrumentation and Control Systems*, November 1997, pp. 63–68.

[8] GROOVER, M. P., "Industrial Control Systems," *Maynard's Industrial Engineering Handbook*, Fifth Edition, Kjell Zandin, Editor, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, (forthcoming, 2001).

[9] HIRSH, D., "Acquiring and sharing data seamlessly," *Instrumentation and Control Systems*, October 1997, pp. 25–35.

[10] JONES, C. T., and L. A. BRYAN, *Programmable Controllers-Concepts and Applications*, International Programmable Controls, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, 1983.

[11] *MicroMentor-Understanding and Applying Micro Programmable Controllers*, ALLEN-BRADLEY COMPANY, INC., 1995.

[12] OLSSON, G., and G. PIANI, *Computer Systems for Automation and Control*, Prentice Hall, London, 1992.

[13] PLATT, G., *Process Control: A Primer for the Nonspecialist and the Newcomer*, Second Edition, Instrument Society of America, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, 1998.

[14] POLISCHUK, T., "PCs are in control, but not everywhere," *Instrumentation and Control Systems*, March 1998, pp. 25–36.

[15] RULLAN, A., "Programmable Logic Controllers versus Personal Computers for Process Control," *Computers and Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 33, Nos. 1–2, 1997, pp. 421–424.

[16] SPROW, E., "PC-based Controls: Part 1, The Opportunities," *Machine Shop Guide*, October 1998, pp. 28–36.

[17] STOEVER, K., "21 st Century Manufacturing: Control Systems and the Internet," *Term Report*, MSE 427, Manufacturing Systems Engineering Program, Lehigh University, April 1998.

[18] STUDEBAKER, P., "The Top 10 Trends in Process Control," *Control*, April 1998.

chapter 5

# Sensors, Actuators, and Other Control System Components

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



To implement process control, the computer must collect data from and transmit signals to the production process. In Section 4.1.2, process variables and parameters were classified as either continuous or discrete, with several subcategories existing in the discrete class. The digital computer operates on digital (binary) data, whereas at least some of the data from the process are continuous (analog). Accommodations for this difference must be made in the computer-process interface. In this chapter, we examine the components required to implement this interface. The components are:

1. sensors for measuring continuous and discrete process variables
2. actuators that drive continuous and discrete process parameters
3. devices that convert continuous analog signals to digital data
4. devices that convert digital data into analog signals
5. input/output devices for discrete data.

**TABLE 5.1** Categories of Computer Input/Output Interface for the Different Types of Process Parameters and Variables

| *Type of Data from/to Process* | *Input Interface to Computer* | *Output Interface from Computer* |
|---|---|---|
| Continuous analog signal | Analog-to-digital converter | Digital-to-analog converter |
| Discrete data—binary (on/off) | Contact input | Contact output |
| Discrete data other than binary | Contact input array | Contact output array |
| Discrete pulse data | Pulse counters | Pulse generators |

The types of computer input/output interface for the different categories of process variables and parameters are summarized in Table 5.1.

## 5.1 SENSORS

A wide variety of measuring devices is available for collecting data from the manufacturing process for use in feedback control. In general, a measuring device is composed of two components: a sensor and a transducer. The *sensor* detects the physical variable of interest (such as temperature, force, or pressure). The *transducer* converts the physical variable into an alternative form (commonly electrical voltage), quantifying the variable in the conversion. The quantified signal can be interpreted as the value of the measured variable. In some cases, the sensor and transducer are the same device; for example, a limit switch that converts the mechanical movement of a lever to close an electrical contact.

To use any measuring device, a *calibration* procedure is required to establish the relationship between the physical variable to be measured and the converted output signal (such as voltage). The ease with which the calibration procedure can be accomplished is one criterion by which a measuring device can be evaluated. A list of desirable features of measuring devices for process control is presented in Table 5.2. Few measuring devices achieve perfect scores in all of these criteria, and the control system engineer must decide which features are the most important in selecting among the variety of available sensors and transducers for a given application.

Consistent with our classification of process variables, measuring devices can be classified into two basic categories: (1) analog and (2) discrete. An *analog* measuring device produces a continuous analog signal such as electrical voltage. Examples are thermocouples, strain gages, and potentiometers. The output signal from an analog measuring device must be converted to digital data by an analog-to-digital converter (Section 5.3). A *discrete* measuring device produces an output that can have only certain values. Discrete sensor devices are often divided into two categories: binary and digital. A *binary* measuring device produces an on/off signal. The most common devices operate by closing an electrical contact from a normally open position. Limit switches operate in this manner. Other binary sensors include photoelectric sensors and proximity switches. A *digital* measuring device produces a digital output signal, either in the form of a set of parallel status bits (e.g., a photoelectric sensor array) or a series of pulses that can be counted (e.g., an optical encoder). In either case, the digital signal represents the quantity to be measured. Digital transducers are finding increased use because of the ease with which they can be read when used as stand-alone measuring instruments and because of their compatibility with digital computer systems. Several of the common sensors and measuring devices used in industrial control systems are listed in Table 5.3.

**TABLE 5.2** Desirable Features for Selecting Measuring Devices Used in Automated Systems

| *Desirable Feature* | *Definition and Comments* |
|---|---|
| High accuracy | The measurement contains small systematic errors about the true value. |
| High precision | The random variability or noise in the measured value is low. |
| Wide operating range | The measuring device possesses high accuracy and precision over a wide range of values of the physical variable being measured. |
| High speed of response | The ability of the device to respond quickly to changes in the physical variable being measured. Ideally, the time lag would be zero. |
| Ease of calibration | Calibration of the measuring device should be quick and easy. |
| Minimum drift | Drift refers to the gradual loss in accuracy over time. High drift requires frequent recalibration of the measuring device. |
| High reliability | The device should not be subject to frequent malfunctions or failures during service. It must be capable of operating in the potentially harsh environment of the manufacturing process where it will be applied. |
| Low cost | The cost to purchase (or fabricate) and install the measuring device should be low relative to the value of the data provided by the sensor. |

**TABLE 5.3** Common Measuring Devices Used in Automation

| *Measuring Device* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| Accelerometer | Analog device used to measure vibration and shock. Can be based on various physical phenomena. |
| Ammeter | Analog device that measures the strength of an electrical current. |
| Bimetallic switch | Binary switch that uses bimetallic coil to open and close electrical contact as a result of temperature change. *Bimetallic coil* consists of two metal strips of different thermal expansion coefficients bonded together. |
| Bimetallic thermometer | Analog temperature measuring device consisting of bimetallic coil (see definition above) that changes shape in response to temperature change. Shape change of coil can be calibrated to indicate temperature. |
| DC tachometer | Analog device consisting of dc generator that produces electrical voltage proportional to rotational speed. |
| Dynamometer | Analog device used to measure force, power, or torque. Can be based on various physical phenomena (e.g., strain gage, piezoelectric effect). |
| Float transducer | Float attached to lever arm. Pivoting movement of lever arm can be used to measure liquid level in vessel (analog device) or to activate contact switch (binary device). |
| Fluid flow sensor | Analog measurement of liquid flow, usually based on pressure difference between flow in two pipes of different diameter. |
| Fluid flow switch | Binary switch similar to limit switch but activated by increase in fluid pressure rather than by contacting object. |
| Linear variable differential transformer | Analog position sensor consisting of primary coil opposite two secondary coils separated by a magnetic core. When primary coil is energized, induced voltage in secondary coil is function of core position. Can also be adapted to measure force or pressure. |

*(continued)*

**TABLE 5.3** *(continued)*

| *Measuring Device* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| Limit switch (mechanical) | Binary contact sensor in which lever arm or pushbutton closes (or opens) an electrical contact. |
| Manometer | Analog device used to measure pressure of gas or liquid. Based on comparison of known and unknown pressure forces. A *barometer* is a specific type of manometer used to measure atmospheric pressure. |
| Ohmmeter | Analog device that measures electrical resistance. |
| Optical encoder | Digital device used to measure position and/or speed, consisting of a slotted disk separating a light source from a photocell. As disk rotates, photocell senses light through slots as a series of pulses. Number and frequency of pulses are proportional (respectively) to position and speed of shaft connected to disk. Can be adapted for linear as well as rotational measurements. |
| Photoelectric sensor | Binary noncontact sensor (switch) consisting of emitter (light source) and receiver (photocell) triggered by interruption of light beam. Two common types: (1) *transmitted type,* in which object blocks light beam between emitter and receiver; and (2) *retroreflective type,* in which emitter and receiver are located in one device and beam is reflected off remote reflector except when object breaks the reflected light beam. |
| Photoelectric sensor array | Digital sensor consisting of linear series of photoelectric sensors. Array is designed to indicate height or size of object interrupting some but not all of the light beams. |
| Photometer | Analog sensor that measures illumination and light intensity. |
| Piezoelectric transducer | Analog device based on piezoelectric effect of certain materials (e.g., quartz) in which an electrical charge is produced when the material is deformed. Charge can be measured and is proportional to deformation. Can be used to measure force, pressure, and acceleration. |
| Potentiometer | Analog position sensor consisting of resistor and contact slider. Position of slider on resistor determines measured resistance. Available for both linear and rotational (angular) measurements. |
| Proximity switch | Binary noncontact sensor is triggered when nearby object induces changes in electromagnetic field. Two types: (1) inductive and (2) capacitive. |
| Radiation pyrometer | Analog temperature-measuring device that senses electromagnetic radiation in the visible and infrared range of spectrum. |
| Resistance-temperature detector | Analog temperature-measuring device based on increase in electrical resistance of a metallic material as temperature is increased. |
| Strain gage | Widely used analog sensor to measure force, torque, or pressure. Based on change in electrical resistance resulting from strain of a conducting material. |
| Thermistor | Analog temperature-measuring device based on decrease in electrical resistance of a semiconductor material as temperature is increased. |
| Thermocouple | Analog temperature-measuring device based on thermoelectric effect, in which the junction of two dissimilar metal wires emits a small voltage that is a function of the temperature of the junction. Common standard thermocouples include: chromel-alumel, iron-constantan, and chromel-constantan. |
| Ultrasonic range sensor | Time lapse between emission and reflection (from object) of high-frequency sound pulses is measured. Can be used to measure distance or simply to indicate presence of object. |

## 5.2 ACTUATORS

In industrial control systems, an *actuator* is a hardware device that converts a controller command signal into a change in a physical parameter. The change in the physical parameter is usually mechanical, such as position or velocity change. An actuator is a transducer, because it changes one type of physical quantity, say electric current, into another type of physical quantity, say rotational speed of an electric motor. The controller command signal is usually low level, and so an actuator may also include an *amplifier* to strengthen the signal sufficiently to drive the actuator.

A list of common actuators is presented in Table 5.4. Depending on the type of amplifier used, most actuators can be classified into one of three categories: (1) electrical, (2) hydraulic, and (3) pneumatic. *Electrical actuators* are most common; they include ac and dc motors of various kinds, stepper motors, and solenoids. Electrical actuators include both linear devices (output is linear displacement) and rotational devices (output is rotational displacement or velocity). *Hydraulic actuators* use hydraulic fluid to amplify the controller command signal. The available devices provide both linear and rotational motion. Hydraulic actuators are often specified when large forces are required. *Pneumatic actuators* use compressed air (typically "shop air" in the factory environment) as the driving power. Again, both linear and rotational pneumatic actuators are available. Because of the relatively low air pressures involved, these actuators are usually limited to relatively low force applications compared with hydraulic actuators.

**TABLE 5.4** Common Actuators Used in Automated Systems

| *Actuator* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| DC motor | Rotational electromagnetic motor. Input is direct current (dc). Very common servomotor in control systems. Rotary motion can be converted to linear motion using rack-and-pinion or ball screw. |
| Hydraulic piston | Piston inside cylinder exerts force and provides linear motion in response to hydraulic pressure. High force capability. |
| Induction motor (rotary) | Rotational electromagnetic motor. Input is alternating current (ac). Advantages compared with dc motor: lower cost, simpler construction, and more-convenient power supply. Rotary motion can be converted to linear motion using rack-and-pinion or ball screw. |
| Linear induction motor | Straight-line motion electromagnetic motor. Input is alternating current (ac). Advantages: high speed, high positioning accuracy, and long stroke capacity. |
| Pneumatic cylinder | Piston inside cylinder exerts force and provides linear motion in response to air pressure. |
| Relay switch | On-off switch opens or closes circuit in response to an electromagnetic force. |
| Solenoid | Two-position electromechanical assembly consists of core inside coil of wire. Core is usually held in one position by spring, but when coil is energized, core is forced to other position. Linear solenoid most common, but rotary solenoid available. |
| Stepping motor | Rotational electromagnetic motor. Output shaft rotates in direct proportion to pulses received. Advantages: high accuracy, easy implementation, compatible with digital signals, and can be used with open-loop control. Disadvantages: lower torque than dc motors, limited speed, and risk of missed pulse under load. Rotary motion can be converted to linear motion using rack-and-pinion or ball screw. |

## 5.3 ANALOG-TO-DIGITAL CONVERSION

Continuous analog signals from the process must be converted into digital values to be used by the computer, and digital data generated by the computer must be converted to analog signals to be used by analog actuators. We discuss analog-to-digital conversion in this section and digital-to-analog conversion in the following section.

The procedure for converting an analog signal from the process into digital form typically consists of the following steps and hardware devices, as illustrated in Figure 5.1:

1. *Sensor and transducer.* This is the measuring device that generates the analog signal (Section 5.1).
2. *Signal conditioning.* The continuous analog signal from the transducer may require conditioning to render it into more suitable form. Common signal conditioning steps include: (1) filtering to remove random noise and (2) conversion from one signal form to another, for example, converting a current into a voltage.
3. *Multiplexer.* The multiplexer is a switching device connected in series with each input channel from the process; it is used to time-share the analog-to-digital converter (ADC) among the input channels. The alternative is to have a separate ADC for each input channel, which would be costly for a large application with many input channels. Since the process variables need only be sampled periodically, using a multiplexer provides a cost-effective alternative to dedicated ADCs for each channel.
4. *Amplifier.* Amplifiers are used to scale the incoming signal up or down to be compatible with the range of the analog-to-digital converter.
5. *Analog-to-digital converter.* As its name indicates, the function of the ADC is to convert the incoming analog signal into its digital counterpart.

Let us consider the operation of the ADC, which is the heart of the conversion process. Analog-to-digital conversion occurs in three phases: (1) sampling, (2) quantization, and (3) encoding. *Sampling* consists of converting the continuous signal into a series of discrete analog signals at periodic intervals, as shown in Figure 5.2. In *quantization*, each discrete analog signal is assigned to one of a finite number of previously defined amplitude levels. The amplitude levels are discrete values of voltage ranging over the full scale of the ADC. In the *encoding* phase, the discrete amplitude levels obtained during quantization are converted into digital code, representing the amplitude level as a sequence of binary digits.

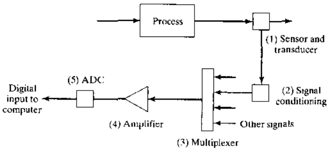



**Figure 5.1** Steps in analog-to-digital conversion of continuous analog signals from process.

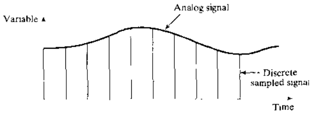



**Figure 5.2** Analog signal converted into series of discrete sampled data by analog-to-digital converter.

In selecting an analog-to-digital converter for a given application, the following factors are relevant: (1) sampling rate, (2) conversion time, (3) resolution, and (4) conversion method.

The *sampling rate* is the rate at which the continuous analog signals are sampled or polled. Higher sampling rates mean that the continuous waveform of the analog signal can be more closely approximated. When the incoming signals are multiplexed, the maximum possible sampling rate for each signal is the maximum sampling rate of the ADC divided by the number of channels that are processed through the multiplexer. For example, if the maximum sampling rate of the ADC is 1000 sample/sec, and there are 10 input channels through the multiplexer, then the maximum sampling rate for each input line is $1000/10 = 100$ sample/sec. (This ignores time losses due to multiplexer switching.)

The maximum possible sampling rate of an ADC is limited by the ADC conversion time. *Conversion time* of an ADC is the time interval between when an incoming signal is applied and when the digital value is determined by the quantization and encoding phases of the conversion procedure. Conversion time depends on (1) number of bits $n$ used to define the converted digital value; as $n$ is increased, conversion time increases (bad news), but resolution of the ADC improves (good news); and (2) type of conversion procedure used by the ADC.

The *resolution* of an ADC is the precision with which the analog signal is evaluated. Since the signal is represented in binary form, precision is determined by the number of quantization levels, which in turn is determined by the bit capacity of the ADC and the computer. The number of quantization levels is defined as follows:

$$N_q = 2^n \tag{5.1}$$

where $N_q$ = number of quantization levels; and $n$ = number of bits. Resolution can be defined in equation form as follows:

$$R_{ADC} = \frac{\text{Range}}{N_q - 1} = \frac{\text{Range}}{2^n - 1} \tag{5.2}$$

where $R_{ADC}$ = resolution of the ADC, also called the *quantization-level spacing*, which is the length of each quantization level; Range = full-scale range of the ADC, usually 0–10 V (the incoming signal must typically be amplified, either up or down, to this range); and $N_q$ = the number of quantization levels, defined in Eq. (5.1).

Quantization generates an error, because the quantized digital value is likely to be different from the true value of the analog signal. The maximum possible error occurs when the true value of the analog signal is on the borderline between two adjacent quantization levels; in this case, the error is one-half the quantization-level spacing. By this reasoning, the *quantization error* is defined:

$$\text{Quantization error} = \pm \frac{1}{2} R_{ADC} \tag{5.3}$$

Various *conversion methods* are available by which to encode an analog signal into its digital equivalent. Let us discuss one of the most common techniques, called the *successive approximation method*. In this method, a series of known trial voltages are successively compared to the input signal whose value is unknown. The number of trial voltages corresponds to the number of bits used to encode the signal. The first trial voltage is one-half the full-scale range of the ADC, and each successive trial voltage is one-half the preceding value. Comparing the remainder of the input voltage with each trial voltage yields a bit value of "1" if the input exceeds the trial value and "0" if the input is less than the trial voltage. The successive bit values, multiplied by their corresponding trial voltage values, provide the encoded value of the input signal. Let us illustrate the procedure with an example.

**EXAMPLE 5.1 Successive Approximation Method in Analog-to-Digital Conversion**

Suppose the input signal is 6.8 V. Use the successive approximation method to encode the signal for a 6-bit register for an ADC with a full-scale range of 10 V.

***Solution:*** The encoding procedure for the input of 6.8 V is illustrated in Figure 5.3. In the first trial, 6.8 V is compared with 5.0 V. Since $6.8 > 5.0$, the first bit value is 1. Comparing the remainder $(6.8 - 5.0) = 1.8$ V with the second trial voltage of 2.5 V yields a 0, since $1.8 < 2.5$. The third trial voltage $= 1.25$ V. Since $1.8 > 1.25$, the third bit value is 1. The rest of the 6 bits are evaluated in the figure to yield an encoded value $= 6.718$ V.

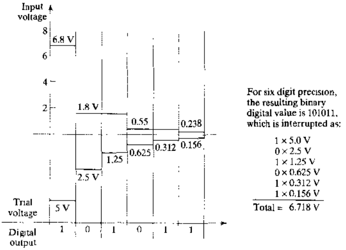



**Figure 5.3** Successive approximation method applied to Example 5.2.

## 5.4 DIGITAL-TO-ANALOG CONVERSION

The process performed by a digital-to-analog converter (DAC) is the reverse of the ADC process. The DAC transforms the digital output of the computer into a continuous signal to drive an analog actuator or other analog device. Digital-to-analog conversion consists of two steps: (1) *decoding*, in which the digital output of the computer is converted into a series of analog values at discrete moments in time, and (2) *data holding*, in which each successive value is changed into a continuous signal (usually electrical voltage) used to drive the analog actuator during the sampling interval.

Decoding is accomplished by transferring the digital value from the computer to a binary register that controls a reference voltage source. Each successive bit in the register controls one-half the voltage of the preceding bit, so that the level of the output voltage is determined by the status of the bits in the register. Thus, the output voltage is given by:

$$E_o = E_{ref}\{0.5B_1 + 0.25B_2 + 0.125B_3 + \cdots + (2^n)^{-1}B_n\} \tag{5.4}$$

where $E_o$ = output voltage of the decoding step (V); $E_{ref}$ = reference voltage (V); and $B_1, B_2, \ldots, B_n$ = status of successive bits in the register, 0 or 1; and $n$ = the number of bits in the binary register.

The objective in the data holding step is to approximate the envelope formed by the data series, as illustrated in Figure 5.4. Data holding devices are classified according to the order of the extrapolation calculation used to determine the voltage output during sampling intervals. The most common extrapolator is a *zero-order hold*, in which the output voltage between sampling instants is a sequence of step signals, as in Figure 5.4(a). The voltage function during the sampling interval is constant and can be expressed very simply as:

$$E(t) = E_o \tag{5.5}$$

where $E(t)$ = voltage as a function of time $t$ during the sampling interval (V), and $E_o$ = voltage output from the decoding step, Eq. (5.4).

The first-order data hold is less common than the zero-order hold, but it usually approximates the envelope of the sampled data values more closely. With the *first-order hold*, the voltage function $E(t)$ during the sampling interval changes with a constant slope determined by the two preceding $E_o$ values. Expressing this mathematically, we have

$$E(t) = E_o + \alpha t \tag{5.6}$$

where $\alpha$ = rate of change of $E(t)$, $E_o$ = output voltage from Eq. (5.4) at the start of the sampling interval (V), and $t$ = time (sec). The value of $\alpha$ is computed each sampling interval as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{E_o - E_o(-\tau)}{\tau} \tag{5.7}$$

where $E_o$ = output voltage from Eq. (5.4) at the start of the sampling interval (V), $\tau$ = time interval between sampling instants (sec), and $E_o(-\tau)$ = value of $E_o$ from Eq. (5.4) from the preceding sampling instant (removed backward in time by $\tau$, V). The result of the first-order hold is illustrated in Figure 5.4(b).

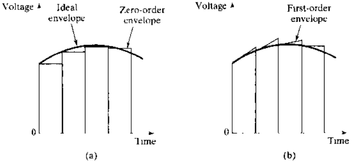



**Figure 5.4** Data holding step using (a) zero-order hold and (b) first-order hold.

**EXAMPLE 5.2 Zero-Order and First-Order Data Hold for Digital-to-Analog Converter**

A digital-to-analog converter uses a reference voltage of 100 V and has 6-bit precision. In three successive sampling instants, 0.5 sec apart, the data contained in the binary register are the following:

| *Instant* | *Binary Data* |
|---|---|
| 1 | 101000 |
| 2 | 101010 |
| 3 | 101101 |

Determine: (a) the decoder output values for the three sampling instants and the voltage signals between instants 2 and 3 for (b) a zero-order hold and (c) a first-order hold.

***Solution:*** (a) The decoder output values for the three sampling instants are computed according to Eq. (5.4) as follows:

$$\text{Instant 1, } E_o = 100\{0.5(1) + 0.25(0) + 0.125(1) + 0.0625(0) + 0.03125(0) + 0.015625(0)\}$$
$$= 62.50 \text{ V}$$

$$\text{Instant 2, } E_o = 100\{0.5(1) + 0.25(0) + 0.125(1) + 0.0625(0) + 0.03125(1) + 0.015625(0)\}$$
$$= 65.63 \text{ V}$$

$$\text{Instant 3, } E_o = 100\{0.5(1) + 0.25(0) + 0.125(1) + 0.0625(1) + 0.03125(0) + 0.015625(1)\}$$
$$= 70.31 \text{ V}$$

(b) The zero-order hold between sampling instants 2 and 3 yields a constant voltage $E(t) = 65.63$ V according to Eq. (5.5).

(c) The first-order hold yields a steadily increasing voltage. The slope $\alpha$ is given by Eq. (5.7):

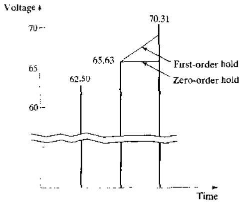



**Figure 5.5** Solution to Example 5.2.

$$\alpha = \frac{65.63 - 62.5}{0.5} = 6.25$$

and from Eq. (5.6), the voltage function between instants 2 and 3 is

$$E(t) = 65.63 + 6.25\,t$$

These values and functions are plotted in Figure 5.5. Note that the first-order hold more accurately anticipates the value of $E_o$ at sampling instant 3 than does the zero-order hold.

## 5.5 INPUT/OUTPUT DEVICES FOR DISCRETE DATA

Discrete data can be processed by a digital computer without needing the kinds of conversion procedures required for continuous analog signals. As indicated earlier, discrete data divide into three categories: (a) binary data, (b) discrete data other than binary, and (c) pulse data. The first two categories are communicated between the process and the computer by means of contact input and contact output interfaces, while pulse data are entered into and sent from the computer using pulse counters and pulse generators.

### 5.5.1 Contact Input/Output Interfaces

Contact interfaces are of two types: input and output. These interfaces read binary data from the process into the computer and send binary signals from the computer to the process, respectively. The terms input and output refer to the computer.

A *contact input interface* is a device by which binary data are read into the computer from some external source (e.g., the process). It consists of a series of simple contacts that can be either closed or open (on or off) to indicate the status of binary devices connected to the process such as limit switches (contact or no contact), valves (open or closed), or motor pushbuttons (on or off). The computer periodically scans the actual status of the contacts to update the values stored in memory.

The contact input interface can also be used to enter discrete data other than binary. This type of data is generated by devices such as a photoelectric sensor array and can be stored in a binary register consisting of multiple bits. The individual bit values (0 or 1) can be entered through the contact input interface. In effect, a certain number of contacts in the input interface are assigned to the binary register, the number of contacts being equal to the number of bits in the register. The binary number can be converted to a conventional base 10 number as needed in the application.

The *contact output interface* is the device that communicates on/off signals from the computer to the process. The contact positions are set in either of two states: ON or OFF. These positions are maintained until changed by the computer, perhaps in response to events in the process. In computer process control applications, hardware controlled by the contact output interface include alarms, indicator lights (on control panels), solenoids, and constant speed motors. The computer controls the sequence of ON/OFF activities in a work cycle through this contact output interface.

The contact output interface can be used to transmit a discrete data value other than binary by assigning an array of contacts in the interface for that purpose. The 0 and 1 values of the contacts in the array are evaluated as a group to determine the corresponding discrete number. In effect, this procedure is the reverse of that used by the contact input interface for discrete data other than binary.

### 5.5.2 Pulse Counters and Generators

Discrete data can also exist in the form of a series of pulses. Such data is generated by digital transducers such as optical encoders. Pulse data are also used to control certain devices such as stepper motors.

A *pulse counter* is a device used to convert a series of pulses (call it a *pulse train*, as shown in Figure 4.1) into a digital value. The value is then entered into the computer through its input channel. The most common type of pulse counter is one that counts electrical pulses. It is constructed using sequential logic gates, called *flip-flops*, which are electronic devices that possess memory capability and hence can be used to store the results of the counting procedure.

Pulse counters can be used for both counting and measurement applications. A typical counting application might be to add up the number of packages moving past a photoelectric sensor along a conveyor. A typical measurement application is to indicate the rotational speed of a shaft. One possible method to accomplish the measurement is for the shaft to be connected to an optical encoder, which generates a certain number of electrical pulses for each rotation. To determine rotational speed, the pulse counter measures the number of pulses received during a certain time period and divides this by the time period and by the number of pulses in each revolution of the encoder.

A *pulse generator* is a device that produces a series of electrical pulses whose total number and frequency are specified by the control computer. The total number of pulses might be used to drive the axis of a positioning system. The frequency of the pulse train, or pulse rate, could be used to control the rotational speed of a stepper motor. A pulse generator operates by repeatedly closing and opening an electrical contact, thus producing a sequence of discrete electrical pulses. The amplitude (voltage level) and frequency are designed to be compatible with the device being controlled.

## REFERENCES


[1] ASTROM, K. J., and WITTENMARK, B., *Computer-Controlled Systems - Theory and Design*, Third Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle Rover, New Jersey, 1997.

[2] BATESON, R. N., *Introduction to Control System Technology*, Sixth Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1999.

[3] BOUCHER, T. O., *Computer Automation in Manufacturing*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1996.

[4] DOEBLIN, E. O., *Measurement Systems: Applications and Design*, Fourth Edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1990.

[5] OLSSON, G., and G. PIANI, *Computer Systems for Automation and Control*, Prentice Hall, London, 1992.

[6] PESSEN, D. W., *Industrial Automation: Circuit Design and Components*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1989.


## PROBLEMS

**5.1** A continuous voltage signal is to be converted into its digital counterpart using an analog-to-digital converter. The maximum voltage range is ±30 V. The ADC has a 12-bit capacity. Determine: (a) number of quantization levels, (b) resolution, (c) the spacing of each quantization level, and the quantization error for this ADC.

**5.2** A voltage signal with a range of 0-115 V is to be converted by means of an ADC. Determine the minimum number of bits required to obtain a quantization error of (a) ±5 V maximum, (b) ±1 V maximum, (c) ±0.1 V maximum.

**5.3** A digital-to-analog converter uses a reference voltage of 120 V dc and has eight binary-digit precision. In one of the sampling instants, the data contained in the binary register = 01010101. If a zero-order hold is used to generate the output signal, determine the voltage level of that signal.

**5.4** A DAC uses a reference voltage of 80 V and has 6-bit precision. In four successive sampling periods, each 1 sec long, the binary data contained in the output register were 100000, 011111, 011101, and 011010. Determine the equation for the voltage as a function of time between sampling instants 3 and 4 using (a) a zero-order hold and (b) a first-order hold.

**5.5** In Problem 5.4, suppose that a second-order hold were to be used to generate the output signal. The equation for the second-order hold is

$$E(t) = E_0 + \alpha t + \beta t^2 \tag{5.8}$$

where $E_0$ = starting voltage at the beginning of the time interval. (a) For the binary data given in Problem 5.4, determine the values of $\alpha$ and $\beta$ that would be used in the equation for the time interval between sampling instants 3 and 4. (b) Compare the first-order and second-order holds in anticipating the voltage at sampling instant 4.

chapter 6

# Numerical Control

## CHAPTER CONTENTS

*Numerical control* (NC) is a form of programmable automation in which the mechanical actions of a machine tool or other equipment are controlled by a program containing coded alphanumeric data. The alphanumerical data represent relative positions between a workhead and a workpart as well as other instructions needed to operate the machine. The workhead is a cutting tool or other processing apparatus, and the workpart is the object being processed. When the current job is completed, the program of instructions can be changed to process a new job. The capability to change the program makes NC suitable for low and medium production. It is much easier to write new programs than to make major alterations of the processing equipment.

Numerical control can be applied to a wide variety of processes. The applications divide into two categories: (1) machine tool applications, such as drilling, milling, turning, and other metal working; and (2) nonmachine tool applications, such as assembly, drafting, and inspection. The common operating feature of NC in all of these applications is control of the workhead movement relative to the workpart.

The concept for NC dates from the late 1940s. The first NC machine was developed in 1952 (Historical Note 6.1).

### Historical Note 6.1 The first NC machines [2], [8], [16], [18]

The development of NC owes much to the United States Air Force and the early aerospace industry. The first development work in the area of NC is attributed to John Parsons and his associate Frank Stulen at Parsons Corporation in Traverse City, Michigan. Parsons was a contractor for the Air Force during the 1940s and had experimented with the concept of using coordinate position data contained on punched cards to define and machine the surface contours of airfoil shapes. He had named his system the *Cardamatic* milling machine, since the numerical data was stored on punched cards. After development work by Parsons and his colleagues, the idea was presented to the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in 1948. The initial Air Force contract was awarded to Parsons in June 1949. A subcontract was awarded by Parsons in July 1949 to the Servomechanism Laboratories at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to: (1) perform a systems engineering study on machine tool controls and (2) develop a prototype machine tool based on the Cardamatic principle. Research commenced on the basis of this subcontract, which continued until April 1951, when a contract was signed by MIT and the Air Force to complete the development work.

Early in the project, it became clear that the required data transfer rates between the controller and the machine tool could not be achieved using punched cards, and the possibility of either punched paper tape or magnetic tape was proposed as a more appropriate medium for storing the numerical data. These and other technical details of the control system for machine tool control had been defined by June 1950. The name *numerical control* was adopted in March 1951 based on a contest sponsored by John Parsons among "MIT personnel working on the project." The first NC machine was developed by retrofitting a Cincinnati Milling Machine Co. vertical Hydro-Tel milling machine (a 24-in × 60-in conventional tracer mill) that had been donated by the Air Force from surplus equipment. The controller combined analog and digital components, consisted of 292 vacuum tubes, and occupied a floor area greater than the machine tool itself. The prototype successfully performed simultaneous control of three-axis motion based on coordinate-axis data on punched binary tape. This experimental machine was in operation by March 1952.

A patent for the machine tool system was filed in August 1952 entitled *Numerical Control Servo System*, which was awarded in December 1962. Inventors were listed as Jay Forrester, William Pease, James McDonough, and Alfred Susskind, all Servomechanisms Lab staff during the project. It is of interest to note that a patent was also filed by John Parsons and Frank Stulen in May 1952 for a *Motor Controlled Apparatus for Positioning Machine Tool* based on the idea of using punched cards and a mechanical rather than electronic controller. This patent was issued in January 1958. In hindsight, it is clear that the MIT research provided the prototype for subsequent developments in NC technology. So far as is known, no commercial machines were ever introduced using the Parsons-Stulen configuration.

Once the NC machine was operational in March 1952, trial parts were solicited from aircraft companies across the country to learn about the operating features and economics of NC. Several potential advantages of NC were apparent from these trials. These included good accuracy and repeatability, reduction of noncutting time in the machining cycle, and the capability to machine complex geometries. Part programming was recognized as a difficulty with the new technology. A public demonstration of the machine was held in September 1952 for machine tool builders (anticipated to be the companies that would subsequently develop products in the new technology), aircraft component producers (expected to be the principal users of NC), and other interested parties.

Reactions of the machine tool companies following the demonstrations "ranged from guarded optimism to outright negativism" [18, p. 61]. Most of the companies were concerned about a system that relied on vacuum tubes, not realizing that tubes would soon be displaced by transistors and integrated circuits. They were also worried about their staff's qualifications to maintain such equipment and were generally skeptical of the NC concept. Anticipating this reaction, the Air Force sponsored two additional tasks: (1) information dissemination to industry and (2) an economic study. The information dissemination task included many visits by Servo Lab personnel to companies in the machine tool industry as well as visits to the Lab by industry personnel to observe demonstrations of the prototype machine. The economic study showed clearly that the applications of general purpose NC machine tools were in low and medium quantity production, as opposed to Detroit-type transfer lines, which could be justified only for very large quantities.

One company that showed great interest in the MIT work was Giddings & Lewis Machine Tool Company in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. In April 1953, an agreement was signed between G&L and MIT to extend the technology of NC. This work resulted in the development of a second prototype machine that was a significant advancement over the first Servo Lab machine. Two patents came out of this work, one for the machine control unit and the second for equipment to prepare the punched paper tape for storing NC part programs.

In 1956, the Air Force decided to sponsor the development of NC machine tools at several different companies. These machines were placed in operation at various aircraft companies between 1958 and 1960. The advantages of NC soon became apparent, and the aerospace companies began placing orders for new NC machines. In some cases, they even began building their own units. This served as a stimulus to the remaining machine tool companies that had not yet embraced NC technology. Advances in computer technology also stimulated further development (Historical Note 6.2).

The importance of part programming was clear from the start. The U.S. Air Force continued to encourage the development and application of NC by sponsoring research at MIT for a part programming language to control NC machines. This research resulted in the development of the APT language in 1958 (Historical Note 6.3).

## 6.1 FUNDAMENTALS OF NC TECHNOLOGY

To introduce NC technology, we first define the basic components of an NC system. This is followed by a description of NC coordinate systems in common use and types of motion controls used in NC.

### 6.1.1 Basic Components of an NC System

An NC system consists of three basic components: (1) a program of instructions, (2) a machine control unit, and (3) processing equipment. The general relationship among the three components is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

The *program of instructions* is the detailed step by step commands that direct the actions of the processing equipment. In machine tool applications, the program of instructions is called a *part program*, and the person who prepares the program is called a *part programmer*. In these applications, the individual commands refer to positions of a cutting tool relative to the worktable on which the workpart is fixtured. Additional instructions are usually included, such as spindle speed, feed rate, cutting tool selection, and other functions. The program is coded on a suitable medium for submission to the machine control unit. For many years, the common medium was 1-inch wide punched tape, using a standard format that could be interpreted by the machine control unit. Today, punched tape has largely been replaced by newer storage technologies in modern machine shops. These technologies include magnetic tape, diskettes, and electronic transfer of part programs from a computer.

In modern NC technology, the *machine control unit* (MCU) consists of a microcomputer and related control hardware that stores the program of instructions and executes it by converting each command into mechanical actions of the processing equipment, one command at a time. The related hardware of the MCU includes components to interface with the processing equipment and feedback control elements. The MCU also includes one or more reading devices for entering part programs into memory. The type of readers depends on the storage media used for part programs in the machine shop (e.g., punched tape reader, magnetic tape reader, floppy disk drive). The MCU also includes control system software, calculation algorithms, and translation software to convert the NC part program into a usable format for the MCU. Because the MCU is a computer, the term *computer numerical control* (CNC) is used to distinguish this type of NC from its technological predecessors that were based entirely on hard-wired electronics. Today, virtually all new MCUs are based on computer technology; hence, when we refer to NC in this chapter and elsewhere, we mean CNC.

The third basic component of an NC system is the *processing equipment* that performs useful work. It accomplishes the processing steps to transform the starting workpiece into a completed part. Its operation is directed by the MCU, which in turn is driven by instructions contained in the part program. In the most common example of NC, machining, the processing equipment consists of the worktable and spindle as well as the motors and controls to drive them.

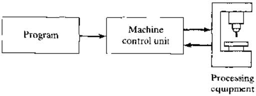



**Figure 6.1** Basic components of an NC system.

### 6.1.2 NC Coordinate Systems

To program the NC processing equipment, a standard axis system must be defined by which the position of the workhead relative to the workpart can be specified. There are two axis systems used in NC, one for flat and prismatic workparts and the other for rotational parts. Both axis systems are based on the Cartesian coordinate system.

The axis system for flat and prismatic parts consists of the three linear axes ($x$, $y$, $z$) in the Cartesian coordinate system, plus three rotational axes ($a$, $b$, $c$), as shown in Figure 6.2(a). In most machine tool applications, the $x$-and $y$-axes are used to move and position the worktable to which the part is attached, and the $z$-axis is used to control the vertical position of the cutting tool. Such a positioning scheme is adequate for simple NC applications such as drilling and punching of flat sheet metal. Programming of these machine tools consists of little more than specifying a sequence of $x$-$y$ coordinates.

The $a$-, $b$-, and $c$-rotational axes specify angular positions about the $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-axes, respectively. To distinguish positive from negative angles, the *right-hand rule* is used. Using the right hand with the thumb pointing in the positive linear axis direction ($+x$, $+y$, or $+z$), the fingers of the hand are curled in the positive rotational direction. The rotational axes can be used for one or both of the following: (1) orientation of the workpart to present different surfaces for machining or (2) orientation of the tool or workhead at some angle relative to the part. These additional axes permit machining of complex workpart geometries. Machine tools with rotational axis capability generally have either four or five axes: three linear axes plus one or two rotational axes. Most NC machine tool systems do not require all six axes.

The coordinate axes for a rotational NC system are illustrated in Figure 6.2(b). These systems are associated with NC lathes and turning centers. Although the work rotates, this is not one of the controlled axes on most of these turning machines. Consequently, the $y$-axis is not used. The path of the cutting tool relative to the rotating workpiece is defined in the $x$-$z$ plane, where the $x$-axis is the radial location of the tool, and the $z$-axis is parallel to the axis of rotation of the part.

The part programmer must decide where the origin of the coordinate axis system should be located. This decision is usually based on programming convenience. For example, the origin might be located at one of the corners of the part. If the workpart is sym-

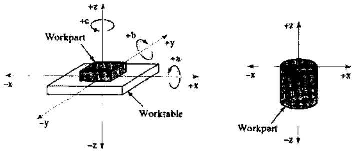



**Figure 6.2** Coordinate systems used in NC: (a) for flat and prismatic work and (b) for rotational work. (On most turning machines, the $z$-axis is horizontal rather than vertical as we have shown it.)

metrical, the zero point might be most conveniently defined at the center of symmetry. Wherever the location, this zero point is communicated to the machine tool operator. At the beginning of the job, the operator must move the cutting tool under manual control to some *target point* on the worktable, where the tool can be easily and accurately positioned. The target point has been previously referenced to the origin of the coordinate axis system by the part programmer. When the tool has been accurately positioned at the target point, the operator indicates to the MCU where the origin is located for subsequent tool movements.

### 6.1.3 Motion Control Systems

Some NC processes are performed at discrete locations on the workpart (e.g., drilling and spot welding). Others are carried out while the workhead is moving (e.g., turning and continuous arc welding). If the workhead is moving, it may be required to follow a straight line path or a circular or other curvilinear path. These different types of movement are accomplished by the motion control system, whose features are explained below.

*Point-to-Point Versus Continuous Path Control.* Motion control systems for NC (and robotics, Chapter 7) can be divided into two types: (1) point-to-point and (2) continuous path. *Point-to-point systems*, also called *positioning systems*, move the worktable to a programmed location without regard for the path taken to get to that location. Once the move has been completed, some processing action is accomplished by the workhead at the location, such as drilling or punching a hole. Thus, the program consists of a series of point locations at which operations are performed, as depicted in Figure 6.3.

*Continuous path systems* generally refer to systems that are capable of continuous simultaneous control of two or more axes. This provides control of the tool trajectory relative to the workpart. In this case, the tool performs the process while the worktable is moving, thus enabling the system to generate angular surfaces, two-dimensional curves, or three-dimensional contours in the workpart. This control mode is required in many milling and turning operations. A simple two-dimensional profile milling operation is shown in Figure 6.4 to illustrate continuous path control. When continuous path control is utilized to move the tool parallel to only one of the major axes of the machine tool worktable, this is called *straight-cut NC*. When continuous path control is used for simultaneous control of two or more axes in machining operations, the term *contouring* is used.

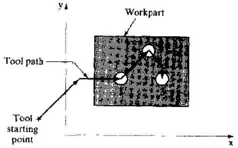



**Figure 6.3** Point-to-point (positioning) control in NC. At each $x$-$y$ position, table movement stops to perform the hole-drilling operation.

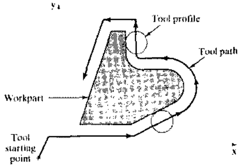



**Figure 6.4** Continuous path (contouring) control in NC ($x$-$y$ plane only). Note that cutting tool path must be offset from the part outline by a distance equal to its radius.

*Interpolation Methods.* One of the important aspects of contouring is *interpolation*. The paths that a contouring-type NC system is required to generate often consist of circular arcs and other smooth nonlinear shapes. Some of these shapes can be defined mathematically by relatively simple geometric formulas (e.g., the equation for a circle is $x^2 + y^2 = R^2$, where $R =$ the radius of the circle and the center of the circle is at the origin), whereas others cannot be mathematically defined except by approximation. In any case, a fundamental problem in generating these shapes using NC equipment is that they are continuous, whereas NC is digital. To cut along a circular path, the circle must be divided into a series of straight line segments that approximate the curve. The tool is commanded to machine each line segment in succession so that the machined surface closely matches the desired shape. The maximum error between the nominal (desired) surface and the actual (machined) surface can be controlled by the lengths of the individual line segments, as explained in Figure 6.5.

If the programmer were required to specify the endpoints for each of the line segments, the programming task would be extremely arduous and fraught with errors. Also, the part program would be extremely long because of the large number of points. To ease the burden, interpolation routines have been developed that calculate the intermediate points to be followed by the cutter to generate a particular mathematically defined or approximated path.

A number of interpolation methods are available to deal with the various problems encountered in generating a smooth continuous path in contouring. They include: (1) linear interpolation, (2) circular interpolation, (3) helical interpolation, (4) parabolic interpolation, and (5) cubic interpolation. Each of these procedures, briefly described in Table 6.1, permits the programmer to generate machine instructions for linear or curvilinear paths using relatively few input parameters. The interpolation module in the MCU performs the calculations and directs the tool along the path. In CNC systems, the interpolator is generally accomplished by software. Linear and circular interpolators are almost always included in modern CNC systems, whereas helical interpolation is a common option. Parabolic and cubic interpolations are less common; they are only needed by machine shops that must produce complex surface contours.

*Absolute Versus Incremental Positioning.* Another aspect of motion control is concerned with whether positions are defined relative to the origin of the coordinate system

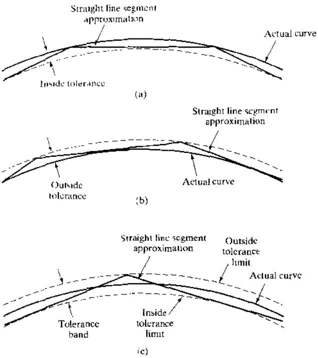



**Figure 6.5** Approximation of a curved path in NC by a series of straight line segments. The accuracy of the approximation is controlled by the maximum deviation (called the tolerance) between the nominal (desired) curve and the straight line segments that are machined by the NC system. In (a) the tolerance is defined on only the inside of the nominal curve. In (b) the tolerance is defined on only the outside of the desired curve. In (c) the tolerance is defined on both the inside and outside of the desired curve.

**TABLE 6.1** Numerical Control Interpolation Methods for Continuous Path Control

*Linear interpolation.* This is the most basic and is used when a straight line path is to be generated in continuous path NC. Two-axis and three-axis linear interpolation routines are sometimes distinguished in practice, but conceptually they are the same. The programmer specifies the beginning point and end point of the straight line and the feed rate to be used along the straight line. The interpolator computes the feed rates for each of the two (or three) axes to achieve the specified feed rate.

*Circular interpolation.* This method permits programming of a circular arc by specifying the following parameters: (1) the coordinates of the starting point, (2) the coordinates of the endpoint, (3) either the center or radius of the arc, and (4) the direction of the cutter along the arc. The generated tool path consists of a series of small straight line segments (see Figure 6.5) calculated by the interpolation module. The cutter is directed to move along each line segment one-by-one to generate the smooth circular path. A limitation of circular interpolation is that the plane in which the circular arc exists must be a plane defined by two axes of the NC system ($x - y$, $x - z$, or $y - z$).

*Helical interpolation.* This method combines the circular interpolation scheme for two axes described above with linear movement of a third axis. This permits the definition of a helical path in three-dimensional space. Applications include the machining of large internal threads, either straight or tapered.

*Parabolic* and *cubic interpolations.* These routines provide approximations of free form curves using higher order equations. They generally require considerable computational power and are not as common as linear and circular interpolation. Most applications are in the aerospace and automotive industries for free form designs that cannot accurately and conveniently be approximated by combining linear and circular interpolations.

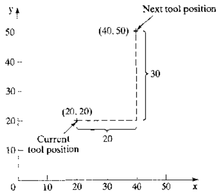



**Figure 6.6** Absolute versus incremental positioning. The workhead is presently at point (20, 20) and is to be moved to point (40, 50). In absolute positioning, the move is specified by $x = 40$, $y = 50$; whereas in incremental positioning, the move is specified by $x = 20$, $y = 30$.

or relative to the previous location of the tool. The two cases are called absolute positioning and incremental positioning. In *absolute positioning*, the workhead locations are always defined with respect to the origin of the axis system. In *incremental positioning*, the next workhead position is defined relative to the present location. The difference is illustrated in Figure 6.6.

## 6.2 COMPUTER NUMERICAL CONTROL

Since the introduction of NC in 1952, there have been dramatic advances in digital computer technology. The physical size and cost of a digital computer have been significantly reduced at the same time that its computational capabilities have been substantially increased. It was logical for the makers of NC equipment to incorporate these advances in computer technology into their products, starting first with large mainframe computers in the 1960s, followed by minicomputers in the 1970s, and microcomputers in the 1980s (Historical Note 6.2). Today, NC means computer numerical control. *Computer numerical control* (CNC) is defined as an NC system whose MCU is based on a dedicated microcomputer rather than on a hard-wired controller.

### Historical Note 6.2 Digital computers for NC

The development of NC has relied heavily on advances in digital computer technology. As computers evolved and their performance improved, producers of NC machines were quick to adopt the latest generation of computer technology.

The first application of the digital computer for NC was to perform part programming. In 1956, MIT demonstrated the feasibility of a computer-aided part programming system using its Whirlwind I computer (an early digital computer prototype developed at MIT). Based on this demonstration, the U.S. Air Force sponsored development of the APT language, which was completed in 1958 and subsequently released in December 1961 (Historical Note 6.3).

Numerical control technology was in its second decade before computers were employed to actually control machine tool motions. In the mid-1960s, the concept of *direct numerical control* (DNC) was developed. In DNC, individual machine tools were controlled by a mainframe computer located remotely from the machines. The computer bypassed the punched tape reader, instead transmitting instructions to the machine in real time, one block at a time. The first prototype system was demonstrated in 1966 [8]. Two companies that pioneered the development of DNC were General Electric Company and Cincinnati Milling Machine Company (changing its name to Cincinnati Milacron in 1970). Several DNC systems were demonstrated at the National Machine Tool Show in 1970.

Mainframe computers represented the state of the technology in the mid-1960s. There were no personal computers or microcomputers at that time. But the trend in computer technology was toward the use of integrated circuits of increasing levels of integration, which resulted in dramatic increases in computational performance at the same time that the size and cost of the computer were reduced. At the beginning of the 1970s, the economics were right for using a dedicated computer as the MCU. This application came to be known as *computer numerical control* (CNC). At first, minicomputers were used as the controllers; subsequently, microcomputers were used as the performance/size trend continued.

CNC altered the economics of DNC. Direct numerical control economics were never attractive in the first place. The DNC systems marketed in the late 1960s and early 1970s were very expensive. Their high cost, combined with their inflexibility in terms of management-reporting formats and hardware requirements, caused businesses to resist the temptation to plunge into the new technology. All of a sudden, CNC was available. Why use an expensive mainframe computer to run multiple machine tools, when each machine could have its own computer? Yet the DNC concept had merit, because it included a communications network that provided for collection of data from the machine tools as well as distribution of part programs to the machines. As CNC replaced conventional NC, the notion of DNC reappeared only in a different form. Instead of direct control of individual machines by a central computer, one instruction block at a time, the central computer could download entire part programs to the machines. The term used for this modified form of DNC was *distributed NC*.

### 6.2.1 Features of CNC

Computer NC systems include additional features beyond what is feasible with conventional hard-wired NC. These features, many of which are standard on most CNC MCUs whereas others are optional, include the following:

- *Storage of more than one part program.* With improvements in computer storage technology, newer CNC controllers have sufficient capacity to store multiple programs. Controller manufacturers generally offer one or more memory expansions as options to the MCU.
- *Various forms of program input.* Whereas conventional (hard-wired) MCUs are limited to punched tape as the input medium for entering part programs, CNC controllers generally possess multiple data entry capabilities, such as punched tape (if the machine shop still uses punched tape), magnetic tape, floppy diskette, RS-232 communications with external computers, and manual data input (operator entry of program).
- *Program editing at the machine tool.* CNC permits a part program to be edited while it resides in the MCU computer memory. Hence, the process of testing and correcting a program can be done entirely at the machine site, rather than returning to the

programming office to correct the tape. In addition to part program corrections, editing also permits optimizing cutting conditions in the machining cycle. After correcting and optimizing the program, the revised version can be stored on punched tape or other media for future use.

- *Fixed cycles and programming subroutines.* The increased memory capacity and the ability to program the control computer provide the opportunity to store frequently used machining cycles as *macros* that can be called by the part program. Instead of writing the full instructions for the particular cycle into every program, a call statement is included in the part program to indicate that the macro cycle should be executed. These cycles often require that certain parameters be defined; for example, a bolt hole circle, in which the diameter of the bolt circle, the spacing of the bolt holes, and other parameters must be specified.
- *Interpolation.* Some of the interpolation schemes described in Table 6.1 are normally executed only on a CNC system because of the computational requirements. Linear and circular interpolation are sometimes hard-wired into the control unit, but helical, parabolic, and cubic interpolations are usually executed in a stored program algorithm.
- *Positioning features for setup.* Setting up the machine tool for a given workpart involves installing and aligning a fixture on the machine tool table. This must be accomplished so that the machine axes are established with respect to the workpart. The alignment task can be facilitated using certain features made possible by software options in a CNC system. *Position set* is one of these features. With position set, the operator is not required to locate the fixture on the machine table with extreme accuracy. Instead, the machine tool axes are referenced to the location of the fixture by using a target point or set of target points on the work or fixture.
- *Cutter length and size compensation.* In older style controls, cutter dimensions had to be set very precisely to agree with the tool path defined in the part program. Alternative methods for ensuring accurate tool path definition have been incorporated into CNC controls. One method involves manually entering the actual tool dimensions into the MCU. These actual dimensions may differ from those originally programmed. Compensations are then automatically made in the computed tool path. Another method involves use of a tool length sensor built into the machine. In this technique, the cutter is mounted in the spindle and the sensor measures its length. This measured value is then used to correct the programmed tool path.
- *Acceleration and deceleration calculations.* This feature is applicable when the cutter moves at high feed rates. It is designed to avoid tool marks on the work surface that would be generated due to machine tool dynamics when the cutter path changes abruptly. Instead, the feed rate is smoothly decelerated in anticipation of a tool path change and then accelerated back up to the programmed feed rate after the direction change.
- *Communications interface.* With the trend toward interfacing and networking in plants today, most modern CNC controllers are equipped with a standard RS-232 or other communications interface to allow the machine to be linked to other computers and computer-driven devices. This is useful for various applications, such as: (1) downloading part programs from a central data file as in distributed NC; (2) collecting operational data such as workpiece counts, cycle times, and machine utilization; and (3) interfacing with peripheral equipment, such as robots that load and unload parts.
- *Diagnostics.* Many modern CNC systems possess an on-line diagnostics capability that monitors certain aspects of the machine tool to detect malfunctions or signs of impending malfunctions or to diagnose system breakdowns. Some of the common features of a CNC diagnostics system are listed in Table 6.2

**TABLE 6.2** Common Features of a CNC Diagnostics System

*Control start-up diagnostics.* This diagnostic check is applied when the CNC system is initially powered up. It checks the integrity of system components, such as the CPU, servo controls, and *input/output* (I/O) board, indicating which components have failed or malfunctioned during startup.

*Malfunction and failure analysis.* When a malfunction is detected during regular machine operation, a message is displayed on the controller's CRT monitor indicating the nature of the problem. Depending on the seriousness of the malfunction, the machine can be stopped or maintenance can be scheduled for a nonproduction period. In the event of a machine breakdown, the analysis feature can help the repair crew determine the reason for the breakdown. One of the biggest problems when a machine failure occurs is diagnosing the reason for the breakdown. By monitoring and analyzing its own operation, the system can determine and communicate the reason for the failure. In many diagnostics systems, a communications link can be established with the machine tool builder to provide repair support to the user.

*Extended diagnostics for individual components.* If an intermittent problem is suspected of a certain component, a continuous check of the component can be initiated.

*Tool life monitoring.* Tool life data for each cutting tool are entered into the system. The system accumulates the actual run time of each tool, and when its life expectancy is reached, a tool change notice is displayed. In some CNC systems, the worn tool will be replaced by an identical tool if one is available in the tool drum.

*Preventive maintenance notices.* This feature indicates when normal preventive maintenance routines must be performed, such as checks on cutting fluid levels, hydraulic fluid, and bearing fitting changes.

*Programming diagnostics.* This feature consists of a graphics simulator to check new part programs. Some systems calculate data such as machining cycle times and actual cutting time of each tool during the cycle.

*Source:* Noaker [15] and others.

### 6.2.2 The Machine Control Unit for CNC

The MCU is the hardware that distinguishes CNC from conventional NC. The general configuration of the MCU in a CNC system is illustrated in Figure 6.7. The MCU consists of the following components and subsystems: (1) central processing unit, (2) memory, (3) I/O interface, (4) controls for machine tool axes and spindle speed, and (5) sequence controls for other machine tool functions. These subsystems are interconnected by means of a system bus, as indicated in the figure.

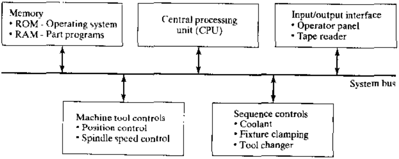



**Figure 6.7** Configuration of CNC machine control unit.

*Central Processing Unit.* The central processing unit (CPU) is the brain of the MCU. It manages the other components in the MCU based on software contained in main memory. The CPU can be divided into three sections: (1) control section, (2) arithmetic-logic unit, and (3) immediate access memory. The *control section* retrieves commands and data from memory and generates signals to activate other components in the MCU. In short, it sequences, coordinates, and regulates all of the activities of the MCU computer. The *arithmetic-logic unit* (ALU) consists of the circuitry to perform various calculations (addition, subtraction, multiplication), counting, and logical functions required by software residing in memory. The *immediate access memory* provides a temporary storage for data being processed by the CPU. It is connected to main memory by means of the system data bus.

*Memory.* The immediate access memory in the CPU is not intended for storing CNC software. A much greater storage capacity is required for the various programs and data needed to operate the CNC system. As with most other computer systems, CNC memory can be divided into two categories: (1) main memory and (2) secondary memory. *Main memory* (also known as *primary storage*) consists of ROM (read-only memory) and RAM (random access memory) devices. Operating system software and machine interface programs (Section 6.2.3) are generally stored in ROM. These programs are usually installed by the manufacturer of the MCU. Numerical control part programs are stored in RAM devices. Current programs in RAM can be erased and replaced by new programs as jobs are changed.

High-capacity *secondary memory* (also called *auxiliary storage* or *secondary storage*) devices are used to store large programs and data files, which are transferred to main memory as needed. Common among the secondary memory devices are floppy diskettes and hard disks. Floppy diskettes are portable and have replaced much of the punched paper tape traditionally used to store part programs. Hard disks are high-capacity storage devices that are permanently installed in the CNC machine control unit. CNC secondary memory is used to store part programs, macros, and other software.

*Input/Output Interface.* The I/O interface provides communication between the various components of the CNC system, other computer systems, and the machine operator. As its name suggests, the I/O interface transmits and receives data and signals to and from external devices, several of which are indicated in Figure 6.7. The *operator control panel* is the basic interface by which the machine operator communicates to the CNC system. This is used to enter commands relating to part program editing, MCU operating mode (e.g., program control vs. manual control), speeds and feeds, cutting fluid pump on/off, and similar functions. Either an alphanumeric keypad or keyboard is usually included in the operator control panel. The I/O interface also includes a *display* (CRT or LED) for communication of data and information from the MCU to the machine operator. The display is used to indicate current status of the program as it is being executed and to warn the operator of any malfunctions in the CNC system.

Also included in the I/O interface are one or more means of entering the part program into storage. As indicated previously, NC part programs are stored in a variety of ways, including punched tape, magnetic tape, and floppy disks. Programs can also be entered manually by the machine operator or stored at a central computer site and transmitted via *local area network* (LAN) to the CNC system. Whichever means is employed by the plant, a suitable device must be included in the I/O interface to allow input of the program into MCU memory.

*Controls for Machine Tool Axes and Spindle Speed.* These are hardware components that control the position and velocity (feed rate) of each machine axis as well as the rotational speed of the machine tool spindle. The control signals generated by MCU must be converted to a form and power level suited to the particular position control systems used to drive the machine axes. Positioning systems can be classified as open-loop or closed-loop, and different hardware components are required in each case. A more-detailed discussion of these hardware elements is presented in Section 6.6, together with an analysis of how they operate together to achieve position and feed rate control. For our purposes here, it is sufficient to indicate that some of the hardware components are resident in the MCU.

Depending on the type of machine tool, the spindle is used to drive either (1) the workpiece or (2) a rotating cutter. Turning exemplifies the first case, whereas milling and drilling exemplify the second. Spindle speed is a programmed parameter for most CNC machine tools. Spindle speed control components in the MCU usually consist of a drive control circuit and a feedback sensor interface. The particular hardware components depend on the type of spindle drive.

*Sequence Controls for Other Machine Tool Functions.* In addition to control of table position, feed rate, and spindle speed, several additional functions are accomplished under part program control. These auxiliary functions are generally on/off (binary) actuations, interlocks, and discrete numerical data. A sampling of these functions is presented in Table 6.3. To avoid overloading the CPU, a programmable logic controller (Chapter 8) is sometimes used to manage the I/O interface for these auxiliary functions.

*Personal Computers and the MCU.* In growing numbers, personal computers (PCs) are being used in the factory to implement process control (Section 4.4.6), and CNC is no exception. Two basic configurations are being applied [14]: (1) the PC is used as a separate front-end interface for the MCU, and (2) the PC contains the motion control board and other hardware required to operate the machine tool. In the second case, the CNC control board fits into a standard slot of the PC. In either configuration, the advantage of using a PC for CNC is its flexibility to execute a variety of user software in addition

**TABLE 6.3** Examples of CNC Auxiliary Functions Often Implemented by a Programmable Logic Controller in the MCU

| *CNC Auxiliary Function* | *Type or Classification* |
|---|---|
| Coolant control | On/off output from MCU to pump |
| Tool changer and tool storage unit | Discrete numerical data (possible values limited to capacity of tool storage unit) |
| Fixture clamping device | On/off output from MCU to clamp actuator |
| Emergency warning or stop | On/off input to MCU from sensor; on/off output to display and alarm |
| Robot for part loading/unloading | Interlock to sequence loading and unloading operation; I/O signals between MCU and robot |
| Timers | Continuous |
| Counters (e.g., piece counts) | Discrete numerical data (possible values limited to number of parts that can be produced in a given time period, such as a shift) |

to and concurrently with controlling the machine tool operation. The user software might include programs for shop-floor control, statistical process control, solid modeling, cutting tool management, and other computer-aided manufacturing software. Other benefits include improved ease of use compared with conventional CNC and ease of networking the PCs. Possible disadvantages include (1) lost time to retrofit the PC for CNC, particularly when installing the CNC motion controls inside the PC, and (2) current limitations in applications requiring complex five-axis control of the machine tool-for these applications, traditional CNC is still more efficient. It should be mentioned that advances in the technology of PC-based CNC are likely to reduce these disadvantages over time. Companies are demanding open architecture in CNC products, which permits components from different vendors to be used in the same system [7].

### 6.2.3 CNC Software

The computer in CNC operates by means of software. There are three types of software programs used in CNC systems: (1) operating system software, (2) machine interface software, and (3) application software.

The principal function of the *operating system software* is to interpret the NC part programs and generate the corresponding control signals to drive the machine tool axes. It is installed by the controller manufacturer and is stored in ROM in the MCU. The operating system software consists of the following: (1) an *editor,* which permits the machine operator to input and edit NC part programs and perform other file management functions; (2) a *control program,* which decodes the part program instructions, performs interpolation and acceleration/deceleration calculations, and accomplishes other related functions to produce the coordinate control signals for each axis; and (3) an *executive program,* which manages the execution of the CNC software as well as the I/O operations of the MCU. The operating system software also includes the diagnostics routines that are available in the CNC system (Table 6.2).

The *machine interface software* is used to operate the communication link between the CPU and the machine tool to accomplish the CNC auxiliary functions (Table 6.3). As previously indicated, the I/O signals associated with the auxiliary functions are sometimes implemented by means of a programmable logic controller interfaced to the MCU, and so the machine interface software is often written in the form of ladder logic diagrams (Section 8.2).

Finally, the *application software* consists of the NC part programs that are written for machining (or other) applications in the user's plant. We postpone the topic of part programming to Section 6.5.

## 6.3 DNC

Historical Note 6.2 describes several ways in which digital computers have been used to implement NC. In this section, we discuss two of these implementations that are distinguished from CNC: (1) direct NC and (2) distributed NC.

### 6.3.1 Direct Numerical Control

The first attempt to use a digital computer to drive the NC machine tool was DNC. This was in the late 1960s before the advent of CNC. As initially implemented, DNC involved the control of a number of machine tools by a single (mainframe) computer through direct connection and in real time. Instead of using a punched tape reader to enter the part program into the MCU, the program was transmitted to the MCU directly from the computer, one block of instructions at a time. This mode of operation was referred to by the name *behind the tape reader* (BTR). The DNC computer provided instruction blocks to the machine tool on demand; when a machine needed control commands, they were communicated to it immediately. As each block was executed by the machine, the next block was transmitted. As far as the machine tool was concerned, the operation was no different from that of a conventional NC controller. In theory, DNC relieved the NC system of its least reliable components: the punched tape and tape reader.

The general configuration of a DNC system is depicted in Figure 6.8. The system consisted of four components: (1) central computer, (2) bulk memory at the central computer site, (3) set of controlled machines, and (4) telecommunications lines to connect the machines to the central computer. In operation, the computer called the required part program from bulk memory and sent it (one block at a time) to the designated machine tool. This procedure was replicated for all machine tools under direct control of the computer. One commercially available DNC system during the 1970s claimed to be capable of controlling up to 256 machines.

In addition to transmitting data to the machines, the central computer also received data back from the machines to indicate operating performance in the shop (e.g., number of machining cycles completed, machine utilization, and breakdowns). Thus, a central objective of DNC was to achieve two-way communication between the machines and the central computer.

Advantages claimed for DNC in the early 1970s included: (1) high reliability of a central computer compared with individual hard-wired MCUs; (2) elimination of the tape and tape reader, which were unreliable and error-prone; (3) control of multiple machines by one computer; (4) improved computational capability for circular interpolation; (5) part programs stored magnetically in bulk memory in a central location; and (6) computer located in an environmentally agreeable location. However, these advantages were not enough to persuade a conservative manufacturing community to pay the high investment cost for a DNC system, and some of the claimed advantages proved to be overly optimistic.

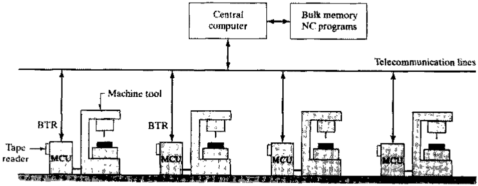



**Figure 6.8** General configuration of a DNC system. Connection to MCU is behind the tape reader. Key: BTR = behind the tape reader, MCU = machine control unit.

For example, elimination of tape readers was unrealistic because of the need for an alternative way to load part programs in case the central computer went down. The installations of DNC were limited to the aerospace industry, which had been involved in NC technology since the beginning and possessed a large number of NC machines. These machines were often dispersed throughout large factories, and DNC represented an efficient way to distribute part programs to the machines.

### 6.3.2 Distributed Numerical Control

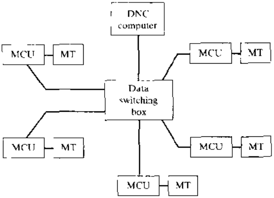
As the number of CNC machine installations grew during the 1970s and 1980s, DNC emerged once again, but in the form of a distributed computer system, or *distributed numerical control* (DNC). The configuration of the new DNC is very similar to that shown in Figure 6.8 except that the central computer is connected to MCUs, which are themselves computers. This permits complete part programs to be sent to the machine tools, rather than one block at a time. It also permits easier and less costly installation of the overall system, because the individual CNC machines can be put into service and the distributed NC can be added later. Redundant computers improve system reliability compared with the original DNC. The new DNC permits two-way communication of data between the shop floor and the central computer, which was one of the important features included in the old DNC. However, improvements in data collection devices as well as advances in computer and communications technologies have expanded the range and flexibility of the information that can be gathered and disseminated. Some of the data and information sets included in the two-way communication flow are itemized in Table 6.4. This flow of information in DNC is similar to the information flow in shop floor control, discussed in Chapter 26.

Distributed NC systems can take on a variety of physical configurations, depending on the number of machine tools included, job complexity, security requirements, and equipment availability and preferences. There are several ways to configure a DNC system. We illustrate two types in Figure 6.9: (a) switching network and (b) LAN. Each type has several possible variations.

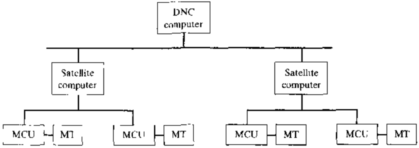
The *switching network* is the simplest DNC system to configure. It uses a data switching box to make a connection from the central computer to a given CNC machine for downloading part programs or uploading data. Transmission of programs to the MCU is accomplished through a RS-232-C connection. (Virtually all commercial MCUs include the RS-232-C or compatible device as standard equipment today.) Use of a switching box limits the number of machines that can be included in the DNC system. The limit depends on

**TABLE 6.4** Flow of Data and Information Between Central Computer and Machine Tools in DNC

| *Data and Information Downloaded from the Central Computer to Machine Tools and Shop Floor* | *Data and Information Loaded from the Machine Tools and Shop Floor to the Central Computer* |
|---|---|
| NC part programs | Piece counts |
| List of tools needed for job | Actual machining cycle times |
| Machine tool setup instructions | Tool life statistics |
| Machine operator instructions | Machine uptime and downtime statistics, from which machine utilization and reliability can be assessed |
| Machining cycle time for part program | |
| Data about when program was last used | |
| Production schedule information | Product quality data |




(a)




(b)

**Figure 6.9** Two configurations of DNC: (a) switching network and (b) LAN. Key: MCU = machine control unit, MT = machine tool.

factors such as part program complexity, frequency of service required to each machine, and capabilities of the central computer. The number of machines in the DNC system can be increased by employing a serial link RS-232-C multiplexer.

Local area networks have been used for DNC since the early 1980s. Various network structures are used in DNC systems, among which is the centralized structure illustrated in Figure 6.9(b). In this arrangement, the computer system is organized as a hierarchy, with the central (host) computer coordinating several satellite computers that are each responsible for a number of CNC machines. Alternative LAN structures are possible, each with its relative advantages and disadvantages. Local area networks in different sections and departments of a plant are often interconnected in plant-wide and corporate-wide networks.

## 6.4 APPLICATIONS OF NC

The operating principle of NC has many applications. There are many industrial operations in which the position of a workhead must be controlled relative to a part or product being processed. The applications divide into two categories: (1) machine tool applications and (2) non-machine tool applications. Machine tool applications are those usually associated with the metalworking industry. Non-machine tool applications comprise a diverse group of operations in other industries. It should be noted that the applications are not always identified by the name "numerical control"; this term is used principally in the machine tool industry.

### 6.4.1 Machine Tool Applications

The most common applications of NC are in machine tool control. Machining was the first application of NC, and it is still one of the most important commercially. In this section, we discuss NC machine tool applications with emphasis on metal machining processes.

*Machining Operations and NC Machine Tools.* *Machining* is a manufacturing process in which the geometry of the work is produced by removing excess material (Section 2.2.1). By controlling the relative motion between a cutting tool and the workpiece, the desired geometry is created. Machining is considered one of the most versatile processes because it can be used to create a wide variety of shapes and surface finishes. It can be performed at relatively high production rates to yield highly accurate parts at relatively low cost.

There are four common types of machining operations: (a) turning, (b) drilling, (c) milling, and (d) grinding. The four operations are shown in Figure 6.10. Each of the machining operations is carried out at a certain combination of speed, feed, and depth of cut, collectively called the *cutting conditions* for the operation. The terminology varies somewhat for grinding. These cutting conditions are illustrated in Figure 6.10 for (a) turning, (b) drilling, and (c) milling. Consider milling. The *cutting speed* is the velocity of the tool (milling cutter) relative to the work, measured in meters per minute (feet per minute). This is usually programmed into the machine as a spindle rotation speed (revolutions per minute). Cutting speed can be converted into spindle rotation speed by means of the following equation:

$$N = \frac{v}{\pi D} \tag{6.1}$$

where $N$ = spindle rotation speed (rev/min), $v$ = cutting speed (m/min, ft/min), and $D$ = milling cutter diameter (m, ft). In milling, the *feed* usually means the size of the chip formed by each tooth in the milling cutter, often referred to as the *chip load* per tooth. This must normally be programmed into the NC machine as the feed rate (the travel rate of the machine tool table). Therefore, feed must be converted to feed rate as follows:

$$f_r = N\, n_t f \tag{6.2}$$

where $f_r$ = feed rate (mm/min, in/min), $N$ = rotational speed (rev/min), $n_t$ = number of teeth on the milling cutter, and $f$ = feed (mm/tooth, in/tooth). For a turning operation, feed is defined as the lateral movement of the cutting tool per revolution of the workpiece, so the units are millimeters per revolution (inches per revolution). *Depth of cut* is the distance the tool penetrates below the original surface of the work (mm, in). These are the parameters that must be controlled during the operation of an NC machine through motion or position commands in the part program.

Each of the four machining processes is traditionally carried out on a machine tool designed to perform that process. Turning is performed on a lathe, drilling is done on a drill

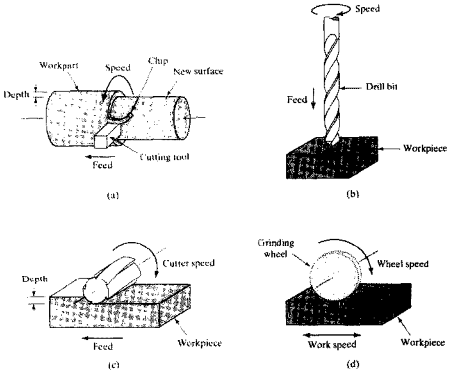



**Figure 6.10** The four common machining operations: (a) turning, (b) drilling, (c) peripheral milling, and (d) surface grinding.

press, milling on a milling machine, and so on. The common NC machine tools are listed in the following along with their typical features:

- *NC lathe*, either horizontal or vertical axis. Turning requires two-axis, continuous path control, either to produce a straight cylindrical geometry (called straight turning) or to create a profile (contour turning).
- *NC boring mill*, horizontal and vertical spindle. Boring is similar to turning, except that an internal cylinder is created instead of an external cylinder. The operation requires continuous path, two-axis control.
- *NC drill press*. These machines use point-to-point control of the workhead (spindle containing the drill bit) and two axis ($x$-$y$) control of the worktable. Some NC drill presses have turrets containing six or eight drill bits. The turret position is programmed under NC control, thus allowing different drill bits to be applied to the same workpart during the machine cycle without requiring the machine operator to manually change the tool.
- *NC milling machine*. Milling machines require continuous path control to perform straight cut or contouring operations. Figure 6.11 illustrates the features of a four-axis milling machine.

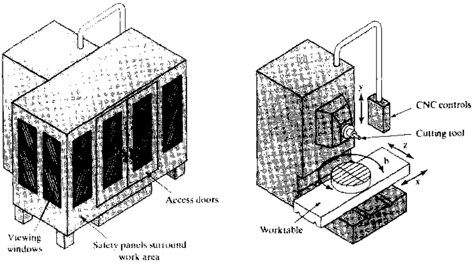



**Figure 6.11** (a) Four-axis CNC horizontal milling machine with safety panels installed and (b) with safety panels removed to show typical axis configuration for the horizontal spindle.

- *NC cylindrical grinder.* This machine operates like a turning machine, except that the tool is a grinding wheel. It has continuous path two-axis control, similar to an NC lathe.

Numerical control has had a profound influence on the design and operation of machine tools. One of the effects has been that the proportion of time spent by the machine cutting metal is significantly greater than with manually operated machines. This causes certain components such as the spindle, drive gears, and feed screws to wear more rapidly. These components must be designed to last longer on NC machines. Second, the addition of the electronic control unit has increased the cost of the machine, therefore requiring higher equipment utilization. Instead of running the machine during only one shift, which is usually the convention with manually operated machines, NC machines are often operated during two or even three shifts to obtain the required economic payback. Third, the increasing cost of labor has altered the relative roles of the human operator and the machine tool. Consider the role of the operator. Instead of being the highly skilled worker who controlled every aspect of part production, the tasks of the NC machine operator have been reduced to part loading and unloading, tool-changing, chip clearing, and the like. Owing to these reduced responsibilities, one operator can often run two or three automatic machines.

The functions of the machine tool have also changed. NC machines are designed to be highly automatic and capable of combining several operations in one setup that formerly required several different machines. They are also designed to reduce the time consumed by the noncutting elements in the operation cycle, such as changing tools and loading and unloading the workpart. These changes are best exemplified by a new type of machine that did not exist prior to the advent and development of NC: machining centers. A *machining center* is a machine tool capable of performing multiple machining operations on a single workpiece in one setup. The operations involve rotating cutters, such as milling and drilling, and the feature that enables more than one operation to be performed in one setup is automatic tool-changing. We discuss machining centers and related machine tools in our coverage of single station manufacturing cells (Section 14.3.3).

*NC Application Characteristics.* In general, NC technology is appropriate for low-to-medium production of medium-to-high variety product. Using the terminology of Section 2.3.1, the product is low-to-medium $Q$, medium-to-high $P$. Over many years of machine shop practice, certain part characteristics have come to be identified as being most suited to the application of NC. These characteristics are the following:

1. *Batch production.* NC is most appropriate for parts produced in small or medium lot sizes (batch sizes ranging from as low as one unit up to several hundred units). Dedicated automation would be uneconomical for these quantities because of the high fixed cost. Manual production would require many separate machine setups and would result in higher labor cost, longer lead time, and higher scrap rate.
2. *Repeat orders.* Batches of the same parts are produced at random or periodic intervals. Once the NC part program has been prepared, parts can be economically produced in subsequent batches using the same part program.
3. *Complex part geometry.* The part geometry includes complex curved surfaces such as those found on airfoils and turbine blades. Mathematically defined surfaces such as circles and helixes can also be accomplished with NC. Some of these geometries would be difficult if not impossible to achieve accurately using conventional machine tools.
4. *Much metal needs to be removed from the workpart.* This condition is often associated with a complex part geometry. The volume and weight of the final machined part is a relatively small fraction of the starting block. Such parts are common in the aircraft industry to fabricate large structural sections with low weights.
5. *Many separate machining operations on the part.* This applies to parts consisting of many machined features requiring different cutting tools, such as drilled and/or tapped holes, slots, flats, and so on. If these operations were machined by a series of manual operations, many setups would be needed. The number of setups can usually be reduced significantly using NC.
6. *The part is expensive.* This factor is often a consequence of one or more of preceding factors 3, 4, and 5. It can also result from using a high-cost starting work material. When the part is expensive, and mistakes in processing would be costly, the use of NC helps to reduce rework and scrap losses.

These characteristics are summarized in Table 6.5, which is organized as a checklist for potential NC users to evaluate their operations in terms of NC applicability. The more check marks falling in the "YES" column, the more likely that NC will be successful. Although the list pertains to machining, the characteristics are adaptable to other production applications.

*NC for Other Metalworking Processes.* In addition to the machining process, NC machine tools have also been developed for other metal working processes. These machines include the following:

**TABLE 6.5** Checklist to Determine Applicability of NC in Machine Shop Operations

| *Production Characteristic* | *NO (few or no applications)* | *YES (many applications)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Batch production in small or medium lot sizes | ________ | ________ |
| 2. Repeat orders at random or periodic intervals | ________ | ________ |
| 3. Complex part geometry | ________ | ________ |
| 4. Much metal needs to be removed from the part | ________ | ________ |
| 5. Many separate machining operations on the part | ________ | ________ |
| 6. The part is expensive | ________ | ________ |
| Total check marks in each column | ________ | ________ |

- *Punch presses* for sheet metal hole punching. The two-axis NC operation is similar to that of a drill press except that holes are produced by punching rather than by drilling.
- *Presses* for sheet metal bending. Instead of cutting sheet metal, these systems bend sheet metal according to programmed commands.
- *Welding machines*. Both spot welding and continuous arc welding machines are available with automatic controls based on NC.
- *Thermal cutting machines*, such as oxyfuel cutting, laser cutting, and plasma arc cutting. The stock is usually flat; thus, two-axis control is adequate. Some laser cutting machines can cut holes in preformed sheet metal stock, requiring four-or-five axis control.
- *Tube bending machines*. Automatic tube bending machines are programmed to control the location (along the length of the tube stock) and the angle of the bend. Important applications include frames for bicycles and motorcycles.

### 6.4.2 Other NC Applications

The operating principle of NC has a host of other applications besides machine tool control. However, the applications are not always referred to by the term "numerical control." Some of these machines with NC-type controls that position a workhead relative to an object being processed are the following:

- *Electrical wire wrap machines*. These machines, pioneered by Gardner Denver Corporation, have been used to wrap and string wires on the back pins of electrical wiring boards to establish connections between components on the front of the board. The program of coordinate positions that define the back panel connections is determined from design data and fed to the wire wrap machine. This type of equipment has been used by computer firms and other companies in the electronics industry.
- *Component insertion machines*. This equipment is used to position and insert components on an $x$-$y$ plane, usually a flat board or panel. The program specifies the $x$- and $y$-axis positions in the plane where the components are to be located. Component insertion machines find extensive applications for inserting electronic components

into printed circuit boards. Machines are available for either through-hole or surface-mount applications as well as similar insertion-type mechanical assembly operations.

- *Drafting machines.* Automated drafting machines serve as one of the output devices for a CAD/CAM (computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacturing) system. The design of a product and its components are developed on the CAD/CAM system. Design iterations are developed on the graphics monitor rather than on a mechanical drafting board. When the design is sufficiently finalized for presentation, the output is plotted on the drafting machine, basically a high speed $x$-$y$ plotter.
- *Coordinate measuring machine.* A coordinate measuring machine (CMM) is an inspection machine used for measuring or checking dimensions of a part. The CMM has a probe that can be manipulated in three axes and identifies when contact is made against a part surface. The location of the probe tip is determined by the CMM control unit, thereby indicating some dimension on the part. Many coordinate measuring machines are programmed to perform automated inspections under NC. We discuss coordinate measuring machines in Section 23.4.
- *Tape laying machines for polymer composites.* The workhead of this machine is a dispenser of uncured polymer matrix composite tape. The machine is programmed to lay the tape onto the surface of a contoured mold, following a back-and-forth and criss-cross pattern to build up a required thickness. The result is a multilayered panel of the same shape as the mold.
- *Filament winding machines for polymer composites.* This is similar to the preceding except that a filament is dipped in uncured polymer and wrapped around a rotating pattern of roughly cylindrical shape.

Additional applications of NC include cloth cutting, knitting, and riveting.

### 6.4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of NC

When the production application satisfies the characteristics in Table 6.5, NC yields many benefits and advantages over manual production methods. These benefits and advantages translate into economic savings for the user company. However, NC is a more-sophisticated technology than conventional production methods are, and there are drawbacks and costs that must be considered to apply the technology effectively. In this section, we examine the advantages and disadvantages of NC.

***Advantages of NC.*** The advantages generally attributed to NC, with emphasis on machine tool applications, are the following:

- *Nonproductive time is reduced.* NC cannot optimize the metal cutting process itself, but it does increase the proportion of time the machine is cutting metal. Reduction in noncutting time is achieved through fewer setups, less setup time, reduced workpiece handling time, and automatic tool changes on some NC machines. This advantage translates into labor cost savings and lower elapsed times to produce parts.
- *Greater accuracy and repeatability.* Compared with manual production methods, NC reduces or eliminates variations that are due to operator skill differences, fatigue, and other factors attributed to inherent human variabilities. Parts are made closer to nominal dimensions, and there is less dimensional variation among parts in the batch.

- *Lower scrap rates.* Because greater accuracy and repeatability are achieved, and because human errors are reduced during production, more parts are produced within tolerance. As a consequence, a lower scrap allowance can be planned into the production schedule, so fewer parts are made in each batch with the result that production time is saved.
- *Inspection requirements are reduced.* Less inspection is needed when NC is used because parts produced from the same NC part program are virtually identical. Once the program has been verified, there is no need for the high level of sampling inspection that is required when parts are produced by conventional manual methods. Except for tool wear and equipment malfunctions, NC produces exact replicates of the part each cycle.
- *More-complex part geometries are possible.* NC technology has extended the range of possible part geometries beyond what is practical with manual machining methods. This is an advantage in product design in several ways: (1) More functional features can be designed into a single part, thus reducing the total number of parts in the product and the associated cost of assembly; (2) mathematically defined surfaces can be fabricated with high precision; and (3) the space is expanded within which the designer's imagination can wander to create new part and product geometries.
- *Engineering changes can be accommodated more gracefully.* Instead of making alterations in a complex fixture so that the part can be machined to the engineering change, revisions are made in the NC part program to accomplish the change.
- *Simpler fixtures are needed.* NC requires simpler fixtures because accurate positioning of the tool is accomplished by the NC machine tool. Tool positioning does not have to be designed into the jig.
- *Shorter manufacturing lead times.* Jobs can be set up more quickly and fewer setups are required per part when NC is used. This results in shorter elapsed time between order release and completion.
- *Reduced parts inventory.* Because fewer setups are required and job changeovers are easier and faster, NC permits production of parts in smaller lot sizes. The economic lot size is lower in NC than in conventional batch production. Average parts inventory is therefore reduced.
- *Less floorspace required.* This results from the fact that fewer NC machines are required to perform the same amount of work compared to the number of conventional machine tools needed. Reduced parts inventory also contributes to lower floor space requirements.
- *Operator skill-level requirements are reduced.* The skill requirements for operating an NC machine are generally less than those required to operate a conventional machine tool. Tending an NC machine tool usually consists only of loading and unloading parts and periodically changing tools. The machining cycle is carried out under program control. Performing a comparable machining cycle on a conventional machine requires much more participation by the operator, and a higher level of training and skill are needed.

*Disadvantages of NC.* On the opposing side, there are certain commitments to NC technology that must be made by the machine shop that installs NC equipment; and these commitments, most of which involve additional cost to the company, might be seen as disadvantages. The disadvantages of NC include the following:

- *Higher investment cost.* An NC machine tool has a higher first cost than a comparable conventional machine tool. There are several reasons why. (1) NC machines include CNC controls and electronics hardware; (2) software development costs of the CNC controls manufacturer must be included in the cost of the machine; (3) more-reliable mechanical components are generally used in NC machines; and (4) NC machine tools often possess additional features not included on conventional machines, such as automatic tool changers and part changers (Section 14.3.3).
- *Higher maintenance effort.* In general, NC equipment requires a higher level of maintenance than conventional equipment requires, which translates to higher maintenance and repair costs. This is due largely to the computer and other electronics that are included in a modern NC system. The maintenance staff must include personnel who are trained in maintaining and repairing this type of equipment.
- *Part programming.* NC equipment must be programmed. To be fair, it should be mentioned that process planning must be accomplished for any part, whether or not it is produced on NC equipment. However, NC part programming is a special preparation step in batch production that is absent in conventional machine shop operations.
- *Higher utilization of NC equipment.* To maximize the economic benefits of an NC machine tool, it usually must be operated multiple shifts. This might mean adding one or two extra shifts to the plant's normal operations, with the requirement for supervision and other staff support.

## 6.5 NC PART PROGRAMMING

NC part programming consists of planning and documenting the sequence of processing steps to be performed on an NC machine. The part programmer must have a knowledge of machining (or other processing technology for which the NC machine is designed) as well as geometry and trigonometry. The documentation portion of part programming involves the input medium used to transmit the program of instructions to the NC machine control unit (MCU). The traditional input medium dating back to the first NC machines in the 1950s is 1-inch wide punched tape. More recently, the use of magnetic tape and floppy disks have been growing in popularity as storage technologies for NC. The advantage of these input media is their much higher data density.

Part programming can be accomplished using a variety of procedures ranging from highly manual to highly automated methods. The methods are: (1) manual part programming, (2) computer-assisted part programming, (3) part programming using CAD/CAM, and (4) manual data input. These part programming techniques are described in this section. Let us begin our presentation by explaining the NC coding system used to convey the part program to the machine tool.

### 6.5.1 NC Coding System

The program of instructions is communicated to the machine tool using a coding system based on binary numbers. This NC coding system is the low-level machine language that can be understood by the MCU. When higher level languages are used, such as APT (Section 6.5.4), the statements in the program are converted to this basic code. In the present section, we discuss how instructions are written in this NC code to control the relative positions of the tool and workpiece and to accomplish the other functions of the machine tool.

*Binary Numbers and the Binary Coded Decimal System.* In the binary number system, each digit can take on either of two values, 0 or 1. The meaning of consecutive digits in the binary system is based on the number 2 raised to successive powers. Starting from the right, the first digit is $2^0$ (which equals 1), the second digit is $2^1$ (which equals 2), the third is $2^2$ (which equals 4), the fourth is $2^3$ (which equals 8), and so forth. The two numbers, 0 or 1, in successive digit positions, indicate the presence or absence of the value. For example, the binary number 0101 is equal to the decimal number 5. The conversion from binary to decimal operates as follows:

$$(0 \times 2^3) + (1 \times 2^2) + (0 \times 2^1) + (1 \times 2^0) = (0 \times 8) + (1 \times 4) + (0 \times 2) + (1 \times 1)$$
$$= 4 + 1 = 5$$

Conversion of the 10 digits in the decimal number system into binary numbers is shown in Table 6.6. Four binary digits are required to represent the ten single-digit numbers in decimal. Of course, the numerical data required in NC includes large decimal values; for example, the coordinate position $x = 1250$ mm. To encode the decimal value 1250 in the binary number system requires a total of 11 digits: 10011100010. Another problem with the binary number system is the coding of decimal fractions, for example, feed = 0.085 mm/rev.

To deal with these problems in NC, a combination of the binary and decimal number systems has been adopted, called the *binary-coded decimal* (BCD) system. In this coding scheme, each of the ten digits (0-9) in the decimal system is coded as a four-digit binary number, and these binary numbers are added in sequence as in the decimal number system. For example, the decimal value 1250 would be coded in BCD as follows:

| *Number sequence* | *Binary number* | *Decimal value* |
|---|---|---|
| First | 0001 | 1000 |
| Second | 0010 | 200 |
| Third | 0101 | 50 |
| Fourth | 0000 | 0 |
| Sum | | 1250 |

*EIA and ISO Coding Standards.* In addition to numerical values, the NC coding system must also provide for alphabetical characters and other symbols. Eight binary digits are used to represent all of the characters required for NC part programming. There are two standard coding systems currently used in NC: (1) the Electronics Industry Association (EIA) and (2) the International Standards Organization (ISO). The Electronics Industry Association system is known as EIA RS-244-B. The ISO code was originally developed as the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) and has been adopted by ISO as its NC standard. The complete listings of EIA and ISO (ASCII) codes for NC are shown in Table 6.7. Many NC controllers are capable of reading either code.

**TABLE 6.6** Comparison of Binary and Decimal Numbers

| *Binary* | *Decimal* | *Binary* | *Decimal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0000 | 0 | 0101 | 5 |
| 0001 | 1 | 0110 | 6 |
| 0010 | 2 | 0111 | 7 |
| 0011 | 3 | 1000 | 8 |
| 0100 | 4 | 1001 | 9 |

**TABLE 6.7** Standard EIA and ISO (ASCII) Codes for Numerical Control Programming, Originally Designed for Punched Tape

| *EIA Code* | | | | | | | | | *Character or Interpretation* | *ISO Code (ASCII)* | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | | O | | | o | | | | 0 | | | O | O | | o | | | |
| | | | | | o | | | O | 1 | O | | O | O | | o | | | O |
| | | | | | o | | O | | 2 | O | | O | O | | o | | O | |
| | | | O | | o | | O | O | 3 | | | O | O | | o | | O | O |
| | | | | | o | O | | | 4 | O | | O | O | | o | O | | |
| | | | O | | o | O | | O | 5 | | | O | O | | o | O | | O |
| | | | O | | o | O | O | | 6 | | | O | O | | o | O | O | |
| | | | | | o | O | O | O | 7 | O | | O | O | | o | O | O | O |
| | | | | O | o | | | | 8 | O | | O | O | O | o | | | |
| | | | O | O | o | | | O | 9 | O | O | O | o | | | O | | |
| | O | O | | | o | | | O | A | | O | | | | o | | | O |
| | O | O | | | o | | O | | B | | O | | | | o | | O | |
| | O | O | O | | o | | O | O | C | O | O | | | | o | | O | O |
| | O | O | | | o | O | | | D | | O | | | | o | O | | |
| | O | O | O | | o | O | | O | E | O | O | | | | o | O | | O |
| | O | O | O | | o | O | O | | F | O | O | | | | o | O | O | |
| | O | O | | | o | O | O | O | G | | O | | | | o | O | O | O |
| | O | O | | O | o | | | | H | | O | | | O | o | | | |
| | O | O | O | O | o | | | O | I | O | O | | | O | o | | | O |
| | O | | O | | o | | | O | J | O | O | | | O | o | | O | |
| | O | | O | | o | | O | | K | | O | | | O | o | | O | O |
| | O | | | | o | | O | O | L | O | O | | | O | o | O | | |
| | O | | O | | o | O | | | M | | O | | | O | o | O | | O |
| | O | | | | o | O | | O | N | | O | | | O | o | O | O | |
| | O | | | | o | O | O | | O | O | O | | | O | o | O | O | O |
| | O | | O | | o | O | O | O | P | | O | | O | | o | | | |
| | O | | O | O | o | | | | Q | O | O | | O | | o | | | O |
| | O | | | O | o | | | O | R | O | O | | O | | o | | O | |
| | | O | O | | o | | O | | S | | O | | O | | o | O | O | |
| | | O | | | o | O | O | | T | O | O | | O | | o | O | | |
| | | O | O | | o | O | | | U | | O | | O | | o | O | | O |
| | | O | | | o | O | | O | V | | O | | O | | o | O | O | |
| | | O | | | o | O | O | | W | O | O | | O | | o | O | O | O |
| | | O | O | | o | O | O | O | X | O | O | | O | O | o | | | |
| | | O | O | O | o | | | | Y | | O | | O | O | o | | | O |
| | | O | | O | o | | | O | Z | | O | | O | O | o | | O | |
| | | O | O | O | o | O | O | | Tab | | | | | O | o | | | O |
| O | | | | | o | | | | End-of-Block | | | | | O | o | | O | |
| | | | O | | o | | | | Space | O | | O | | | o | | | |
| | O | O | O | | o | | | | Positive sign (+) | | | O | | O | o | | O | O |
| | O | | | | o | | | | Negative sign (–) | | | O | | O | o | O | | O |
| | O | O | | O | o | | O | O | Period (decimal point) (.) | | | O | | O | o | O | O | |
| | | O | O | O | o | | O | O | Comma (,) | O | | O | | O | o | O | | |

Note: Column numbers identify columns on the punched tape; O's represent holes in the tape.

Both EIA and ISO coding schemes were developed when punched tape was the predominant medium for storing NC part programs. Although punched tape has been largely superseded by more modern media, it is still widely used in industry, if only for backup storage. To ensure the correctness of the punched tape, the eight binary digits in the EIA and ISO codes include a *parity check*. Here's how the parity check works, explained here for the EIA code. In the EIA system, the tape reader is instructed to count an odd number of holes across the width of the tape. Whenever the particular number or symbol being punched requires an even number of holes, an extra hole is punched in column 5, hence making the total an odd number. For example, the decimal number 5 is coded by means of holes in columns 1 and 3. Since this is an even number of holes, a parity hole would be added. The decimal 7 requires an odd number of holes (in columns 1, 2, and 3), so no parity hole is needed. The parity check helps to ensure that the tape punch mechanism has perforated a complete hole in all required positions. If the tape reader counts an even number of holes, then a signal is issued that a parity error has occurred.

The difference between the EIA and ISO systems is that the parity check in the ISO code is an even number of holes, called an *even parity*. The EIA system uses an *odd parity*. Also, whereas the parity hole is in the fifth-digit position in the EIA coding system, it is in the eighth position in the ISO system. These differences can be seen in Table 6.7.

*How Instructions Are Formed.* A binary digit is called a *bit*. In punched tape, the values 0 or 1 are represented by the absence or presence of a hole in a certain row and column position (rows run across the tape; columns run lengthwise along the tape). Out of one row of bits a character is formed. A *character* is a combination of bits representing a numerical digit (0-9), an alphabetical letter (A-Z), or a symbol (Table 6.7). Out of a sequence of characters, a word is formed. A *word* specifies a detail about the operation, such as $x$-position, $y$-position, feed rate, or spindle speed. Out of a collection of words, a block is formed. A *block* is one complete NC instruction. It specifies the destination for the move, the speed and feed of the cutting operation, and other commands that determine explicitly what the machine tool will do. For example, an instruction block for a two-axis NC milling machine would likely include the $x$- and $y$-coordinates to which the machine table should be moved, the type of motion to be performed (linear or circular interpolation), the rotational speed of the milling cutter, and the feed rate at which the milling operation should be performed. Instruction blocks are separated by an end-of-block (EOB) symbol (a hole in column 8 in the EIA standard or holes in columns 2 and 4 in the ISO standard, as in Table 6.7).

The essential information in a part program is conveyed to the MCU by means of words that specify coordinates, feeds and speeds, tooling, and other commands necessary to operate the machine tool. Given the variety of machine tool types and the many different companies that build NC machine tools and MCUs, it is no surprise that several different formats have been developed over the years to specify words within an instruction block. These are often referred to as *tape formats*, because they were developed for punched tapes. More generally, they are known as *block formats*. At least five block formats have been developed [8]; these are briefly described in Table 6.8, with two lines of code for the drilling sequence shown in Figure 6.12.

The word address format with TAB separation and variable word order has been standardized by EIA as RS-274. It is the block format used on all modern controllers and is the format we will discuss here. It is usually referred to simply as the word address format even though it has been enhanced by tab separation and variable word order. Common letter prefixes used in the word address format are defined in Table 6.9.

**TABLE 6.8** Five Block Formats Used in NC Programming

| *Block Format (Tape Format)* | *Example for Figure 6.12* |
|---|---|
| *Fixed sequential format.* This format was used on many of the first commercially available NC machines. Each instruction block contains five words specified in only numerical data and in a very fixed order. | 00100070000300003<br>00200070000600003 |
| *Fixed sequential format with TAB ignored.* This is the same as the fixed sequential format except that TAB codes are used to separate the words for easier reading by humans. | 001 00 07000 03000 03<br>002 00 07000 06000 03 |
| *Tab sequential format.* This is the same as the preceding format except that words with the same value as in the preceding block can be omitted in the sequence. | 001 00 07000 03000 03<br>002 00 06000 |
| *Word address format.* This format uses a letter prefix to identify the type of word. See Table 6.9 for definition of prefixes. Repeated words can be omitted. The words run together, which makes the code difficult to read (for humans). | N001G00X07000Y03000M03<br>N002Y06000 |
| *Word address format with TAB separation and variable word order.* This is the same format as the previous, except that words are separated by TABs, and the words in the block can be listed in any order. See Table 6.9 for definition of letter prefixes. | N001 G00 X07000 Y03000 M03<br>N002 Y06000 |

Note: Examples indicate point-to-point moves to two hole locations in Figure 6.12.

Words in an instruction block are intended to convey all of the commands and data needed for the machine tool to execute the move defined in the block. The words required for one machine tool type may differ from those required for a different type; for example, turning requires a different set of commands than milling. The words in a block are usually given in the following order (although the word address format allows variations in the order):

- sequence number (N-word)
- preparatory word (G-word); see Table 6.10 for definition of G-words
- coordinates (X-, Y-, Z-words for linear axes, A-, B-, C-words for rotational axes)
- feed rate (F-word)

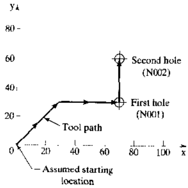



**Figure 6.12** Example drilling sequence for block formats described in Table 6.8. Dimensions are in millimeters.

**TABLE 6.9** Common Word Prefixes Used in Word Address Format

| *Word Prefix* | *Example* | *Function* |
|---|---|---|
| N | N01 | Sequence number; identifies block of instruction. From one to four digits can be used. |
| G | G21 | Preparatory word; prepares controller for instructions given in the block. See Table 6.10. There may be more than one G-word in a block. (Example specifies that numerical values are in millimeters.) |
| X, Y, Z | X75.0 | Coordinate data for three linear axes. Can be specified in either inches or millimeters. (Example defines $x$-axis value as 75 mm.) |
| U, W | U25.0 | Coordinate data for incremental moves in turning in the $x$- and $z$-directions, respectively. (Example specifies an incremental move of 25 mm in the $x$-direction.) |
| A, B, C | A90.0 | Coordinate data for three rotational axes. A is the rotational axis about $x$-axis; B rotates about $y$-axis; and C rotates about $z$-axis. Specified in degrees of rotation. (Example defines 90° of rotation about $x$-axis.) |
| R | R100.0 | Radius of arc; used in circular interpolation. (Example defines radius = 100 mm for circular interpolation.) The R-code can also be used to enter cutter radius data for defining the tool path offset distance from the part edge. |
| I, J, K | I32 J67 | Coordinate values of arc center, corresponding to $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-axes, respectively; used in circular interpolation. (Example defines center of arc for circular interpolation to be at $x = 32$ mm and $y = 67$ mm.) |
| F | G94 F40 | Feed rate per minute or per revolution in either inches or millimeters, as specified by G-words in Table 6.10. (Example specifies feed rate = 40 mm/min in milling or drilling operation.) |
| S | S0800 | Spindle rotation speed in revolutions per minute, expressed in four digits. For some machines, spindle rotation speed is expressed as a percentage of maximum speed available on machine, expressed in two digits. |
| T | T14 | Tool selection, used for machine tools with automatic tool changers or tool turrets. (Example specifies that the cutting tool to be used in the present instruction block is in position 14 in the tool drum.) |
| D | D05 | Tool diameter word used in contouring moves for offsetting the tool from the workpart by a distance stored in the indicated register, usually the distance is the cutter radius. (Example indicates that the radius offset distance is stored in offset register number 05 in the controller.) |
| P | P05 R15.0 | Used to store cutter radius data in offset register number 05. (Example indicates that a cutter radius value of 15.0 mm is to be stored in offset register 05. |
| M | M03 | Miscellaneous command. See Table 6.11. (Example commands the machine to start spindle rotation in clockwise direction.) |

Note: Dimensional values in the examples are specified in millimeters.

- spindle speed (S-word)
- tool selection (T-word)
- miscellaneous command (M-word); see Table 6.11 for definition of M-words
- end-of-block (EOB symbol)

G-words and M-words require some elaboration. G-words are called preparatory words. They consist of two numerical digits (following the "G" prefix in the word address format) that prepare the MCU for the instructions and data contained in the block. For example, G02 prepares the controller for clockwise circular interpolation, so that the subsequent data in the block can be properly interpreted for this type of move. In some cases, more than one G-word is needed to prepare the MCU for the move. Most of the common G-words are presented in Table 6.10. While G-words have been standardized in the machine tool industry, there are sometimes deviations for particular machines. For instance, there are several differences between milling and turning type machines; these are identified in Table 6.10.

**TABLE 6.10** Common G-words (Preparatory Word)

| *G-word* | *Function* |
|---|---|
| G00 | Point-to-point movement (rapid traverse) between previous point and endpoint defined in current block. Block must include *x-y-z* coordinates of end position. |
| G01 | Linear interpolation movement. Block must include *x-y-z* coordinates of end position. Feed rate must also be specified. |
| G02 | Circular interpolation, clockwise. Block must include either arc radius or arc center; coordinates of end position must also be specified. |
| G03 | Circular interpolation, counterclockwise. Block must include either arc radius or arc center; coordinates of end position must also be specified. |
| G04 | Dwell for a specified time. |
| G10 | Input of cutter offset data, followed by a P-code and an R-code. |
| G17 | Selection of *x-y* plane in milling. |
| G18 | Selection of *x-z* plane in milling. |
| G19 | Selection of *y-z* plane in milling. |
| G20 | Input values specified in inches. |
| G21 | Input values specified in millimeters. |
| G28 | Return to reference point. |
| G32 | Thread cutting in turning. |
| G40 | Cancel offset compensation for cutter radius (nose radius in turning). |
| G41 | Cutter offset compensation, left of part surface. Cutter radius (nose radius in turning) must be specified in block. |
| G42 | Cutter offset compensation, right of part surface. Cutter radius (nose radius in turning) must be specified in block. |
| G50 | Specify location of coordinate axis system origin relative to starting location of cutting tool. Used in some lathes. Milling and drilling machines use G92. |
| G90 | Programming in absolute coordinates. |
| G91 | Programming in incremental coordinates. |
| G92 | Specify location of coordinate axis system origin relative to starting location of cutting tool. Used in milling and drilling machines and some lathes. Other lathes use G50. |
| G94 | Specify feed per minute in milling and drilling. |
| G95 | Specify feed per revolution in milling and drilling. |
| G98 | Specify feed per minute in turning. |
| G99 | Specify feed per revolution in turning. |

Note: Some G-words apply to milling and/or drilling only, whereas others apply to turning only.

**TABLE 6.11** Common M-words Used in Word Address Format

| *M-word* | *Function* |
|---|---|
| M00 | Program stop; used in middle of program. Operator must restart machine. |
| M01 | Optional program stop; active only when optional stop button on control panel has been depressed. |
| M02 | End of program. Machine stop. |
| M03 | Start spindle in clockwise direction for milling machine (forward for turning machine). |
| M04 | Start spindle in counterclockwise direction for milling machine (reverse for turning machine). |
| M05 | Spindle stop. |
| M06 | Execute tool change, either manually or automatically. If manually, operator must restart machine. Does not include selection of tool, which is done by T-word if automatic, by operator if manual. |
| M07 | Turn cutting fluid on flood. |
| M08 | Turn cutting fluid on mist. |
| M09 | Turn cutting fluid off. |
| M10 | Automatic clamping of fixture, machine slides, etc. |
| M11 | Automatic unclamping. |
| M13 | Start spindle in clockwise direction for milling machine (forward for turning machine) and turn on cutting fluid. |
| M14 | Start spindle in counterclockwise direction for milling machine (reverse for turning machine) and turn on cutting fluid. |
| M17 | Spindle and cutting fluid off. |
| M19 | Turn spindle off at oriented position. |
| M30 | End of program. Machine stop. Rewind tape (on tape-controlled machines). |

M-words are used to specify miscellaneous or auxiliary functions that are available on the machine tool. Examples include starting the spindle rotation, stopping the spindle for a tool change, and turning the cutting fluid on or off. Of course, the particular machine tool must possess the function that is being called. Many of the common M-words are explained in Table 6.11. Miscellaneous commands are normally placed at the end of the block.

### 6.5.2 Manual Part Programming

In manual part programming, the programmer prepares the NC code using the low-level machine language previously described. The program is either written by hand on a form from which a punched tape or other storage media is subsequently coded, or it is entered directly into a computer equipped with NC part programming software, which writes the program onto the storage media. In any case, the part program is a block-by-block listing of the machining instructions for the given job, formatted for the particular machine tool to be used.

Manual part programming can be used for both point-to-point and contouring jobs. It is most suited for point-to-point machining operations such as drilling. It can also be used for simple contouring jobs, such as milling and turning when only two axes are involved. However, for complex three-dimensional machining operations, there is an advantage in using computer-assisted part programming.

*Instructions in Word Address Format.* Instructions in word address format consist of a series of words, each identified by a prefix label. In our coverage, statements are illustrated with dimensions given in millimeters. The values are expressed in four digits including one decimal place. For example, X020.0 means $x = 20.0$ mm. It should be noted that many CNC machines use formats that differ from ours, and so the instruction manual for each particular machine tool must be consulted to determine its own proper format. Our format is designed to convey principles and for easy reading.

In preparing the NC part program, the part programmer must initially define the origin of the coordinate axes and then reference the succeeding motion commands to this axis system. This is accomplished in the first statement of the part program. The directions of the $x$-, $y$-, and/or $z$-axes are predetermined by the machine tool configuration, but the origin of the coordinate system can be located at any desired position. The part programmer defines this position relative to some part feature that can be readily recognized by the machine operator. The operator is instructed to move the tool to this position at the beginning of the job. With the tool in position, the G92 code is used by the programmer to define the origin as follows:

G92 X0 Y-050.0 Z010.0

where the $x$, $y$, and $z$ values specify the coordinates of the tool location in the coordinate system; in effect, this defines the location of the origin. In some CNC lathes and turning centers, the code G50 is used instead of G92. Our $x$, $y$, and $z$ values are specified in millimeters, and this would have to be explicitly stated. Thus, a more-complete instruction block would be the following:

G21 G92 X0 Y-050.0 Z010.0

where the G21 code indicates that the subsequent coordinate values are in millimeters. Motions are programmed by the codes G00, G01, G02, and G03. G00 is used for a point-to-point rapid traverse movement of the tool to the coordinates specified in the command; for example,

G00 X050.0 Y086.5 Z100.0

specifies a rapid traverse motion from the current location to the location defined by the coordinates $x = 50.0$ mm, $y = 86.5$ mm, and $z = 100.0$ mm. This command would be appropriate for NC drilling machines in which a rapid move is desired to the next hole location, with no specification on the tool path. The velocity with which the move is achieved in rapid traverse mode is set by parameters in the MCU and is not specified numerically in the instruction block. The G00 code is not intended for contouring operations.

Linear interpolation is accomplished by the G01 code. This is used when it is desired for the tool to execute a contour cutting operation along a straight line path. For example, the command

G01 G94 X050.0 Y086.5 Z100.0 F40 S800

specifies that the tool is to move in a straight line from its current position to the location defined by $x = 50.0$ mm, $y = 86.5$ mm, and $z = 100.0$ mm, at a feed rate of 40 mm/min and spindle speed of 800 rev/min.

The G02 and G03 codes are used for circular interpolation, clockwise and counterclockwise, respectively. As indicated in Table 6.1, circular interpolation on a milling machine is limited to one of three planes, $x$-$y$, $x$-$z$, or $y$-$z$. The distinction between clockwise and counterclockwise is established by viewing the plane from the front view. Selection of the desired plane is accomplished by entering one of the codes, G17, G18, or G19, respectively. Thus, the instruction

G02 G17 X088.0 Y040.0 R028.0 F30

moves the tool along a clockwise circular trajectory in the $x$-$y$ plane to the final coordinates defined by $x = 88$ mm and $y = 40$ mm at a feed rate of 30 mm/min. The radius of the circular arc is 28 mm. The path taken by the cutter from an assumed starting point ($x = 40$, $y = 60$) is illustrated in Figure 6.13.

In a point-to-point motion statement (G00), it is usually desirable to position the tool so that its center is located at the specified coordinates. This is appropriate for operations such as drilling, in which a hole is to be positioned at the coordinates indicated in the statement. But in contouring motions, it is almost always desirable that the path followed by the center of the tool be separated from the actual surface of the part by a distance equal to the cutter radius. This is shown in Figure 6.14 for profile milling the outside edges of a rectangular part in two dimensions. For a three-dimensional surface, the shape of the end of the cutter would also have to be considered in the offset computation. This tool path compensation is called the *cutter offset*, and the calculation of the correct coordinates of the endpoints of each move can be time consuming and tedious for the part programmer. Modern CNC machine tool controllers perform these cutter offset calculations automatically when the programmer uses the G40, G41, and G42 codes. The G40 code is used to cancel the cutter offset compensation. The G41 and G42 codes invoke the cutter offset compensation of the tool path on the left- or right-hand side of the part, respectively. The left- and right-hand sides are defined according to the tool path direction. To illustrate, in the rectangular part

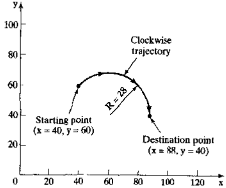



**Figure 6.13** Tool path in circular interpolation for the statement: G02 G17 X088.0 Y040.0 R028.0. Units are millimeters.

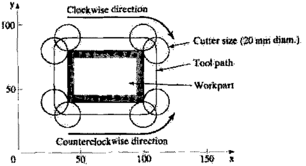



**Figure 6.14** Cutter offset for a simple rectangular part. The tool path is separated from the part perimeter by a distance equal to the cutter radius. To invoke cutter offset compensation, the G41 code is used to follow the clockwise path, which keeps the tool on the left-hand side of the part. G42 is used to follow the counterclockwise path, which keeps the tool on the right-hand side of the part.

in Figure 6.14, a clockwise tool path around the part would always position the tool on the left-hand side of the edge being cut, so a G41 code would be used to compute the cutter offset compensation. By contrast, a counterclockwise tool path would keep the tool on the right-hand side of the part, so G42 would be used. Accordingly, the instruction for profile milling the bottom edge of the part, assuming that the cutter begins along the bottom left corner, would read:

G42 G01 X100.0 Y040.0 D05

where D05 refers to the cutter radius value stored in MCU memory. Certain registers are reserved in the control unit for these cutter offset values. The D-code references the value contained in the identified register, D05 indicates that the radius offset distance is stored in the number 5 offset register in the controller. This data can be entered into the controller in either of two ways: (1) as manual input or (2) as an instruction in the part program. Manual input is more flexible because the tooling used to machine the part may change from one setup to the next. At the time the job is run, the operator knows which tool will be used, and the data can be loaded into the proper register as one of the steps in the setup. When the offset data is entered as a part program instruction, the statement has the form:

G10 P05 R10.0

where G10 is a preparatory word indicating that cutter offset data will be entered; P05 indicates that the data will be entered into offset register number 05; and R10.0 is the radius value, here 10.0 mm.

***Some Part Programming Examples.*** To demonstrate manual part programming, we present two examples using the sample part shown in Figure 6.15. The first example is a point-to-point program to drill the three holes in the part. The second example is a two-axis contouring program to accomplish profile milling around the periphery of the part.

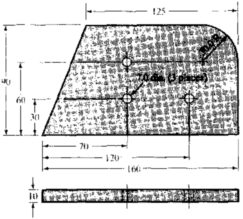



**Figure 6.15** Sample part to illustrate NC part programming. Dimensions are in millimeters. General tolerance = ±0.1 mm. Work material is a machinable grade of aluminum.

### EXAMPLE 6.1 Point-to-Point Drilling

This example presents the NC part program in word address format for drilling the three holes in the sample part shown in Figure 6.15. We assume that the outside edges of the starting workpart have been rough cut (by jig sawing) and are slightly oversized for subsequent profile milling. The three holes to be drilled in this example will be used to locate and fixture the part for profile milling in the following example. For the present drilling sequence, the part is gripped in place so that its top surface is 40 mm above the surface of the machine tool table to provide ample clearance beneath the part for hole drilling. We will define the $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-axes as shown in Figure 6.16. A 7.0-mm diameter drill, corresponding to the specified hole size, has been chucked in the CNC drill press. The drill will be operated at a feed of 0.05 mm/rev and a spindle speed of 1000 rev/min (corresponding to a surface speed of about 0.37 m/sec, which is slow for the aluminum work material). At the beginning of the job, the drill point will be positioned at a target point located at $x = 0$, $y = -50$, and $z = +10$ (axis units are millimeters). The program begins with the tool positioned at this target point.

| NC Part Program Code | Comments |
|---|---|
| N001 G21 G90 G92 X0 Y-050.0 Z010.0; | Define origin of axes. |
| N002 G00 X070.0 Y030.0; | Rapid move to first hole location. |
| N003 G01 G95 Z-15.0 F0.05 S1000 M03; | Drill first hole. |
| N004 G01 Z010.0; | Retract drill from hole. |
| N005 G00 Y060.0; | Rapid move to second hole location. |
| N006 G01 G95 Z-15.0 F0.05; | Drill second hole. |
| N007 G01 Z010.0; | Retract drill from hole. |

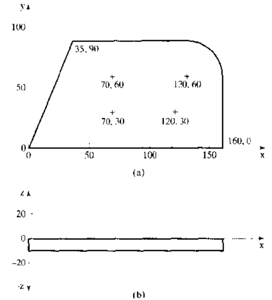



**Figure 6.16** Sample part aligned relative to (a) $x$- and $y$-axes, and (b) $z$-axis. Coordinates are given for significant part features in (a).

| | |
|---|---|
| N008 G00 X120.0 Y030.0; | Rapid move to third hole location. |
| N009 G01 G95 Z-15.0 F0.05; | Drill third hole. |
| N010 G01 Z010.0; | Retract drill from hole. |
| N011 G00 X0 Y-050.0 M05; | Rapid move to target point. |
| N012 M30; | End of program, stop machine. |

**EXAMPLE 6.2 Two-Axis Milling**

The three holes drilled in the previous example can be used for locating and holding the workpart to completely mill the outside edges without re-fixturing. The axis coordinates are shown in Figure 6.16 (same coordinates as in the previous drilling sequence). The part is fixtured so that its top surface is 40 mm above the surface of the machine tool table. Thus, the origin of the axis system will be 40 mm above the table surface. A 20-mm diameter end mill with four teeth will be used. The cutter has a side tooth engagement length of 40 mm. Throughout the machining sequence, the bottom tip of the cutter will be positioned 25 mm below the part top surface, which corresponds to $z = -25$ mm. Since the part is 10 mm thick, this $z$-position will allow the side cutting edges of the milling cutter to cut the full thickness of the part during profile milling. The cutter will be operated at a spindle speed = 1000 rev/min (which corresponds to a surface speed of about 1.0 m/sec) and a feed rate = 50 mm/min (which corresponds to 0.20 mm/tooth). The tool path to be followed by the cutter is shown

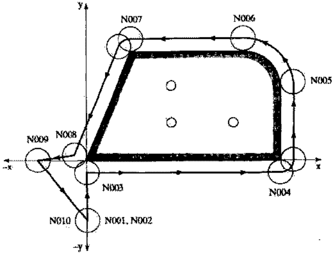



**Figure 6.17** Cutter path for profile milling outside perimeter of sample part.

in Figure 6.17, with numbering that corresponds to the sequence number in the program. Cutter diameter data has been manually entered into offset register 05. At the beginning of the job, the cutter will be positioned so that its center tip is at a target point located at $x = 0$, $y = -50$, and $z = +10$. The program begins with the tool positioned at this location.

| NC Part Program Code | Comments |
|---|---|
| N001 G21 G90 G92 X0 Y-050.0 Z010.0; | Define origin of axes. |
| N002 G00 Z-025.0 S1000 M03; | Rapid to cutter depth, turn spindle on. |
| N003 G01 G94 G42 Y0 D05 F40; | Engage part, start cutter offset. |
| N004 G01 X160.0; | Mill lower part edge. |
| N005 G01 Y060.0; | Mill right straight edge. |
| N006 G17 G03 X130.0 Y090.0 R030.0; | Circular interpolation around arc. |
| N007 G01 X035.0; | Mill upper part edge. |
| N008 G01 X0 Y0; | Mill left part edge. |
| N009 G40 G00 X-040.0 M05; | Rapid exit from part. cancel offset. |
| N010 G00 X0 Y-050.0; | Rapid move to target point. |
| N011 M30; | End of program, stop machine. |

### 6.5.3 Computer-Assisted Part Programming

Manual part programming can be time consuming, tedious, and subject to errors for parts possessing complex geometries or requiring many machining operations. In these cases, and even for simpler jobs, it is advantageous to use computer-assisted part programming. A number of NC part programming language systems have been developed to accomplish many of the calculations that the programmer would otherwise have to do. This saves time and results in a more-accurate and efficient part program. In computer-assisted part programming, the various tasks are divided between the human part programmer and the computer.

In computer-assisted part programming, the machining instructions are written in English-like statements that are subsequently translated by the computer into the low-level machine code that can be interpreted and executed by the machine tool controller. When using one of the part programming languages, the two main tasks of the programmer are: (1) defining the geometry of the workpart and (2) specifying the tool path and operation sequence.

*Defining the Part Geometry.* No matter how complicated the workpart may appear, it is composed of basic geometric elements and mathematically defined surfaces. Consider our sample part in Figure 6.18. Although its appearance is somewhat irregular, the outline of the part consists of intersecting straight lines and a partial circle. The hole locations in the part can be defined in terms of the $x$- and $y$-coordinates of their centers. Nearly any component that can be conceived by a designer can be described by points, straight lines, planes, circles, cylinders, and other mathematically defined surfaces. It is the part programmer's task to identify and enumerate the geometric elements of which the part is comprised. Each element must be defined in terms of its dimensions and location relative to other elements. A few examples will be instructive here to show how geometric elements are defined. We will use our sample part to illustrate, with labels of geometry elements added as shown in Figure 6.18.

Let us begin with the simplest geometric element, a point. The simplest way to define a *point* is by means of its coordinates; for example,

$$\text{P4} = \text{POINT}/35, 90, 0$$

where the point is identified by a symbol (P4), and its coordinates are given in the order $x$, $y$, $z$ in millimeters ($x$ = 35 mm, $y$ = 90 mm, and $z$ = 0). A *line* can be defined by two points, as in the following:

$$\text{L1} = \text{LINE/P1, P2}$$

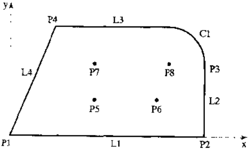



**Figure 6.18** Sample part with geometry elements (points, lines, and circle) labeled for computer-assisted part programming.

where L1 is the line defined in the statement, and P1 and P2 are two previously defined points. And finally, a *circle* can be defined by its center location and radius:

C1 = CIRCLE/CENTER, P8, RADIUS, 30

where C1 is the newly defined circle, with center at previously defined point P8 and radius = 30 mm. Our examples are based on the APT language, which offers many alternative ways to define points, lines, circles, and other geometric elements. The APT language is described in Section 6.5.4, and a listing of APT word definitions is provided in the Appendix to this chapter.

*Specifying Tool Path and Operation Sequence.* After the part geometry has been defined, the part programmer must next specify the tool path that the cutter will follow to machine the part. The tool path consists of a sequence of connected line and arc segments, using the previously defined geometry elements to guide the cutter. For example, suppose we are machining the outline of our sample part in Figure 6.18 in a profile milling operation (contouring). We have just finished cutting along surface L1 in a counterclockwise direction around the part, and the tool is presently located at the intersection of surfaces L1 and L2. The following APT statement could be used to command the tool to make a left turn from L1 onto L2 and to cut along L2:

GOLFT/L2, TANTO, C1

The tool proceeds along surface L2 until it is tangent to (TANTO) circle C1. This is a continuous path motion command. Point-to-point commands tend to be simpler; for example, the following statement directs the tool to go to a previously defined point P0:

GOTO/P0

A variety of contouring and point-to-point motion commands are available in the APT language.

*Other Functions.* In addition to defining part geometry and specifying tool path, the programmer must also accomplish various other programming functions, such as:

- naming the program
- identifying the machine tool on which the job will be performed
- specifying cutting speeds and feed rates
- designating the cutter size (cutter radius, tool length, etc.)
- specifying tolerances in circular interpolation

*Computer Tasks in Computer-Assisted Part Programming.* The computer's role in computer-assisted part programming consists of the following tasks, performed more or less in the sequence noted: (1) input translation, (2) arithmetic and cutter offset computations, (3) editing, and (4) postprocessing. The first three tasks are carried out under the supervision of the language processing program. For example, the APT language uses a processor designed to interpret and process the words, symbols, and numbers written in APT. Other languages require their own processors. The fourth task, postprocessing, re-

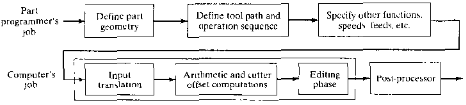



**Figure 6.19** Tasks in computer-assisted part programming.

quires a separate computer program The sequence and relationship of the tasks of the part programmer and the computer are portrayed in Figure 6.19.

The part programmer enters the program using APT or some other high-level part programming language. The *input translation* module converts the coded instructions contained in the program into computer-usable form, preparatory to further processing. In APT, input translation accomplishes the following tasks: (1) syntax check of the input code to identify errors in format, punctuation, spelling, and statement sequence; (2) assigning a sequence number to each APT statement in the program; (3) converting geometry elements into a suitable form for computer processing; and (4) generating an intermediate file called PROFIL that is utilized in subsequent arithmetic calculations.

The *arithmetic module* consists of a set of subroutines to perform the mathematical computations required to define the part surface and generate the tool path, including compensation for cutter offset. The individual subroutines are called by the various statements used in the part programming language. The arithmetic computations are performed on the PROFIL file. The arithmetic module frees the programmer from the time-consuming and error-prone geometry and trigonometry calculations to concentrate on issues related to workpart processing. The output of this module is a file called CLFILE, which stands for "cutter location file." As its name suggests, this file consists mainly of tool path data.

In *editing*, the CLFILE is edited, and a new file is generated called CLDATA. When printed, CLDATA provides readable data on cutter locations and machine tool operating commands. The machine tool commands can be converted to specific instructions during postprocessing. Some of the editing of CLFILE involves processing of special functions associated with the part programming language. For example, in APT, one of the special functions is a COPY command, which provides for copying a tool path sequence that has been generated in the preceding computations and translating the sequence to a new location. Another APT instruction processed in the editing phase is TRACUT, which stands for "transform cutter locations." This instruction allows a tool path sequence to be transformed from one coordinate system to another, based on matrix manipulation. Other editing functions are concerned with constructing tool paths for machines having rotational axes, such as four- and five-axis machining centers. The output of the editing phase is a part program in a format that can be postprocessed for the given machine tool on which the job will be accomplished.

NC machine tool systems are different. They have different features and capabilities. High-level part programming languages, such as APT, are generally not intended for only one machine tool type. They are designed to be general purpose. Accordingly, the final task of the computer in computer-assisted part programming is *postprocessing*, in which the cutter location data and machining commands in the CLDATA file are converted into low-level code that can be interpreted by the NC controller for a specific machine tool. The output of postprocessing is a part program consisting of G-codes, $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-coordinates. S, F, M, and other functions in word address format. The postprocessor is separate from the high-level part programming language. A unique postprocessor must be written for each machine tool system.

### 6.5.4 Part Programming with APT

In this section, we present some of the basic principles and vocabulary of the APT language. APT is an acronym that stands for Automatically Programmed Tooling. It is a three-dimensional NC part programming system that was developed in the late 1950s and early 60s (Historical Note 6.3). Today it remains an important and widely used language in the United States and around the world. APT is also important because many of the concepts incorporated into it formed the basis for other subsequently developed languages. APT was originally intended as a contouring language, but modern versions can be used for both point-to-point and contouring operations in up to five axes. Our discussion will be limited to the three linear axes, $x$, $y$, and $z$. APT can be used for a variety of machining operations. Our coverage will concentrate on drilling (point-to-point) and milling (contouring) operations. There are more than 500 words in the APT vocabulary. Only a small (but important) fraction of the total lexicon will be covered here. The Appendix to this chapter lists some of these important APT words.

#### Historical Note 6.3 APT: Automatically Programmed Tool [2], [16], [18].

The reader must remember that the work described in this historical note was started in the 1950s, a time when digital computer technology was in its infancy, and so were the associated computer programming languages and methods. The APT project was a pioneering effort, not only in the development of NC technology, but also in computer programming concepts, computer graphics, and computer-aided design (CAD).

It was recognized early in the NC development research at MIT that part programming would be a time-consuming task in the application of the new technology, and that there were opportunities to reduce the programming time by delegating portions of the task to a general-purpose computer. In June 1951, even before the first experimental NC machine was operating, a study was undertaken to explore how the digital computer might be used as a programming aid. The result of this study was a recommendation that a set of computer programs be developed to perform the mathematical computations that otherwise would have to be accomplished by the part programmer. In hindsight, the drawback of this approach was that, while it automated certain steps in the part programming task, the basic manual programming procedure was preserved.

The significant breakthrough in computer-assisted part programming was the development of the automatically programmed tool system (APT) during the years 1956–1959. It was the brainchild of mathematician Douglas Ross, who worked in the MIT Servomechanisms Lab at the time. Ross envisioned a part programming system in which (1) the user would prepare instructions for operating the machine tool using English-like words, (2) the digital computer would translate these instructions into a language that the computer could understand and process, (3) the computer would carry out the arithmetic and geometric calculations needed to execute the instructions, and (4) the computer would further process (postprocess) the instructions so that they could be interpreted by the machine tool controller. He further recognized that the programming system should be expandable for applications beyond those considered in the immediate research (milling applications). The acronym "APT" was coined in December 1956 while Ross was preparing the first of many interim reports to the project sponsor, the U.S. Air Force.

Around this time, the Aircraft Industries Association (AIA, renamed the Aerospace Industries Association in 1959) was attempting to deal with NC part programming issues through its Subcommittee on Numerical Control (SNC). Ross was invited to attend a meeting of the SNC in January 1957 to present his views on computer-assisted part programming. The result of this meeting was that Ross's work at MIT was established as a focal point for NC programming within the AIA. A project was initiated in April 1957 to develop a two-dimensional version of APT, with nine aircraft companies plus IBM Corporation participating in the joint effort and MIT as project coordinator. The 2D-APT system was ready for field evaluation at plants of participating companies in April 1958. Testing, debugging, and refining the programming system took approximately three years, during which time the AIA assumed responsibility for further APT development. In 1961, the Illinois Institute of Technology Research Institute (IITRI) was selected by the AIA to become the agency responsible for long-range maintenance and upgrading of APT. In 1962, IITRI announced completion of APT-III, a commercial version of APT for three-dimensional part programming. In 1974, APT was accepted as the U.S. standard for programming NC metal cutting machine tools. In 1978, it was accepted by the ISO as the international standard.

One of the initial problems with APT when it was released in the early 1960s was that a very large computer was required to execute it, thereby limiting the number of companies that could use it. Several part programming languages based directly on APT were developed to address this problem. Two of the more important APT-based languages were ADAPT and EXAPT. ADAPT (ADaptation of APT) was developed by IBM under Air Force contract to include many of the features of APT but required a much smaller computer. ADAPT can be used for both point-to-point and contouring jobs. EXAPT (EXtended subset of APT) was another NC part programming language based on APT. EXAPT was developed in Germany around 1964 in three versions: (1) EXAPT I was designed for point-to-point applications, such as drilling and straight milling; (2) EXAPT II was developed for turning operations; and (3) EXAPT III was capable of limited contouring for milling.

APT is not only a language; it is also the computer program that processes the APT statements to calculate the corresponding cutter positions and generate the machine tool control commands. To program in APT, the part geometry must first be defined. Then the tool is directed to various point locations and along surfaces of the workpart to accomplish the required machining operations. The viewpoint of the programmer is that the workpiece remains stationary, and the tool is instructed to move relative to the part. To complete the program, speeds and feeds must be specified, tools must be called, tolerances must be given for circular interpolation, and so forth. Thus, there are four basic types of statements in the APT language:

1. *Geometry statements*, also called *definition statements*, are used to define the geometry elements that comprise the part.
2. *Motion commands* are used to specify the tool path.
3. *Postprocessor statements* control the machine tool operation, for example, to specify speeds and feeds, set tolerance values for circular interpolation, and actuate other capabilities of the machine tool.
4. *Auxiliary statements*, a group of miscellaneous statements used to name the part program, insert comments in the program and accomplish similar functions.

These statements are constructed of APT vocabulary words, symbols, and numbers, all arranged using appropriate punctuation. APT vocabulary words consist of six or fewer characters. The characters are almost always letters of the alphabet. Only a very few APT vocabulary words contain numerical digits-so few in fact that we will not encounter any of them in our treatment of APT in this chapter. Most APT statements include a slash (/) as part of the punctuation. APT vocabulary words that immediately precede the slash are called *major words*, whereas those that follow the slash are called *minor words*.

*Geometry Statements.* The geometry of the part must be defined to identify the surfaces and features that are to be machined. Accordingly, the points, lines, and surfaces must be defined in the program prior to specifying the motion statements. The general form of an APT geometry statement is the following:

$$\text{SYMBOL} = \text{GEOMETRY TYPE/descriptive data} \tag{6.3}$$

An example of such a statement is

$$\text{P1} = \text{POINT/20.0, 40.0, 60.0}$$

An APT geometry statement consists of three sections. The first is the symbol used to identify the geometry element. A symbol can be any combination of six or fewer alphabetical and numerical characters, at least one of which must be alphabetical. Also, the symbol cannot be an APT vocabulary word. Some examples are presented in Table 6.12 to illustrate what is permissible as a symbol and what is not. The second section of the APT geometry statement is an APT major word that identifies the type of geometry element. Examples are POINT, LINE, CIRCLE, and PLANE. The third section of the APT geometry statement provides the descriptive data that define the element precisely, completely, and uniquely. These data may include numerical values to specify dimensional and position data, previously defined geometry elements, and APT minor words.

Punctuation in an APT geometry statement is indicated in Eq. (6.3). The definition statement is written as an equation, the symbol being equated to the geometry element type, followed by a slash with descriptive data to the right of the slash. Commas are used to separate the words and numerical values in the descriptive data.

There are a variety of ways to specify the various geometry elements. The Appendix to this chapter presents a sampling of statements for defining the geometry elements we

**TABLE 6.12** Examples of Permissible and Impermissible Symbols in APT Geometry Statements

| *Symbol* | *Permissible or Not, and Why* |
|---|---|
| P1 | Permissible |
| PZL | Permissible |
| ABCDEF | Permissible |
| PABCDEF | Not permissible, too many characters |
| 123456 | Not permissible, all numerical characters |
| POINT | Not permissible, APT vocabulary word |
| P1.5 | Not permissible, only alphabetic and numerical characters are allowed |

will be using in our treatment of APT: points, lines, planes, and circles. The reader may benefit from a few examples:

*Points.* Specification of a point is most easily accomplished by designating its $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-coordinates.

P1 = POINT/20.0, 40.0, 60.0

where the descriptive data following the slash indicate the $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-coordinates. The specification can be done in either inches or millimeters (metric). We use metric values in our examples. As an alternative, a point can be defined as the intersection of two intersecting lines, as in the following:

P2 = POINT/INTOF, L1, L2

where the APT word INTOF in the descriptive data stands for "intersection of." Other methods of defining points are given in the Appendix under POINT.

*Lines.* A line defined in APT is considered to be of infinite length in both directions. Also, APT treats a line as a vertical plane that is perpendicular to the $x$-$y$ plane. The easiest way to specify a line is by two points through which it passes:

L3 = LINE/P3, P4

In some situations, the part programmer may find it more convenient to define a new line as being parallel to another line that has been previously defined; for example,

L4 = LINE/P5, PARLEL, L3

where PARLEL is APT's way of spelling "parallel." The statement indicates line L4 passes through point P5 and is parallel to line L3.

*Planes.* A plane can be defined by specifying three points through which the plane passes, as in the following:

PL1 = PLANE/P1, P2, P3

Of course, the three points must be non-collinear. A plane can also be defined as being parallel to another plane that has been previously defined; for instance,

PL2 = PLANE/P2, PARLEL, PL1

which states that plane PL2 passes through point P2 and is parallel to plane PL1. In APT, a plane extends indefinitely.

*Circles.* In APT, a circle is considered to be a cylindrical surface that is perpendicular to the $x$-$y$ plane and extends to infinity in the $z$-direction. The easiest way to define a circle is by its center and radius, as in the following:

C1 = CIRCLE/CENTER, P1, RADIUS, 25.0

By convention, the circle is located in the $x$-$y$ plane. An alternative way of defining a circle is to specify that it passes through three points; for example,

C2 = CIRCLE/P4, P5, P6

where the three points must not be collinear. There are many other ways to define a circle, several of which are listed in the Appendix under CIRCLE.

Certain ground rules must be obeyed when formulating APT geometry statements. Following are four important APT rules:

1. Coordinate data must be specified in the order $x$, then $y$, then $z$, because the statement

   P1 = POINT/20.5, 40.0, 60.0

   is interpreted to mean $x = 20.5$ mm, $y = 40.0$ mm, and $z = 60.0$ mm.
2. Any symbols used as descriptive data must have been previously defined; for example, in the statement

   P2 = POINT/INTOF, L1, L2

   the two lines L1 and L2 must have been previously defined. In setting up the list of geometry statements, the APT programmer must be sure to define symbols before using them in subsequent statements.
3. A symbol can be used to define only one geometry element. The same symbol cannot be used to define two different elements. For example, the following statements would be incorrect if they were included in the same program:

   P1 = POINT/20, 40, 60

   P1 = POINT/30, 50, 70
4. Only one symbol can be used to define any given element. For example, the following two statements in the same part program would be incorrect:

   P1 = POINT/20, 40, 60

   P2 = POINT/20, 40, 60

**EXAMPLE 6.3 Part Geometry Using APT**

Let us construct the geometry of our sample part in Figure 6.15. The geometry elements of the part to be defined in APT are labeled in Figure 6.18. Reference is also made to Figure 6.16, which shows the coordinate values of the points used to dimension the part. Only the geometry statements are given in the APT sequence that follows:

P1 = POINT/0, 0, 0

P2 = POINT/160.0, 0, 0

P3 = POINT/160.0, 60.0, 0

P4 = POINT/35.0,90.0,0

P5 = POINT/70.0,30.0,0

P6 = POINT/120.0,30.0,0

P7 = POINT/70.0,60.0,0

P8 = POINT/130.0,60.0,0

L1 = LINE/P1,P2

L2 = LINE/P2,P3

C1 = CIRCLE/CENTER,P8,RADIUS,30.0

L3 = LINE/P4,PARLEL,L1

L4 = LINE/P4,P1

---

*Motion Commands.* All APT motion statements follow a common format, just as geometry statements have their own format. The format of an APT motion command is:

MOTION COMMAND/descriptive data (6.4)

An example of an APT motion statement is

GOTO/P1

The statement consists of two sections separated by a slash. The first section is the basic command that indicates what move the tool should make. The descriptive data following the slash tell the tool where to go. In the above example, the tool is directed to go to (GOTO) point P1, which has been defined in a previous geometry statement.

At the beginning of the sequence of motion statements, the tool must be given a starting point. This is likely to be the target point, the location where the operator has positioned the tool at the start of the job. The part programmer keys into this starting position with the following statement:

FROM/PTARG (6.5)

where FROM is an APT vocabulary word indicating that this is the initial point from which all others will be referenced; and PTARG is the symbol assigned to the starting point. Another way to make this statement is the following:

FROM/−20.0, −20.0, 0

where the descriptive data in this case are the $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-coordinates of the starting point. The FROM statement occurs only at the start of the motion sequence.

In our discussion of APT motion statements, it is appropriate to distinguish between point-to-point motions and contouring motions. For *point-to-point motions*, there are only two commands: GOTO and GODLTA. The GOTO statement instructs the tool to go to a particular point location specified in the descriptive data. Two examples are:

$$\text{GOTO/P2} \tag{6.6a}$$

$$\text{GOTO/25.0, 40.0, 0} \tag{6.6b}$$

In the first command, P2 is the destination of the tool point. In the second command, the tool has been instructed to go to the location whose coordinates are $x = 25.0$, $y = 40.0$, and $z = 0$.

The GODLTA command specifies an incremental move for the tool. To illustrate, the following statement instructs the tool to move from its present position by a distance of 50.0 mm in the $x$-direction, 120.0 mm in the $y$-direction, and 40 mm in the $z$-direction:

GODLTA/50.0, 120.0, 40.0

The GODLTA statement is useful in drilling and related machining operations. The tool can be directed to go to a given hole location; then the GODLTA command can be used to drill the hole, as in the following sequence:

GOTO/P2

GODLTA/0, 0, −50.0

GODLTA/0, 0, 50.0

*Contouring motion* commands are more complicated than PTP commands are because the tool's position must be continuously controlled throughout the move. To exercise this control, the tool is directed along two intersecting surfaces until it reaches a third surface, as shown in Figure 6.20. These three surfaces have specific names in APT; they are:

1. *Drive surface.* This is the surface that guides the side of the cutter. It is pictured as a plane in our figure.
2. *Part surface.* This is the surface, again pictured as a plane, on which the bottom or nose of the tool is guided.

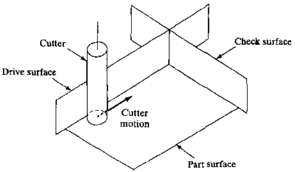



**Figure 6.20** Three surfaces in APT contouring motions that guide the cutting tool.

3. *Check surface.* This is the surface that stops the forward motion of the tool in the execution of the current command. One might say that this surface "checks" the advance of the tool.

It should be noted here that the "part surface" may or may not be an actual surface of the part. The part programmer may elect to use an actual part surface or some other previously defined surface for the purpose of maintaining continuous path control of the tool. The same qualification goes for the drive surface and check surface.

There are several ways in which the check surface can be used. This is determined by using any of four APT modifier words in the descriptive data of the motion statement. The four modifier words are TO, ON, PAST, and TANTO. As depicted in Figure 6.21, the word TO positions the leading edge of the tool in contact with the check surface; ON positions the center of the tool on the check surface; and PAST puts the tool beyond the check surface, so that its trailing edge is in contact with the check surface. The fourth modifier word TANTO is used when the drive surface is tangent to a circular check surface, as in Figure 6.22. TANTO moves the cutting tool to the point of tangency with the circular surface.

An APT contouring motion command causes the cutter to proceed along a trajectory defined by the drive surface and part surface; when the tool reaches the check surface it stops according to one of the modifier words TO, ON, PAST, or TANTO. In writing a

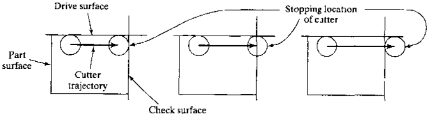



**Figure 6.21** Use of APT modifier words in motion statements: (a) TO moves the tool into initial contact with the check surface; (b) ON positions the tool center on the check surface; and (c) PAST moves the tool just beyond the check surface.

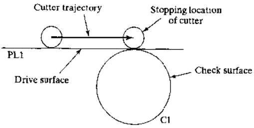



**Figure 6.22** Use of the APT modifier word TANTO. TANTO moves the tool to the point of tangency between two surfaces, at least one of which is a circular surface.

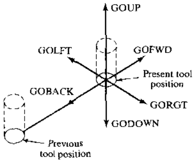



**Figure 6.23** Use of the APT motion words. The tool has moved from a previous position to its present position. The direction of the next move is determined by one of the APT motion words GOLFT, GORGT, GOFWD, GOBACK, GOUP, or GODOWN.

motion statement, the part programmer must keep in mind the direction from which the tool is coming in the preceding motion command. The programmer must pretend to be riding on top of the tool, as if driving a car. After the tool reaches the check surface in the preceding move, does the next move involve a right turn or left turn or what? The answer to this question is determined by one of the following six motion words, whose interpretations are illustrated in Figure 6.23:

- GOLFT commands the tool to make a left turn relative to the last move.
- GORGT commands the tool to make a right turn relative to the last move.
- GOFWD commands the tool to move forward relative to the last move.
- GOBACK commands the tool to reverse direction relative to the last move.
- GOUP commands the tool to move upward relative to the last move.
- GODOWN commands the tool to move down relative to the last move.

In many cases, the next move will be in a direction that is a combination of two pure directions. For example, the direction might be somewhere between go forward and go right. In these cases, the proper motion command would designate the largest direction component among the choices available.

To begin the sequence of motion commands, the FROM statement, Eq. (6.5) is used in the same manner as for point-to-point moves. The statement following the FROM command defines the initial drive surface, part surface, and check surface. With reference to Figure 6.24, the sequence takes the following form:

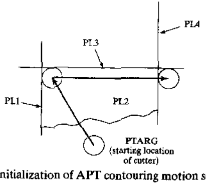



**Figure 6.24** Initialization of APT contouring motion sequence.

FROM/PTARG

GO/TO, PL1, TO, PL2, TO PL3 (6.7)

The symbol PTARG represents the target point where the operator has set up the tool. The GO command instructs the tool to move to the intersection of the drive surface (PL1), the part surface (PL2), and the check surface (PL3). Because the modifier word TO has been used for each of the three surfaces, the circumference of the cutter is tangent to PL1 and PL3, and the bottom of the cutter is on PL2. The three surfaces included in the GO statement must be specified in the order: (1) drive surface, (2) part surface, and (3) check surface.

Note that GO/TO is not the same as the GOTO command, Eq. (6.6). GOTO is used only for PTP motions. The GO/ command is used to initialize a sequence of contouring motions and may take alternative forms such as GO/ON, GO/TO, or GO/PAST.

After initialization, the tool is directed along its path by one of the six motion command words. It is not necessary to redefine the part surface in every motion command after it has been initially defined as long as it remains the same in subsequent commands. In the preceding motion command, Eq. (6.7), the cutter has been directed from PTARG to the intersection of surfaces PL1, PL2, and PL3. Suppose it is now desired to move the tool along plane PL3 in Figure 6.24, with PL2 remaining as the part surface. The following command would accomplish this motion:

GORGT/PL3, PAST, PL4 (6.8)

Note that PL2 is not mentioned in this new command. PL3, which was the check surface in the preceding command, Eq. (6.7), is the drive surface in the new command. And the new check surface is PL4. Although the part surface may remain the same throughout the motion sequence, the drive surface and check surface must be redefined in each new contouring motion command.

There are many parts whose features can all be defined in two axes, $x$ and $y$. Although such parts certainly possess a third dimension, there are no features to be machined in this direction. Our sample part is a case in point. In the engineering drawing, Figure 6.15, the sides of the part appear as lines, although they are three-dimensional surfaces on the physical part. In cases like this, it is more convenient for the programmer to define the part profile in terms of lines and circles rather than planes and cylinders. Fortunately, the APT language system allows this because in APT, lines are treated as planes and circles are treated as cylinders, which are both perpendicular to the $x$-$y$ plane. Hence, the planes around the part outline in Figure 6.15 can be replaced by lines (call them L1, L2, L3, and L4), and the APT commands in Eqs. (6.7) and (6.8) can be replaced by the following:

FROM/PTARG

GO/TO, L1, TO, PL2, TO L3

GORGT/L3, PAST, L4

Substitution of lines and circles for planes and cylinders in APT is allowed only when the sides of the part are perpendicular to the $x$-$y$ plane. Note that plane PL2 has not been converted to a line. As the "part surface" in the motion statement, it must maintain its status as a plane parallel to the $x$- and $y$-axes.

**EXAMPLE 6.4 APT Contouring Motion Commands**

Let us write the APT motion commands to profile mill the outside edges of our sample workpart. The geometry elements are labeled in Figure 6.18, and the tool path is shown in Figure 6.17. The tool begins its motion sequence from a target point PTARG located at $x = 0$, $y = -50$ mm and $z = 10$ mm. We also assume that "part surface" PL2 has been defined as a plane parallel to the $x$-$y$ plane and located 25 mm below the top surface of the part (Figure 6.16). The reason for defining it this way is to ensure that the cutter will machine the entire thickness of the part.

```
FROM/PTARG
GO/TO, L1, TO, PL2, ON, L4
GORGT/L1, PAST, L2
GOLFT/L2, TANTO, C1
GOFWD/C1, PAST, L3
GOFWD/L3, PAST, L4
GOLFT/L4, PAST, L1
GOTO/P0
```

---

*Postprocessor and Auxiliary Statements.* A complete APT part program must include functions not accomplished by geometry statements and motion commands. These additional functions are implemented by postprocessor statements and auxiliary statements.

*Postprocessor statements* control the operation of the machine tool and play a supporting role in generating the tool path. Such statements are used to define cutter size, specify speeds and feeds, turn coolant flow on and off, and control other features of the particular machine tool on which the machining job will be performed. The general form of a postprocessor statement is the following:

$$\text{POSTPROCESSOR COMMAND/descriptive data} \tag{6.9}$$

where the POSTPROCESSOR COMMAND is an APT major word indicating the type of function or action to be accomplished, and the descriptive data consists of APT minor words and numerical values. In some commands, the descriptive data is omitted. Some examples of postprocessor statements that appear in the Appendix at the end of the chapter are the following:

- UNITS/MM indicates that the specified units used in the program are INCHES or MM.
- INTOL/0.02 specifies inward tolerance for circular interpolation.
- OUTTOL/0.02 specifies outward tolerance for circular interpolation.
- CUTTER/20.0 defines cutter diameter for tool path offset calculations; the length and other dimensions of the tool can also be specified, if necessary, for three-dimensional machining.
- SPINDL/1000, CLW specifies spindle rotation speed in revolutions per minute. Either CLW (clockwise) or CCLW (counterclockwise) can be specified.

- SPINDL/OFF stops spindle rotation.
- FEDRAT/40, IPM specifies feed rate in millimeters per minute or inches per minute. Minor words IPM or IPR are used to indicate whether the feed rate is units per minute or units per revolution of the cutter, where the units are specified as inches or millimeters in a preceding UNITS statement.
- RAPID engages rapid traverse (high feed rate) for next move(s).
- COOLNT/FLOOD turns cutting fluid on.
- LOADTL/01 used with automatic toolchangers to identify which cutting tool should be loaded into the spindle.
- DELAY/30 temporarily stops the machine tool for a period specified in seconds.

*Auxiliary statements* are used to identify the part program, specify which postprocessor to use, insert remarks into the program, and so on. Auxiliary statements have no effect on the generation of tool path. The following APT words used in auxiliary statements are defined in the Appendix:

- PARTNO is the first statement in an APT program, used to identify the program; for example,

PARTNO SAMPLE PART NUMBER ONE

- MACHIN/ permits the part programmer to specify the postprocessor, which in effect specifies the machine tool.
- CLPRNT stands for "cutter location print," which is used to print out the cutter location sequence.
- REMARK is used to insert explanatory comments into the program that are not interpreted or processed by the APT processor.
- FINI indicates the end of an APT program.

The major word MACHIN requires a slash (/) as indicated in our list above, with descriptive data that identify the postprocessor to be used. Words such as CLPRNT and FINI are complete without descriptive data. PARTNO and REMARK have a format that is an exception to the normal APT statement structure. These are words that are followed by descriptive data, but without a slash separating the APT word from the descriptive data. PARTNO is used at the very beginning of the part program and is followed by a series of alphanumeric characters that label the program. REMARK permits the programmer to insert comments that the APT processor does not process.

*Some APT Part Programming Examples.* As examples of APT, we will prepare two part programs for our sample part, one to drill the three holes and the second to profile mill the outside edges. As in our example programs in Section 6.5.2, the starting workpiece is an aluminum plate of the desired thickness, and its perimeter has been rough cut slightly oversized in anticipation of the profile milling operation. In effect, these APT programs will accomplish the same operations as previous Examples 6.1 and 6.2 in which manual part programming was used.

**EXAMPLE 6.5 Drilling Sequence in APT**

Let us write the APT program to perform the drilling sequence for our sample part in Figure 6.15. We will show the APT geometry statements only for the three hole locations, saving the remaining elements of geometry for Example 6.6.

```
PARTNO SAMPLE PART DRILLING OPERATION
MACHIN/DRILL, 01
CLPRNT
UNITS/MM
REMARK Part geometry. Points are defined 10 mm above part surface.
PTARG = POINT/0, -50.0, 10.0
P5 = POINT/70.0, 30.0, 10.0
P6 = POINT/120.0, 30.0, 10.0
P7 = POINT/70.0, 60.0, 10.0
REMARK Drill bit motion statements.
FROM/PTARG
RAPID
GOTO/P5
SPINDL/1000, CLW
FEDRAT/0.05, IPR
GODLTA/0, 0, -25
GODLTA/0, 0, 25
RAPID
GOTO/P6
SPINDL/1000, CLW
FEDRAT/0.05, IPR
GODLTA/0, 0, -25
GODLTA/0, 0, 25
RAPID
GOTO/P7
SPINDL/1000, CLW
FEDRAT/0.05, IPR
GODLTA/0, 0, -25
GODLTA/0, 0, 25
```

```
RAPID
GOTO/PTARG
SPINDL/OFF
FINI
```

**EXAMPLE 6.6 Two-Axis Profile Milling in APT**

The three holes drilled in Example 6.5 will be used for locating and holding the workpart for milling the outside edges. Axis coordinates are given in Figure 6.16. The top surface of the part is 40 mm above the surface of the machine table. A 20-mm diameter end mill with four teeth and a side tooth engagement of 40 mm will be used. The bottom tip of the cutter will be positioned 25 mm below the top surface during machining, thus ensuring that the side cutting edges of the cutter will cut the full thickness of the part. Spindle speed = 1000 rev/min and feed rate = 50 mm/min. The tool path, shown in Figure 6.17, is the same as that followed in Example 6.2.

```
PARTNO SAMPLE PART MILLING OPERATION
MACHIN/MILLING, 02
CLPRNT
UNITS/MM
CUTTER/20.0
REMARK Part geometry. Points and lines are defined 25 mm
below part top surface.
PTARG = POINT/0, -50.0, 10.0
P1 = POINT/0, 0, -25
P2 = POINT/160, 0, -25
P3 = POINT/160, 60, -25
P4 - POINT/35, 90, -25
P8 = POINT/130, 60, -25
L1 = LINE/P1, P2
L2 = LINE/P2, P3
C1 = CIRCLE/CENTER, P8, RADIUS, 30
L3 = LINE/P4, LEFT, TANTO, C1
L4 = LINE/P4, P1
PL1 = PLANE/P1, P2, P4
REMARK Milling cutter motion statements.
FROM/PTARG
```

```
SPINDL/1000, CLW
FEDRAT/50, IPM
GO/TO, L1, TO, PL1, ON, L4
GORGT/L1, PAST, L2
GOLFT/L2, TANTO, C1
GOFWD/C1, PAST, L3
GOFWD/L3, PAST, L4
GOLFT/L4, PAST, L1
RAPID
GOTO/PTARG
SPINDL/OFF
FINI
```

### 6.5.5 NC Part Programming Using CAD/CAM

A *CAD/CAM system* is a computer interactive graphics system equipped with software to accomplish certain tasks in design and manufacturing and to integrate the design and manufacturing functions. We discuss CAD/CAM in Chapter 24. One of the important tasks performed on a CAD/CAM system is NC part programming. In this method of part programming, portions of the procedure usually done by the part programmer are instead done by the computer. Recall that the two main tasks of the part programmer in computer-assisted programming are (1) defining the part geometry and (2) specifying the tool path. Advanced CAD/CAM systems automate portions of both of these tasks.

*Geometry Definition Using CAD/CAM.* A fundamental objective of CAD/CAM is to integrate the design engineering and manufacturing engineering functions. Certainly one of the important design functions is to design the individual components of the product. If a CAD/CAM system is used, a computer graphics model of each part is developed by the designer and stored in the CAD/CAM data base. That model contains all of the geometric, dimensional, and material specifications for the part.

When the same CAD/CAM system, or a CAM system that has access to the same CAD data base in which the part model resides, is used to perform NC part programming, it makes little sense to recreate the geometry of the part during the programming procedure. Instead, the programmer has the capability to retrieve the part geometry model from storage and to use that model to construct the appropriate cutter path. The significant advantage of using CAD/CAM in this way is that it eliminates one of the time-consuming steps in computer-assisted part programming: geometry definition. After the part geometry has been retrieved, the usual procedure is to label the geometric elements that will be used during part programming. These labels are the variable names (symbols) given to the lines, circles, and surfaces that comprise the part. Most systems have the capacity to automatically label the geometry elements of the part and to display the labels on the monitor. The programmer can then refer to those labeled elements during tool path construction.

If the NC programmer does not have access to the data base, then the geometry of the part must be defined. This is done by using similar interactive graphics techniques that the product designer would use to design the part. Points are defined in a coordinate system using the computer graphics system, lines and circles are defined from the points, surfaces are defined, and so forth, to construct a geometric model of the part. The advantage of using the interactive graphics system over conventional computer-assisted part programming is that the programmer receives immediate visual verification of the definitions being created. This tends to improve the speed and accuracy of the geometry definition process.

*Tool Path Generation Using CAD/CAM.* The second task of the NC programmer in computer-assisted part programming is tool path specification. The first step in specifying the tool path is to select the cutting tool for the operation. Most CAD/CAM systems have tool libraries that can be called by the programmer to identify what tools are available in the tool crib. The programmer must decide which of the available tools is most appropriate for the operation under consideration and specify it for the tool path. This permits the tool diameter and other dimensions to be entered automatically for tool offset calculations. If the desired cutting tool is not available in the library, an appropriate tool can be specified by the programmer. It then becomes part of the library for future use.

The next step is tool path definition. There are differences in capabilities of the various CAD/CAM systems, which result in different approaches for generating the tool path. The most basic approach involves the use of the interactive graphics system to enter the motion commands one-by-one, similar to computer-assisted part programming. Individual statements in APT or other part programming language are entered, and the CAD/CAM system provides an immediate graphic display of the action resulting from the command, thereby validating the statement.

A more-advanced approach for generating tool path commands is to use one of the automatic software modules available on the CAD/CAM system. These modules have been developed to accomplish a number of common machining cycles for milling, drilling, and turning. They are subroutines in the NC programming package that can be called and the required parameters given to execute the machining cycle. Several of these modules are identified in Table 6.13 and Figure 6.25.

When the complete part program has been prepared, the CAD/CAM system can provide an animated simulation of the program for validation purposes.

*Computer-Automated Part Programming.* In the CAD/CAM approach to NC part programming, several aspects of the procedure are automated. In the future, it should be possible to automate the complete NC part programming procedure. We are referring to this fully automated procedure as computer-automated part programming. Given the geometric model of a part that has been defined during product design, the computer-automated system would possess sufficient logic and decision-making capability to accomplish NC part programming for the entire part without human assistance.

This can most readily be done for certain NC processes that involve well-defined, relatively simple part geometries. Examples are point-to-point operations such as NC drilling and electronic component assembly machines. In these processes, the program consists basically of a series of locations in an $x$-$y$ coordinate system where work is to be performed (e.g., holes are to be drilled or components are to be inserted). These locations are determined by data that are generated during product design. Special algorithms can be developed to process the design data and generate the NC program for the particular system. NC contouring systems will eventually be capable of a similar level of automation. Automatic programming of this type is closely related to computer-automated process planning (CAPP), discussed in Chapter 25.

**TABLE 6.13** Some Common NC Modules for Automatic Programming of Machining Cycles

| *Module Type* | *Brief Description* |
|---|---|
| Profile milling | Generates cutter path around the periphery of a part, usually a 2-D contour where depth remains constant, as in Example 6.8 and Figure 6.17. |
| Pocket milling | Generates the tool path to machine a cavity, as in Figure 6.25(a). A series of cuts is usually required to complete the bottom of the cavity to the desired depth. |
| Lettering (engraving, milling) | Generates tool path to engrave (mill) alphanumeric characters and other symbols to specified font and size. |
| Contour turning | Generates tool path for a series of turning cuts to provide a defined contour on a rotational part, as in Figure 6.25(b). |
| Facing (turning) | Generates tool path for a series of facing cuts to remove excess stock from the part face or to create a shoulder on the part by a series of facing operations, as in Figure 6.25(c). |
| Threading (turning) | Generates tool path for a series of threading cuts to cut external, internal, or tapered threads on a rotational part, as in Figure 6.25(d) for external threads. |

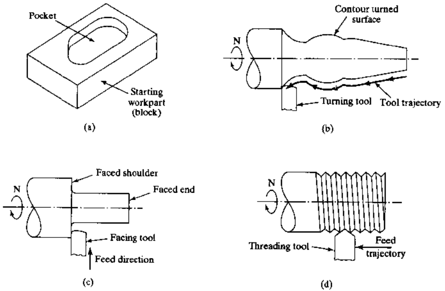



**Figure 6.25** Examples of machining cycles available in automatic programming modules. (a) pocket milling, (b) contour turning (c) facing and shoulder facing, and (d) threading (external).

### 6.5.6 Manual Data Input

Manual and computer-assisted part programming require a relatively high degree of formal documentation and procedure. There is lead time required to write and validate the programs. CAD/CAM part programming automates a substantial portion of the procedure, but a significant commitment in equipment, software, and training is required by the company that utilizes CAD/CAM programming. A potential method of simplifying the procedure is to have the machine operator perform the part programming task at the machine tool. This is called *manual data input* (abbreviated MDI) because the operator manually enters the part geometry data and motion commands directly into the MCU prior to running the job. MDI, also known as *conversational programming* [9], is perceived as a way for the small machine shop to introduce NC into its operations without the need to acquire special NC part programming equipment and to hire a part programmer. MDI permits the shop to make a minimal initial investment to begin the transition to modern CNC technology. The limitation, or potential limitation, of manual data input is the risk of programming errors as jobs become more complicated. For this reason, MDI is usually applied for relatively simple parts.

Communication between the machine operator-programmer and the MDI system is accomplished using a display monitor and alphanumeric keyboard. Entering the programming commands into the controller is typically done using a menu-driven procedure in which the operator responds to prompts and questions posed by the NC system about the job to be machined. The sequence of questions is designed so that the operator inputs the part geometry and machining commands in a logical and consistent manner. A computer graphics capability is included in modern MDI programming systems to permit the operator to visualize the machining operations and verify the program. Typical verification features include tool path display and animation of the tool path sequence.

A minimum of training in NC part programming is required of the machine operator. The skills needed are the ability to read an engineering drawing of the part and to be familiar with the machining process. An important application note in the use of MDI is to make certain that the NC system does not become an expensive toy that stands idle while the operator is entering the programming instructions. Efficient use of the system requires that programming for the next part be accomplished while the current part is being machined. Most MDI systems permit these two functions to be performed simultaneously to reduce changeover time between jobs.

## 6.6 ENGINEERING ANALYSIS OF NC POSITIONING SYSTEMS

The NC positioning system converts the coordinate axis values in the NC part program into relative positions of the tool and workpart during processing. Let us consider the simple positioning system shown in Figure 6.26. The system consists of a cutting tool and a worktable on which a workpart is fixtured. The table is designed to move the part relative to the tool. The worktable moves linearly by means of a rotating leadscrew, which is driven by a stepping motor or servomotor. For simplicity, we show only one axis in our sketch. To provide $x$-$y$ capability, the system shown would be piggybacked on top of a second axis perpendicular to the first. The leadscrew has a certain pitch $p$ (in/thread, mm/thread). Thus, the table moves a distance equal to the pitch for each revolution. The velocity of the worktable, which corresponds to the feed rate in a machining operation, is determined by the rotational speed of the leadscrew.

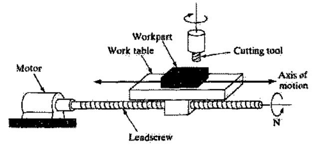



**Figure 6.26** Motor and leadscrew arrangement in an NC positioning system.

There are two types of positioning systems used in NC systems: (a) open loop and (b) closed loop, as shown in Figure 6.27. An *open-loop* system operates without verifying that the actual position achieved in the move is the same as the desired position. A *closed-loop* control system uses feedback measurements to confirm that the final position of the worktable is the location specified in the program. Open-loop systems cost less than closed-loop systems and are appropriate when the force resisting the actuating motion is minimal. Closed-loop systems are normally specified for machines that perform continuous path operations such as milling or turning, in which there are significant forces resisting the forward motion of the cutting tool.

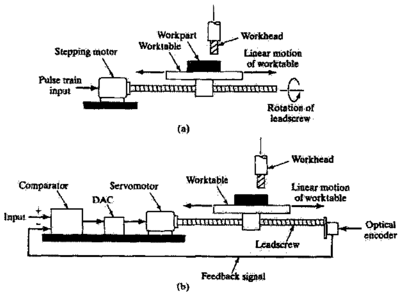



**Figure 6.27** Two types of motion control in NC: (a) open loop and (b) closed loop.

### 6.6.1 Open-Loop Positioning Systems

An open-loop positioning system typically uses a stepping motor to rotate the leadscrew. A stepping motor is driven by a series of electrical pulses, which are generated by the MCU in an NC system. Each pulse causes the motor to rotate a fraction of one revolution, called the step angle. The possible step angles must be consistent with the following relationship:

$$\alpha = \frac{360}{n_s} \tag{6.10}$$

where $\alpha$ = step angle (degrees), and $n_s$ = the number of step angles for the motor, which must be an integer. The angle through which the motor shaft rotates is given by

$$A_m = n_p \alpha \tag{6.11}$$

where $A_m$ = angle of motor shaft rotation (degrees), $n_p$ = number of pulses received by the motor, and $\alpha$ = step angle (degrees/pulse). The motor shaft is generally connected to the leadscrew through a gear box, which reduces the angular rotation of the leadscrew. The angle of the leadscrew rotation must take the gear ratio into account as follows:

$$A = \frac{n_p \alpha}{r_g} \tag{6.12}$$

where $A$ = angle of leadscrew rotation (degrees), and $r_g$ = gear ratio, defined as the number of turns of the motor for each single turn of the leadscrew. That is,

$$r_g = \frac{A_m}{A} = \frac{N_m}{N} \tag{6.13}$$

where $N_m$ = rotational speed of the motor (rev/min), and $N$ = rotational speed of the leadscrew (rev/min).

The linear movement of the worktable is given by the number of full and partial rotations of the leadscrew multiplied by its pitch:

$$x = \frac{pA}{360} \tag{6.14}$$

where $x$ = $x$-axis position relative to the starting position (mm, inch), $p$ = pitch of the leadscrew (mm/rev, in/rev), and $A/360$ = number of leadscrew revolutions. The number of pulses required to achieve a specified $x$-position increment in a point-to-point system can be found by combining the two preceding equations as follows:

$$n_p = \frac{360 x r_g}{p \alpha} \text{ or } \frac{n_s x r_g}{p} \tag{6.15}$$

where the second expression on the right-hand side is obtained by substituting $n_s$ for $360/\alpha$, which is obtained by rearranging Eq. (6.10).

Control pulses are transmitted from the pulse generator at a certain frequency, which drives the worktable at a corresponding velocity or feed rate in the direction of the leadscrew axis. The rotational speed of the leadscrew depends on the frequency of the pulse train as follows:

$$N = \frac{60f_p}{n_s r_g} \tag{6.16}$$

where $N$ = leadscrew rotational speed (rev/min), $f_p$ = pulse train frequency (Hz, pulses/sec), and $n_s$ = steps per revolution or pulses per revolution. For a two-axis table with continuous path control, the relative velocities of the axes are coordinated to achieve the desired travel direction.

The table travel speed in the direction of leadscrew axis is determined by the rotational speed as follows:

$$v_t = f_r = Np \tag{6.17}$$

where $v_t$ = table travel speed (mm/min, in/min), $f_r$ = table feed rate (mm/min, in/min), $N$ = leadscrew rotational speed (rev/min), and $p$ = leadscrew pitch (mm/rev, in/rev).

The required pulse train frequency to drive the table at a specified linear travel rate can be obtained by combining Eqs. (6.16) and (6.17) and rearranging to solve for $f_p$:

$$f_p = \frac{v_t n_s r_g}{60p} \text{ or } \frac{f_r n_s r_g}{60p} \tag{6.18}$$

**EXAMPLE 6.7 NC Open-Loop Positioning**

The worktable of a positioning system is driven by a leadscrew whose pitch = 6.0 mm. The leadscrew is connected to the output shaft of a stepping motor through a gearbox whose ratio is 5:1 (5 turns of the motor to one turn of the leadscrew). The stepping motor has 48 step angles. The table must move a distance of 250 mm from its present position at a linear velocity = 500 mm/min. Determine (a) how many pulses are required to move the table the specified distance and (b) the required motor speed and pulse rate to achieve the desired table velocity.

***Solution:*** (a) Rearranging Eq. (6.14) to find the leadscrew rotation angle $A$ corresponding to a distance $x$ = 250 mm,

$$A = \frac{360x}{p} = \frac{360(250)}{6.0} = 15{,}000°$$

With 50 step angles, each step angle is

$$\alpha = \frac{360}{48} = 7.5°$$

Thus, the number of pulses to move the table 250 mm is

$$n_p = \frac{360xr_g}{p\alpha} = \frac{Ar_g}{\alpha} = \frac{15{,}000(5)}{7.5} = 10{,}000 \text{ pulses.}$$

(b) The rotational speed of the leadscrew corresponding to a table speed of 500 mm/min can be determined from Eq. (6.17):

$$N = \frac{v_t}{p} = \frac{500}{6} = 83.333 \text{ rev/min}$$

Equation (6.13) can be used to find the motor speed:

$$N_m = r_g N = 5(83.333) = 416.667 \text{ rev/min}$$

The applied pulse rate to drive the table is given by Eq. (6.18):

$$f_p = \frac{v_t n_s r_g}{60p} = \frac{500(48)(5)}{60(6)} = 333.333 \text{ Hz}$$

### 6.6.2 Closed-Loop Positioning Systems

A closed-loop NC system, illustrated in Figure 6.27(b), uses servomotors and feedback measurements to ensure that the worktable is moved to the desired position. A common feedback sensor used for NC (and also for industrial robots) is the optical encoder, shown in Figure 6.28. An optical encoder consists of a light source and a photodetector on either side of a disk. The disk contains slots uniformly spaced around the outside of its face. These slots allow the light source to shine through and energize the photodetector. The disk is connected, either directly or through a gear box, to a rotating shaft whose angular position and velocity are to be measured. As the shaft rotates, the slots cause the light source to be seen by the photocell as a series of flashes. The flashes are converted into an equal number of electrical pulses. By counting the pulses and computing the frequency of the pulse train, worktable position and velocity can be determined.

The equations that define the operation of a closed-loop NC positioning system are similar to those for an open-loop system. In the basic optical encoder, the angle between slots in the disk must satisfy the following requirement:

$$\alpha = \frac{360}{n_s} \tag{6.19}$$

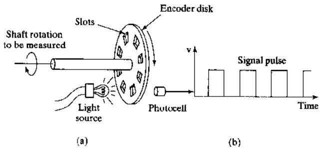



**Figure 6.28** Optical encoder: (a) apparatus and (b) series of pulses emitted to measure rotation of disk.

where $\alpha$ = angle between slots (degrees/slot), and $n_s$ = the number of slots in the disk (slots/rev). For a certain angular rotation of the encoder shaft, the number of pulses sensed by the encoder is given by

$$n_p = \frac{A_e}{\alpha} \tag{6.20}$$

where $n_p$ = pulse count emitted by the encoder, $A_e$ = angle of rotation of the encoder shaft (degrees), and $\alpha$ = angle between slots, which converts to degrees per pulse. The pulse count can be used to determine the linear $x$-axis position of the worktable by factoring in the leadscrew pitch and the gear reduction between the encoder shaft and the leadscrew. Thus,

$$x = \frac{pn_p}{n_s r_{ge}} \tag{6.21}$$

where $n_p$ and $n_s$ are defined above, $p$ = leadscrew pitch (mm/rev, in/rev), and $r_{ge}$ = gear reduction between the encoder and the leadscrew, defined as the number of turns of the encoder shaft for each single turn of the leadscrew. That is,

$$r_{ge} = \frac{A_e}{A} = \frac{N_e}{N} \tag{6.22}$$

where $A_e$ = encoder shaft angle (degrees), $A$ = leadscrew angle (degrees), $N_e$ = rotational speed of encoder shaft (rev/min), and $N$ = rotational speed of leadscrew (rev/min). The gear reduction $r_{ge}$ between the encoder shaft and the leadscrew must not be confused with the gear ratio between the drive motor and the leadscrew $r_g$ defined in Eq. (6.13).

The velocity of the worktable, which is normally the feed rate in a machining operation, is obtained from the frequency of the pulse train as follows:

$$v_t = f_r = \frac{60pf_p}{n_s r_{ge}} \tag{6.23}$$

where $v_t$ = worktable velocity (mm/min, in/min), $f_r$ = feed rate (mm/min, in/min), $f_p$ = frequency of the pulse train emitted by the optical encoder (Hz, pulses/sec), and the constant 60 converts worktable velocity and feed rate from millimeters per second (inches per sec) to millimeters per minute (inches per minute). The terms $p$, $n_s$, and $r_{ge}$ have been previously defined.

The pulse train generated by the encoder is compared with the coordinate position and feed rate specified in the part program, and the difference is used by the MCU to drive a servomotor, which in turn drives the worktable. A digital-to-analog converter (Section 5.4) converts the digital signals used by the MCU into a continuous analog current that powers the drive motor. Closed-loop NC systems of the type described here are appropriate when a reactionary force resists the movement of the table. Metal cutting machine tools that perform continuous path cutting operations, such as milling and turning, fall into this category.

**EXAMPLE 6.8 NC Closed-Loop Positioning**

An NC worktable operates by closed-loop positioning. The system consists of a servomotor, leadscrew, and optical encoder. The leadscrew has a pitch = 6.0 mm and is coupled to the motor shaft with a gear ratio of 5:1 (5 turns of the drive motor for each turn of the leadscrew). The optical encoder generates 48 pulses/rev of its output shaft. The encoder output shaft is coupled to the leadscrew with a 4:1 reduction (4 turns of the encoder shaft for each turn of the leadscrew). The table has been programmed to move a distance of 250 mm at a feed rate = 500 mm/min. Determine (a) how many pulses should be received by the control system to verify that the table has moved exactly 250 mm, (b) the pulse rate of the encoder, and (c) the drive motor speed that correspond to the specified feed rate.

***Solution:*** (a) Rearranging Eq. (6.21) to find $n_p$,

$$n_p = \frac{x n_s r_{ge}}{p} = \frac{250(48)(4)}{6.0} = 8000 \text{ pulses}$$

(b) The pulse rate corresponding to 500 mm/min can be obtained by rearranging Eq. (6.23):

$$f_p = \frac{f_r n_s r_{ge}}{60p} = \frac{500(48)(4)}{60(6.0)} = 266.667 \text{ Hz}$$

(c) Motor speed = table velocity (feed rate) divided by leadscrew pitch, corrected for gear ratio:

$$N_m = \frac{r_g f_r}{p} = \frac{5(500)}{6.0} = 416.667 \text{ rev/min}$$

Note that motor speed has the same numerical value as in Example 6.7 because the table velocity and motor gear ratio are the same.

### 6.6.3 Precision in NC Positioning

For accurate machining or other processing performed by an NC system, the positioning system must possess a high degree of precision. Three measures of precision can be defined for an NC positioning system: (1) control resolution, (2) accuracy, and (3) repeatability. These terms are most readily explained by considering a single axis of the positioning system, as depicted in Figure 6.29. Control resolution refers to the control system's ability to

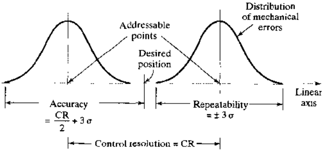



**Figure 6.29** A portion of a linear positioning system axis, with definition of control resolution, accuracy, and repeatability.

divide the total range of the axis movement into closely spaced points that can be distinguished by the MCU. *Control resolution* is defined as the distance separating two adjacent addressable points in the axis movement. *Addressable points* are locations along the axis to which the worktable can be specifically directed to go. It is desirable for control resolution to be as small as possible. This depends on limitations imposed by: (1) the electromechanical components of the positioning system and/or (2) the number of bits used by the controller to define the axis coordinate location.

A number of electromechanical factors affect control resolution, including: leadscrew pitch, gear ratio in the drive system, and the step angle in a stepping motor for an open-loop system or the angle between slots in an encoder disk for a closed-loop system. For an open-loop positioning system driven by a stepper motor, these factors can be combined into an expression that defines control resolution as follows:

$$CR_1 = \frac{p}{n_s r_g} \tag{6.24a}$$

where $CR_1$ = control resolution of the electromechanical components (mm, in), $p$ = leadscrew pitch (mm/rev, in/rev), $n_s$ = number of steps per revolution, and $r_g$ = gear ratio between the motor shaft and the leadscrew as defined in Eq. (6.13). A similar expression can be developed for a closed-loop positioning system, except that the gear reduction between the leadscrew and the encoder shaft must be included:

$$CR_1 = \frac{p}{n_s r_g r_{ge}} \tag{6.24b}$$

The second factor that limits control resolution is the number of bits used by the MCU to specify the axis coordinate value. For example, this limitation may be imposed by the bit storage capacity of the controller. If $B$ = the number of bits in the storage register for the axis, then the number of control points into which the axis range can be divided = $2^B$. Assuming that the control points are separated equally within the range, then

$$CR_2 = \frac{L}{2^B - 1} \tag{6.25}$$

where $CR_2$ = control resolution of the computer control system (mm, in), and $L$ = axis range (mm, in). The control resolution of the positioning system is the maximum of the two values; that is,

$$CR = \text{Max}\{CR_1, CR_2\} \tag{6.26}$$

A desirable criterion is for $CR_2 \leq CR_1$, meaning that the electromechanical system is the limiting factor that determines control resolution. The bit storage capacity of a modern computer controller is sufficient to satisfy this criterion except in unusual situations. Resolutions of 0.0025 mm (0.0001 in) are within the current state of NC technology.

The capability of a positioning system to move the worktable to the exact location defined by a given addressable point is limited by mechanical errors that are due to various imperfections in the mechanical system. These imperfections include play between the leadscrew and the worktable, backlash in the gears, and deflection of machine components.

We assume that the mechanical errors form an unbiased normal statistical distribution about the control point whose mean $\mu = 0$. We further assume that the standard deviation $\sigma$ of the distribution is constant over the range of the axis under consideration. Given these assumptions, then nearly all of the mechanical errors (99.74%) are contained within $\pm 3\sigma$ of the control point. This is pictured in Figure 6.29 for a portion of the axis range that includes two control points.

Let us now make use of these definitions of control resolution and mechanical error distribution to define accuracy and repeatability of a positioning system. Accuracy is defined under worst case conditions in which the desired target point lies in the middle between two adjacent addressable points. Since the table can only be moved to one or the other of the addressable points, there will be an error in the final position of the worktable. This is the maximum possible positioning error, because if the target were closer to either one of the addressable points, then the table would be moved to the closer control point and the error would be smaller. It is appropriate to define accuracy under this worst case scenario. The *accuracy* of any given axis of a positioning system is the maximum possible error that can occur between the desired target point and the actual position taken by the system; in equation form,

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{CR}{2} + 3\sigma \tag{6.27}$$

where CR = control resolution (mm, in), and $\sigma$ = standard deviation of the error distribution. Accuracies in machine tools are generally expressed for a certain range of table travel, for example, $\pm 0.01$ mm for 250 mm ($\pm 0.0004$ in. for 10 in) of table travel.

Repeatability refers to the capability of the positioning system to return to a given addressable point that has been previously programmed. This capability can be measured in terms of the location errors encountered when the system attempts to position itself at the addressable point. Location errors are a manifestation of the mechanical errors of the positioning system, which follow a normal distribution, as assumed previously. Thus, the *repeatability* of any given axis of a positioning system is $\pm 3$ standard deviations of the mechanical error distribution associated with the axis. This can be written:

$$\text{Repeatability} = \pm 3\sigma \tag{6.28}$$

The repeatability of a modern NC machine tool is around $\pm 0.0025$ mm ($\pm 0.0001$ in).

**EXAMPLE 6.9 Control Resolution, Accuracy, and Repeatability in NC**

Suppose the mechanical inaccuracies in the open-loop positioning system of Example 6.7 are described by a normal distribution with standard deviation $\sigma = 0.005$ mm. The range of the worktable axis is 1000 mm, and there are 16 bits in the binary register used by the digital controller to store the programmed position. Other relevant parameters from Example 6.7 are: pitch $p = 6.0$ mm, gear ratio between motor shaft and leadscrew $r_g = 5.0$, and number of step angles in the stepping motor $n_s = 48$. Determine (a) the control resolution, (b) the accuracy, and (c) the repeatability for the positioning system.

***Solution:*** (a) Control resolution is the greater of $CR_1$ and $CR_2$ as defined by Eqs. (6.24) and (6.25).

$$CR_1 = \frac{p}{n_s r_g} = \frac{6.0}{48(5.0)} = 0.025 \text{ mm}$$

$$CR_2 = \frac{1000}{2^{16} - 1} = \frac{1000}{65{,}535} = 0.01526 \text{ mm}$$

$$Cr = \text{Max}\{0.025, 0.01526\} = 0.025 \text{ mm}$$

(b) Accuracy is given by Eq. (6.27):

$$\text{Accuracy} = 0.5(0.025) + 3(0.005) = 0.0275 \text{ mm}$$

(c) Repeatability $= \pm 3(0.005) = \pm 0.015$ mm

## *REFERENCES*


[1] BEARD, T., "Automatic NC Programming Arrives." *Modern Machine Shop*, January 1994.

[2] CHANG, C-H, and M. Melkanoff, *NC Machine Programming and Software Design*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1989.

[3] GROOVER, M. P., and E. W. ZIMMERS, Jr., *CAD/CAM: Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing*, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1984.

[4] HATSCHEK, R. L., "NC Diagnostics," Special Report 744, *American Machinist*, February 1984, pp. 95–114.

[5] Illinois Institute of Technology Research Institute, *APT Part Programming*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1967.

[6] KRAL, I. H., *Numerical Control Programming in APT*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1986.

[7] LADUZINSKY, A., "Open Minded, CNC Manufacturers push ahead with Open-Architecture Controls," *Cutting Tool Engineer*, September 1999, pp. 26–38.

[8] LIN, S-C., *Computer Numerical Control: Essentials of Programming and Networking*, Delmar Publishers Inc., Albany, New York, 1994.

[9] LYNCH, M., *Computer Numerical Control for Machining*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1992.

[10] LYNCH, M., *Computer Numerical Control: Advanced Techniques*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1993.

[11] LYNCH, M., *Computer Numerical Control: Accessory Devices*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1994.

[12] *Modern Machine Shop 1996 CNC & Software Guide*, Modern Machine Shop, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1996.

[13] NOAKER, P. M., "Down the Road with DNC," *Manufacturing Engineering*, November 1992, pp. 35–38.

[14] NOAKER, P. M., "The PC's CNC Transformation," *Manufacturing Engineering*, August 1995, pp. 49–53.

[15] NOAKER, P. M., "RX for Machine Tool Diagnostics," *Manufacturing Engineering*, November 1995, pp. 71–74.

[16] NOBLE, D. F., *Forces of Production*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1984.

[17] OGOREK, M., "CNC Standard Formats," *Manufacturing Engineering*, January 1985, pp. 43–45.

[18] REINTJES, J. F., *Numerical Control: Making a New Technology*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991.

[19] SEAMES, W., *Computer Numerical Control, Concepts and Programming*, Delmar Publishers Inc., Albany, New York, 1995.

[20] VICKERS, G. W., M. LY, and R. G. OETTER, *Numerically Controlled Machine Tools*, Ellis Horwood Limited, West Sussex, England, 1990.

## PROBLEMS

### NC Applications

**6.1** A machinable grade of aluminum is to be milled on an NC machine with a 20-mm diameter four-tooth end milling cutter. Cutting speed = 120 m/min and feed = 0.08 mm/tooth. Convert these values to revolutions per minute and millimeters per minute, respectively.

**6.2** A cast iron workpiece is to be face milled on an NC machine using cemented carbide inserts. The cutter has 16 teeth and is 120 mm in diameter. Cutting speed = 200 m/min and feed = 0.05 mm/tooth. Convert these values to revolutions per minute and millimeters per minute, respectively.

**6.3** An end milling operation is performed on an NC machining center. The total length of travel is 625 mm along a straight line path to cut a particular workpiece. Cutting speed = 2.0 m/sec and chip load (feed/tooth) = 0.075 mm. The end milling cutter has two teeth and its diameter = 15.0 mm. Determine the feed rate and time to complete the cut.

**6.4** A turning operation is to be performed on an NC lathe. Cutting speed = 2.5 m/sec, feed = 0.2 mm/rev, and depth = 4.0 mm. Workpiece diameter = 100 mm and its length = 400 mm. Determine (a) the rotational speed of the workbar, (b) the feed rate, (c) the metal removal rate, and (d) the time to travel from one end of the part to the other.

**6.5** An NC drill press drills four 10.0-mm diameter holes at four locations on a flat aluminum plate in a production work cycle. Although the plate is only 12 mm thick, the drill must travel a full 20 mm vertically at each hole location to allow for clearance above the plate and breakthrough of the drill on the underside of the plate. Cutting conditions: speed = 0.4 m/sec and feed = 0.10 mm/rev. Hole locations are indicated in the following table:

| *Hole Number* | *x-coordinate (mm)* | *y-coordinate (mm)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 25.0 | 25.0 |
| 2 | 25.0 | 100.0 |
| 3 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 4 | 100.0 | 25.0 |

The drill starts out at point (0,0) and returns to the same position after the work cycle is completed. Travel rate of the table in moving from one coordinate position to another is 500 mm/min. Owing to effects of acceleration and deceleration and the time required for the control system to achieve final positioning, a time loss of 3 sec is experienced at each stopping position of the table. Assume that all moves are made to minimize the total cycle time. If loading and unloading the plate take 20 sec (total handling time), determine the time required for the work cycle.

### NC Manual Part Programming

**6.6** Write the part program to drill the holes in the part shown in Figure P6.6. The part is 12.0 mm thick. Cutting speed = 100 m/min and feed = 0.06 mm/rev. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system. Write the part program in the word address format with TAB separation and variable word order. Use absolute positioning. The program style should be similar to Example 6.1.

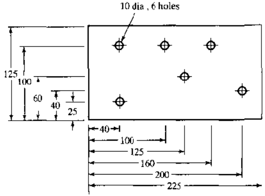



**Figure P6.6** Part drawing for Problem 6.6. Dimensions are in millimeters.

**6.7** The part in Figure P6.7 is to be drilled on a turret-type drill press. The part is 15.0 mm thick. There are three drill sizes to be used: 8 mm, 10 mm, and 12 mm. These drills are to be specified in the part program by tool turret positions T01, T02, and T03. All tooling is high speed steel. Cutting speed = 75 mm/min and feed = 0.08 mm/rev. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system. Write the part program in the word address format with TAB separation and variable word order. Use absolute positioning. The program style should be similar to Example 6.1.

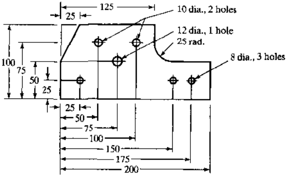



**Figure P6.7** Part drawing for Problem 6.7. Dimensions are in millimeters.

**6.8** The outline of the part in previous Problem 6.7 is to be profile milled using a 30-mm diameter end mill with four teeth. The part is 15 mm thick. Cutting speed = 150 m/min and feed = 0.085 mm/tooth Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system. Two of the holes in the part have already been drilled and will be used for clamping the part during profile milling. Write the part program in the word address format with TAB separation and variable word order. Use absolute positioning. The program style should be similar to Example 6.2.

**6.9** The outline of the part in Figure P6.9 is to be profile milled, using a 20-mm diameter end mill with two teeth. The part is 10 mm thick. Cutting speed = 125 m/min and feed = 0.10 mm/tooth. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system. The two holes in the part have already been drilled and will be used for clamping the part during milling. Write the part program in the word address format with TAB separation

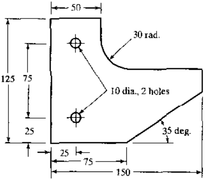



**Figure P6.9** Part drawing for Problem 6.9. Dimensions are in millimeters.

and variable word order. Use absolute positioning. The program style should be similar to Example 6.2.

## NC Part Programming in APT

**6.10** Write the APT geometry statements to define the hole positions of the part in Figure P6.6. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system.

**6.11** Write the complete APT part program to perform the drilling operations for the part drawing in Figure P6.6. Cutting speed = 0.4 m/sec, feed = 0.10 mm/rev, and table travel speed between holes = 500 mm/min. Postprocessor call statement is MACHIN/DRILL, 04.

**6.12** Write the APT geometry statements to define the hole positions of the part in Figure P6.7. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system.

**6.13** Write the APT part program to perform the drilling operations for the part drawing in Figure P6.7. Use the TURRET command to call the different drills required. Cutting speed = 0.4 m/sec, feed = 0.10 mm/rev, and table travel speed between holes = 500 mm/min. Postprocessor call statement is MACHIN/TURDRL, 02.

**6.14** Write the APT geometry statements to define the outline of the part in Figure P6.7. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system.

**6.15** Write the complete APT part program to profile mill the outside edges of the part in Figure P6.7 The part is 15 mm thick. Tooling = 30-mm diameter end mill with four teeth, cutting speed = 150 mm/min, and feed = 0.085 mm/tooth. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system. Two of the holes in the part have already been drilled and will be used for clamping the part during profile milling. Postprocessor call statement is MACHIN/MILL, 06.

**6.16** Write the APT geometry statements to define the part geometry shown in Figure P6.9. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system.

**6.17** Write the complete APT part program to perform the profile milling operation for the part drawing in Figure P6.9. Tooling = 20-mm diameter end mill with two teeth, cutting speed = 125 mm/min, and feed = 0.10 mm/tooth. The part is 10 mm thick. Use the lower left corner of the part as the origin in the $x$-$y$ axis system. The two holes in the part have already been drilled and will be used for clamping the part during milling. Postprocessor call statement is MACHIN/MILL, 01.

**6.18** Write the APT geometry statements to define the outline of the cam shown in Figure P6.18.

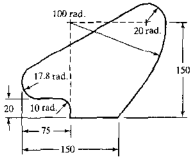



**Figure P6.18** Part drawing for Problem 6.18. Dimensions are in millimeters.

**6.19** The outline of the cam in Figure P6.18 is to be machined in an end milling operation, using a 12.5-mm diameter end mill with two teeth. The part is 7.5 mm thick. Write the complete APT program for this job, using a feed rate = 80 mm/min and a spindle speed = 500 rev/min. Postprocessor call statement is MACHIN/MILL, 03. Assume the rough outline for the part has been obtained in a band saw operation. Ignore clamping issues in the problem.

**6.20** The part outline in Figure P6.20 is to be profile milled in several passes from a rectangular slab (outline of slab shown in dashed lines), using a 25-mm diameter end mill with four teeth. The initial passes are to remove no more than 5 mm of material from the periphery of the part, and the final pass should remove no more than 2 mm to cut the outline to final shape. Write the APT geometry and motion statements for this job. The final part thickness is to be the same as the starting slab thickness, which is 10 mm, so no machining is required on the top and bottom of the part.

**6.21** The top surface of a large cast iron plate is to be face milled. The area to be machined is 400 mm wide and 700 mm long. The insert type face milling cutter has eight teeth and is 100 mm in diameter. Define the origin of the axis system at the lower left corner of the part with the long side parallel to the $x$-axis. Write the APT geometry and motion statements for this job.

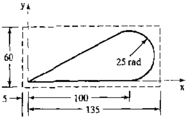



**Figure P6.20** Part drawing for Problem 6.20. Dimensions are in millimeters.

**6.22** Write the APT geometry statements to define the part geometry shown in Figure P6.22.

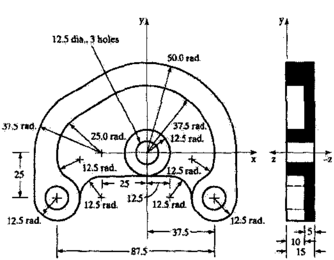



**Figure P6.22** Part drawing for Problem 6.22. Dimensions are in millimeters.

**6.23** The part in Figure P6.22 is to be milled, using a 20-mm diameter end mill with four teeth. Write the APT geometry and motion statements for this job. Assume that preliminary passes have been completed so that only the final pass ("to size") is to be completed in this program. Cutting speed = 500 rev/min, and feed rate = 250 mm/min. The starting slab thickness is 15 mm, so no machining is required on the top or bottom surfaces of the part. The three holes have been predrilled for fixturing in this milling sequence.

### Analysis of Open-Loop Positioning Systems

**6.24** Two stepping motors are used in an open-loop system to drive the leadscrews for $x$-$y$ positioning. The range of each axis is 250 mm. The shafts of the motors are connected directly to the leadscrews. The pitch of each leadscrew is 3.0 mm, and the number of step angles on the stepping motor is 125. (a) How closely can the position of the table be controlled, assuming there are no mechanical errors in the positioning system? (b) What are the required pulse train frequencies and corresponding rotational speeds of each stepping motor to drive the table at 275 mm/min in a straight line from point ($x = 0$, $y = 0$) to point ($x = 130$ mm, $y = 220$ mm)?

**6.25** One axis of an NC positioning system is driven by a stepping motor. The motor is connected to a leadscrew whose pitch is 4.0 mm, and the leadscrew drives the table. Control resolution for the table is specified as 0.015 mm. Determine (a) the number of step angles required to achieve the specified control resolution, (b) the size of each step angle in the motor, and (c) the linear travel rate of the motor at a pulse frequency of 200 pulses per second

**6.26** The worktable in an NC positioning system is driven by a leadscrew with a 4-mm pitch. The leadscrew is powered by a stepping motor that has 250 step angles. The worktable is programmed to move a distance of 100 mm from its present position at a travel speed of 300 mm/min. (a) How many pulses are required to move the table the specified distance? (b) What are the required motor speed and (c) pulse rate to achieve the desired table speed?

**6.27** A stepping motor with 200 step angles is coupled to a leadscrew through a gear reduction of 5:1 (5 rotations of the motor for each rotation of the lead screw). The leadscrew has 2.4 threads/cm. The worktable driven by the leadscrew must move a distance = 25.0 cm at a feed rate = 75 cm/min. Determine (a) the number of pulses required to move the table, (b) the required motor speed, and (c) the pulse rate to achieve the desired table speed.

**6.28** A component insertion machine takes 2.0 sec to put a component into a printed circuit (PC) board, once the board has been positioned under the insertion head. The $x$-$y$ table that positions the PC board uses a stepper motor directly linked to a leadscrew for each axis. The leadscrew has a pitch = 5.0 mm. The motor step angle = 7.2 degrees and the pulse train frequency = 400 Hz Two components are placed on the PC board, one each at positions (25, 25) and (50, 150), where coordinates are in millimeters. The sequence of positions is (0, 0), (25,25), (50, 150), (0,0). Time required to unload the completed board and load the next blank onto the machine table = 5.0 sec. Assume that 0.25 sec. is lost due to acceleration and deceleration on each move. What is the hourly production rate for this PC board?

### Analysis of Closed-Loop Positioning Systems

**6.29** A dc servomotor is used to drive one of the table axes of an NC milling machine. The motor is coupled directly to the leadscrew for the axis, and the leadscrew pitch = 5 mm. The optical encoder attached to the leadscrew emits 500 pulses per revolution of the leadscrew. The motor rotates at a normal speed of 300 rev/min. Determine (a) the control resolution of the system, expressed in linear travel distance of the table axis, (b) the frequency of the pulse train emitted by the optical encoder when the servomotor operates at full speed, and (c) the travel rate of the table at normal revolutions per minute of the motor.

**6.30** In Problem 6.3, the axis corresponding to the feed rate uses a dc servomotor as the drive unit and an optical encoder as the feedback sensing device. The motor is geared to the leadscrew with a 10:1 reduction (10 turns of the motor for each turn of the leadscrew). If the leadscrew pitch = 5 mm, and the optical encoder emits 400 pulses per revolution, determine the rotational speed of the motor and the pulse rate of the encoder to achieve the feed rate indicated.

**6.31** The worktable of an NC machine is driven by a closed-loop positioning system that consists of a servomotor, leadscrew, and optical encoder. The leadscrew pitch = 4 mm and is coupled directly to the motor shaft (gear ratio = 1:1). The optical encoder generates 225 pulses per motor revolution. The table has been programmed to move a distance of 200 mm at a feed rate = 450 mm/min. (a) How many pulses are received by the control system to verify that the table has moved the programmed distance? What are (b) the pulse rate and (c) the motor speed that correspond to the specified feed rate?

**6.32** A NC machine tool table is powered by a servomotor, leadscrew, and optical encoder. The leadscrew has a pitch = 5.0 mm and is connected to the motor shaft with a gear ratio of 16:1 (16 turns of the motor for each turn of the leadscrew). The optical encoder is connected directly to the leadscrew and generates 200 pulses/rev of the leadscrew. The table must move a distance = 100 mm at a feed rate = 500 mm/min. Determine (a) the pulse count received by the control system to verify that the table has moved exactly 100 mm and (b) the pulse rate and (c) motor speed that correspond to the feed rate of 500 mm/min.

**6.33** Same as previous Problem 6.32, except that the optical encoder is directly coupled to the motor shaft rather than to the leadscrew.

**6.34** A leadscrew coupled directly to a dc servomotor is used to drive one of the table axes of an NC milling machine. The leadscrew has 2.5 threads/cm. The optical encoder attached to the leadscrew emits 100 pulses/rev of the leadscrew. The motor rotates at a maximum speed of 800 rev/min. Determine (a) the control resolution of the system, expressed in linear travel distance of the table axis; (b) the frequency of the pulse train emitted by the optical encoder when the servomotor operates at maximum speed; and (c) the travel speed of the table at maximum motor speed.

**6.35** Solve previous Problem 6.34, only the servomotor is connected to the leadscrew through a gear box whose reduction ratio = 10:1 (10 revolutions of the motor for each revolution of the leadscrew).

**6.36** A milling operation is performed on an NC machining center. Total travel distance = 300 mm in a direction parallel to one of the axes of the worktable. Cutting speed = 1.25 m/sec and chip load = 0.05 mm. The end milling cutter has four teeth and its diameter = 20.0 mm. The axis uses a dc servomotor whose output shaft is coupled to a leadscrew with pitch = 6.0 mm. The feedback sensing device is an optical encoder that emits 250 pulses per revolution. Determine (a) the feed rate and time to complete the cut, (b) the rotational speed of the motor, and (c) the pulse rate of the encoder at the feed rate indicated.

**6.37** A dc servomotor drives the $x$-axis of an NC milling machine table. The motor is coupled directly to the table leadscrew, whose pitch = 6.25 mm. An optical encoder is connected to the leadscrew using a 1:5 gear ratio (one turn of the leadscrew converts to 5 turns of the encoder disk). The optical encoder emits 125 pulses per revolution. To execute a certain programmed instruction, the table must move from point ($x$ = 87.5 mm, $y$ = 35.0) to point ($x$ = 25.0 mm, $y$ = 180.0 mm) in a straight-line trajectory at a feed rate = 200 mm/min. Determine (a) the control resolution of the system for the $x$-axis, (b) the rotational speed of the motor, and (c) the frequency of the pulse train emitted by the optical encoder at the desired feed rate.

## Resolution and Accuracy of Positioning Systems

**6.38** A two-axis NC system is used to control a machine tool table uses a bit storage capacity of 16 bits in its control memory for each axis. The range of the $x$-axis is 600 mm and the range of the $y$-axis is 500 mm. The mechanical accuracy of the machine table can be represented by a normal distribution with standard deviation = 0.002 mm for both axes. For each axis of the NC system, determine (a) the control resolution, (b) the accuracy, and (c) the repeatability.

**6.39** Stepping motors are used to drive the two axes of an insertion machine used for electronic assembly. A printed circuit board is mounted on the table, which must be positioned accurately for reliable insertion of components into the board. Range of each axis = 700 mm. The leadscrew used to drive each of the two axes has a pitch of 3.0 mm. The inherent mechanical errors in the table positioning can be characterized by a normal distribution with standard deviation = 0.005 mm. If the required accuracy for the table is 0.04 mm, determine (a) the number of step angles that the stepping motor must have and (b) how many bits are required in the control memory for each axis to uniquely identify each control position.

**6.40** Referring back to Problem 6.26, the mechanical inaccuracies in the open-loop positioning system can be described by a normal distribution whose standard deviation = 0.005 mm. The range of the worktable axis is 500 mm, and there are 12 bits in the binary register used by the digital controller to store the programmed position. For the positioning system, determine (a) the control resolution, (b) the accuracy, and (c) the repeatability. (d) What is the minimum number of bits that the binary register should have so that the mechanical drive system becomes the limiting component on control resolution?

**6.41** The positioning table for a component insertion machine uses a stepping motor and leadscrew mechanism. The design specifications require a table speed of 0.4 m/sec and an accuracy = 0.02 mm. The pitch of the lead-screw = 5.0 mm, and the gear ratio = 2:1 (2 turns of the motor for each turn of the lead-screw). The mechanical errors in the motor, gear box, lead-screw, and table connection are characterized by a normal distribution with standard deviation = 0.0025 mm. Determine (a) the minimum number of step angles in the stepping motor and (b) the frequency of the pulse train required to drive the table at the desired maximum speed.

**6.42** The two axes of an $x$-$y$ positioning table are each driven by a stepping motor connected to a leadscrew with a 10:1 gear reduction. The number of step angles on each stepping motor is 20. Each leadscrew has a pitch = 4.5 mm and provides an axis range = 300 mm. There are 16 bits in each binary register used by the controller to store position data for the two axes. (a) What is the control resolution of each axis? (b) What are the required rotational speeds and corresponding pulse train frequencies of each stepping motor to drive the table at 500 mm/min in a straight line from point (30, 30) to point (100, 200)? Ignore acceleration and deceleration.

## APPENDIX APT WORD DEFINITIONS

ATANGL At angle (descriptive data). The data that follows this APT word is an angle, specified in degrees. See LINE.

CENTER Center (descriptive data). The data that follows this APT word specifies the location of the center of a circle or circular arc. See CIRCLE.

CIRCLE Circle (geometry type). Used to define a circle in the x-y plane. Methods of definition include:

1. Using the coordinates of its center and its radius (see Figure A6.1):

   C1 = CIRCLE/CENTER, 100, 50, 0, RADIUS, 32

2. Using the point identifying its center and its radius (see Figure A6.1):

   C1 = CIRCLE/CENTER, P1, RADIUS, 32

3. Using the point identifying its center and a line to which it is tangent (see Figure A6.1):

   C1 = CIRCLE/CENTER, P1, TANTO, L1

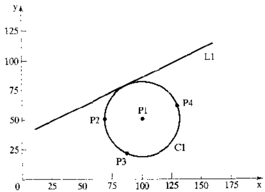



**Figure A6.1** Defining a circle.

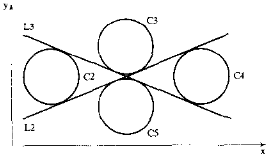



**Figure A6.2** Defining a circle using two intersecting lines.

4. Using three points on its circumference (see Figure A6.1):

C1 = CIRCLE/P2, P3, P4

5. Using two intersecting lines and the radius of the circle (see Figure A6.2):

C2 = CIRCLE/XSMALL, L2, YSMALL, L3, RADIUS, 25

C3 = CIRCLE/YLARGE, L2, YLARGE, L3, RADIUS, 25

C4 = CIRCLE/XLARGE, L2, YLARGE, L3, RADIUS, 25

C5 = CIRCLE/YSMALL, L2, YSMALL, L3, RADIUS, 25

CLPRNT  Cutter location print (auxiliary statement). Used to obtain a computer printout of the cutter location sequence.

COOLNT  Coolant (postprocessor statement). Actuates various coolant options that may be available on the machine tool; also turns coolant off. Examples:

COOLNT/MIST (corresponds to M007)
COOLNT/FLOOD (corresponds to M008)
COOLNT/OFF (corresponds to M009)

CUTTER Cutter (postprocessor statement). Defines cutter diameter and other cutting tool dimensions required in cutter offset calculations. Examples:

1. For two axis profile milling, only cutter diameter is required, specified here in mm (see Figure A6.3a):

CUTTER/20

2. For three-axis contouring, the diameter and corner radius are required (see Figure A6.3b); additional parameters are required for some cutter geometries (not shown here).

CUTTER/20, 5

DELAY Delay (postprocessor command). Used to delay the machine tool operation by a certain period of time, specified in seconds. For example, the following command would cause a delay of 5 seconds:

DELAY/5

END End (postprocessor statement). Stops the program at the end of a section, turning off spindle rotation and coolant, if applicable (corresponds to a M02 or M30). Meaning may vary between machine tools. To continue program, a FROM statement should be used.

FEDRAT Feed rate (postprocessor statement). Used to specify feed rate. Methods of specification include:

1. Feed rate given in units per minute (inches or mm, depending on units specification given in UNITS statement), here specified as 120 mm/min:

FEDRAT/120, IPM (corresponds to G94 F120 or G98 F120)

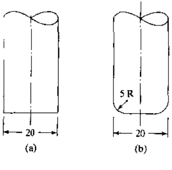



**Figure A6.3** Cutter definition for a 20 mm diameter milling cutter: (a) where corner radius is zero, (b) where corner radius = 5 mm.

2. Feed rate given in units per revolution (inches or mm, depending on units specification given in UNITS statement), here specified as 0.2 mm/rev:

FEDRAT/0.2, IPR (corresponds to G95 F0.2 or G99 F0.2)

FINI Finish (auxiliary statement). Indicates the end of the APT program. Must be the last word in the APT program.

FROM From the starting location (motion startup command). Used to specify the starting location of the cutter, from which subsequent tool motions are referenced. This starting location is defined by the part programmer and set up on the machine tool by the machine operator when the program is executed. The FROM statement itself results in no tool motion. Methods of specification:

1. Using a previously defined starting point (PTARG):

FROM/PTARG

2. Using the coordinates of the starting point, specified here in mm:

FROM/0, −50, 10

GO Go (motion startup command in contouring). Used to position the cutter from the starting location against the drive surface, part surface, and check surface. In the following statement, the starting drive surface is PL1, the starting part surface is PL2, and the check surface is PL3.

GO/TO, PL1, TO, PL2, TO, PL3

GOBACK Go back (contouring motion command). Used to move the tool backwards relative to its previous direction of movement. The following statement directs the tool to move along drive surface PL3 in a direction that is generally backwards relative to the direction of motion executed in the previous motion command. The motion is checked by surface PL4.

GOBACK/PL3, PAST, PL4

GODLTA Go delta (point-to-point motion command). Used to move the tool incrementally from its current location. Commonly used to perform drilling operations. In the following statement, the tool is instructed to move from its present position 0 mm in the $x$-direction, 0 mm in the $y$ direction, and −35 mm in the $z$ direction.

GODLTA/0, 0, −35

GODOWN Go down (contouring motion command). Used to move the tool down relative to its previous direction of movement. See GOBACK for format.

GOFWD Go forward (contouring motion command). Used to move the tool forward relative to its previous direction of movement. See GOBACK for format.

GOLFT Go left (contouring motion command). Used to move the tool to the left relative to its previous direction of movement. See GOBACK for format.

GORGT Go right (contouring motion command). Used to move the tool to the right relative to its previous direction of movement. See GOBACK for format.

GOTO Go to (point-to-point motion command). Used to move the tool to a specified point location. Methods of specification:

1. By naming a previously defined point:

GOTO/P1

2. By defining the coordinates of the point:

GOTO/25, 40, 0

GOUP Go up (contouring motion command). Used to move the tool upward relative to its previous direction of movement. See GOBACK for format.

INTOF Intersection of (descriptive data). Used to indicate the intersection of two geometric elements. Examples:

1. Defining a point P1 by the intersection of two lines, L1 and L2:

P1 = POINT/INTOF, L1, L2

2. Defining a line L1 by the intersection of two planes, PL1 and PL2:

L1=LINE/INTOF, PL1, PL2

INTOL Inward tolerance (postprocessor statement). Indicates the maximum allowable inward deviation between a defined curved surface and the straight line segments used to approximate the curve (see Figure A6.4). In the following example, the inward tolerance is set at 0.02 mm:

INTOL/0.02

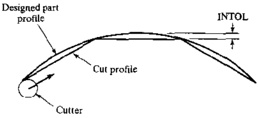



**Figure A6.4** Definition of INTOL (inward tolerance).

See OUTTOL and TOLER. INTOL and OUTTOL can be used together to specify allowable inward and outward tolerances.

IPM Feed specification in inches or mm per minute (descriptive data). Used in conjunction with FEDRAT. Originally, IPM denoted inches per minute; however, it is now used for both inches per minute and mm per minute, which must be specified with a UNITS command.

IPR Feed specification in inches or mm per revolution (descriptive data). Used in conjunction with FEDRAT. Originally, IPM denoted inches per revolution; however, it is now used for both inches per revolution and mm per revolution, which must be specified with a UNITS command.

LEFT Left (descriptive data). Indicates which of two alternatives, left or right, is applicable for the data that follows this APT word. See LINE.

LINE Line (geometry type). Used to define a line. The line is interpreted in APT as a plane that is perpendicular to the x-y plane. Methods of definition include:

1. Using the coordinates of two points through which the line passes (see Figure A6.5):

   L1 = LINE/20, 30, 0, 70, 50, 0

2. Using two previously defined points (see Figure A6.5):

   L1 = LINE/P1, P2

3. Using a point and a circle to which the line is tangent (see Figure A6.6). In the following statements, the descriptive words LEFT and RIGHT are used by looking from the first named point P1 toward the circle:

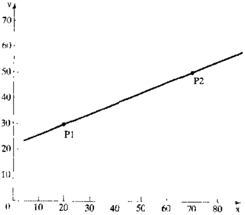



**Figure A6.5** Defining a line using two points.

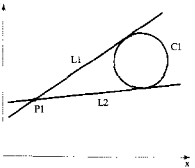



**Figure A6.6** Defining a line using a point and a circle.

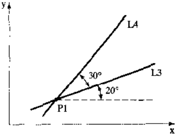



**Figure A6.7** Defining a line using a point and the $x$-axis or another line.

L1 = LINE/P1, LEFT, TANTO, C1

L2 = LINE/P1, RIGHT, TANTO, C1

4. Using a point and the angle of the line with the x-axis or some other line (see Figure A6.7):

L3 = LINE/P1, ATANGL, 20, XAXIS

L4 = LINE/P1, ATANGL, 30, L3

5. Using a point and parallelism or perpendicularity to some other line or to an axis. Examples (see Figure A6.8):

L5 = LINE/P2, PARLEL, L3

L6 = LINE/P2, PERPTO, L3

L7 = LINE/ P2, PERPTO, XAXIS

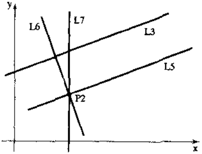



**Figure A6.8** Defining a line using a point and parallelism or perpendicularity to another line.

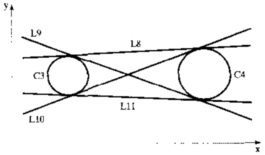



**Figure A6.9** Defining a line using its tangency to two circles.

6. Using two circles to which the line is tangent (see Figure A6.9). In the following examples, the descriptive words LEFT and RIGHT are used by looking from the first named circle toward the second circle:

L8 = LINE/LEFT, TANTO, C3, LEFT, TANTO, C4

L9 = LINE/LEFT, TANTO, C3, RIGHT, TANTO, C4

L10 = LINE/RIGHT, TANTO, C3, LEFT, TANTO, C4

L11 = LINE/RIGHT, TANTO, C3, RIGHT, TANTO, C4

LOADTL Load tool (postprocessor command). This command causes a tool change on a machine tool equipped with automatic tool changer. Descriptive data identifying the tool must be included. In the following example, tool number 14 in the tool storage drum is to be loaded into the spindle; the tool presently in the spindle must be stored back into the tool drum during actuation of the tool changer.

LOADTL/14

MACHIN Machine (auxiliary statement). Used to specify the postprocessor and machine tool. This statement usually follows the PARTNO statement. See PARTNO. In the following statement, MILL54 is the name of the postprocessor program, and number 66 identifies the machine tool selected by the part programmer to run the job:

MACHIN/MILL54, 66

ON On (motion modifier word). One of four motion modifier words to indicate the position relative to a specified surface (usually the check surface) where the cutter motion is to be terminated (see Figure 6.21 in main chapter). See other motion modifier words are TO, PAST, and TANTO.

OUTTOL Outward tolerance (postprocessor statement). Indicates the maximum allowable outward deviation between a defined curved surface and the straight line

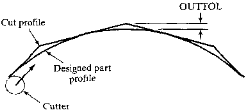



**Figure A6.10** Definition of OUTTOL (outward tolerance).

segments used to approximate the curve (see Figure A6.10). In the following example, the outward tolerance is specified as 0.02 mm:

OUTTOL/0.02

See INTOL and TOLER. INTOL and OUTTOL can be used together to specify allowable inward and outward tolerances.

PARLEL Parallel (descriptive data). Used to define a line or plane as being parallel to another line or plane. See LINE and PLANE.

PARTNO Part number (auxiliary statement). Used at the beginning of an APT part program (generally the first statement) to identify the program. It is not followed by a slash. Example:

PARTNO MECHANISM PLATE 46320

PAST Past (motion modifier word). See ON.

PERPTO Perpendicular to (descriptive data). Used to define a line or plane as being perpendicular to another line or plane. See LINE and PLANE.

PLANE Plane (geometry type). Used to define a plane. Methods of definition include:

1. Using three points that do not lie on the same straight line (see Figure A6.11):

PL1 = PLANE/P1, P2, P3

2. Using a point and parallelism to another plane (see Figure A6.12):

PL2 = PLANE/P4, PARLEL, PL1

3. Using two points and perpendicularity to another plane (see Figure A6.13):

PL3 = PLANE/P5, P6, PERPTO, PL1

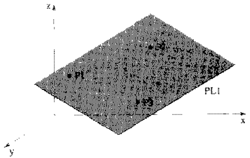



**Figure A6.11** Defining a plane using three points.

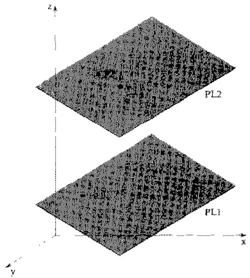



**Figure A6.12** Defining a plane using a point and parallelism to another plane.

POINT Point (geometry type). Used to define a point. Methods of definition include:

1. Using its $x$, $y$, and $z$ coordinates (see Figure A6.14):

$$P1 = POINT/80, 40, 0$$

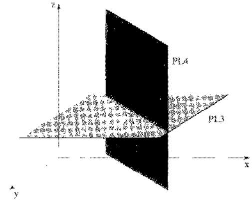



**Figure A6.13** Defining a plane using two points and perpendicularity to another plane.

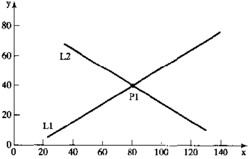



**Figure A6.14** Defining a point using its $x$, $y$, and $z$ coordinates.

2. Using the intersection of two lines (see Figure A6.14):

P1 – POINT/INTOF, L1, L2

3. Using the intersection of a line and a circle (see Figure A6.15):

P2 = POINT/YLARGE, INTOF, L3, C2

P3 = POINT/XLARGE, INTOF, L3, C2

Note that these points could also be defined using the words YSMALL and XSMALL; that is:

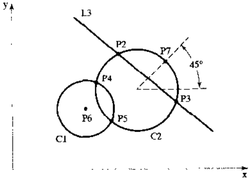



**Figure A6.15** Defining a point using intersections of lines and circles.

P2 = POINT/XSMALL, INTOF, L3, C2

P3 = POINT/YSMALL, INTOF, L3, C2

4. Using two intersecting circles (see Figure A6.15):

P4 = POINT/YLARGE, INTOF, C1, C2

P5 = POINT/YSMALL, INTOF, C1, C2

5. Naming the center of a circle, where the circle has been previously been defined without using the center in the definition (see Figure A6.15):

P6 = POINT/CENTER, C1

6. Using the intersection of a circle and a radial line defined by an angle (see Figure A6.15):

P7 = POINT/C2, ATANGL, 45

RADIUS Radius (descriptive data). Used to indicate the radius of a circle. See CIRCLE.

RAPID Rapid traverse feed (motion command). Used for rapid point-to-point movement of cutting tool (corresponds to G00 in word address format). The command applies to all subsequent motion commands, until superseded by a FEDRAT specification.

REMARK Remark (auxiliary statement). Used to insert a comment, which is not interpreted by the APT processor. No slash is used to separate REMARK from the comment that follows it. Example:

REMARK The following statements define geometry elements.

RIGHT Right (descriptive data). Indicates which of two alternatives, left or right, is applicable for the data that follows this APT word. See LINE.

SPINDL Spindle (postprocessor command). Turns on the spindle at a specified rotational speed; also, turns the spindle off. Must be followed by descriptive data. Applications:

1. Turn spindle on at specified rpm in a clockwise direction:

   SPINDLE/1000, CLW (corresponds to S1000 M03)

2. Turn spindle on at specified rpm in a counterclockwise direction:

   SPINDLE/750,CCLW (corresponds to S750 M04)

3. Turn spindle off.

   SPINDLE/OFF (corresponds to M05)

STOP Stop (postprocessor command). Temporarily stops the execution of the program (corresponds to M00). Used for manually changing the cutter, making adjustments in the setup, changing clamps on the fixture, inspecting the part, and so forth. Program execution resumes when the operator depresses the start button on the machine tool controller.

TANTO Tangent to (descriptive data or motion modifier word). Two uses:

1. As descriptive data, TANTO is used to indicate the tangency of one geometric element to another. See CIRCLE and LINE.
2. As a motion modifier word, TANTO is used to terminate the tool motion at the point of tangency between the drive surface and the check surface, when either or both of these surfaces are circular (see Figure 6.22 in main chapter).

TO To (motion modifier word). See ON.

TOLER Tolerance (postprocessor command). Used to specify the outward tolerance when the inward tolerance is zero. See OUTTOL.

TURRET Turret (postprocessor statement). Used to specify the turret position on a turret lathe or drill or to call a specific tool from an automatic tool changer. Example:

TURRET/T3

UNITS Units specification (postprocessor command). Used to specify inches or mm as the units used in programming. The units can be changed during the program. The two alternative commands are:

1. Units specified as inches:

   UNITS/INCHES (corresponds to G20)

2. Units specified as millimeters:

UNITS/MM (corresponds to G21)

XAXIS X-axis (descriptive data). Used to identify $x$-axis as a reference line.

XLARGE Larger of two alternative $x$-axis locations (descriptive data). Used to indicate the position of one geometric element relative to another when there are two possible alternatives.

XSMALL Smaller of two alternative $x$-axis locations (descriptive data). See XLARGE.

YAXIS Y-axis (descriptive data). Used to identify $y$-axis as a reference line.

YLARGE Larger of two alternative $y$-axis locations (descriptive data). See XLARGE.

YSMALL Smaller of two alternative $y$-axis locations (descriptive data). See XLARGE.

chapter 7

# Industrial Robotics

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**

An *industrial robot* is a general-purpose, programmable machine possessing certain anthropomorphic characteristics. The most obvious anthropomorphic characteristic of an industrial robot is its mechanical arm, that is used to perform various industrial tasks. Other human-like characteristics are the robot's capability to respond to sensory inputs, communicate with other machines, and make decisions. These capabilities permit robots to perform a variety of useful tasks. The development of robotics technology followed the development of numerical control (Historical Note 7.1), and the two technologies are quite similar. They both involve coordinated control of multiple axes (the axes are called *joints* in robotics), and they both use dedicated digital computers as controllers. Whereas NC machines are designed to perform specific processes (e.g., machining, sheetmetal hole punching, and thermal cutting), robots are designed for a wider variety of tasks. Typical production applications of industrial robots include spot welding, material transfer, machine loading, spray painting, and assembly.

Reasons for the commercial and technological importance of industrial robots include the following:

- Robots can be substituted for humans in hazardous or uncomfortable work environments.
- A robot performs its work cycle with a consistency and repeatability that cannot be attained by humans.
- Robots can be reprogrammed. When the production run of the current task is completed, a robot can be reprogrammed and equipped with the necessary tooling to perform an altogether different task.
- Robots are controlled by computers and can therefore be connected to other computer systems to achieve computer integrated manufacturing.

**Historical Note 7.1** A short history of industrial robots [6]

The word "robot" entered the English language through a Czechoslovakian play titled *Rossum's Universal Robots*, written by Karel Capek in the early 1920s. The Czech word "robota" means forced worker. In the English translation, the word was converted to "robot." The story line of the play centers around a scientist named Rossum who invents a chemical substance similar to protoplasm and uses it to produce robots. The scientist's goal is for robots to serve humans and perform physical labor. Rossum continues to make improvements in his invention, ultimately perfecting it. These "perfect beings" begin to resent their subservient role in society and turn against their masters, killing off all human life.

Rossum's invention was pure science fiction (at least in the 1920s; however, advances in the modern field of biotechnology may ultimately be capable of producing such robotic beings). Our short history must also include mention of two real inventors who made original contributions to the technology of industrial robotics. The first was *Cyril W. Kenward*, a British inventor who devised a manipulator that moved on an $x$-$y$-$z$ axis system. In 1954, Kenward applied for a British patent for his robotic device, and the patent was issued in 1957.

The second inventor was an American named *George C. Devol*. Devol is credited with two inventions related to robotics. The first was a device for magnetically recording electrical signals so that the signals could be played back to control the operation of machinery. This device was invented around 1946, and a U.S. patent was issued in 1952. The second invention was a robotic device developed in the 1950s, that Devol called "Programmed Article Transfer." This device was intended for parts handling. The U.S. patent was finally issued in 1961. It was a rough prototype for the hydraulically driven robots that were later built by Unimation, Inc.

Although Kenward's robot was chronologically the first (at least in terms of patent date), Devol's proved ultimately to be far more important in the development and commercialization of robotics technology. The reason for this was a catalyst in the person of *Joseph Engelberger*. Engelberger had graduated with a degree in physics in 1949. As a student, he had read science fiction novels about robots. By the mid-1950s, he was working for a company that made control systems for jet engines. Hence, by the time a chance meeting occurred between Engelberger and Devol in 1956, Engelberger was "predisposed by education, avocation, and occupation toward the notion of robotics."[1] The meeting took place at a cocktail party in Fairfield, Connecticut. Devol described his programmed article transfer invention to Engelberger, and they subsequently began considering how to develop the device as a commercial product for industry. In 1962, Unimation, Inc. was founded, with Engelberger as president. The name of the company's first product was "Unimate," a polar configuration robot. The first application of a Unimate robot was for unloading a die casting machine at a Ford Motor Company plant.

[1] This quote was too good to resist. It was borrowed from Groover et al., *Industrial Robotics: Technology, Programming, and Applications* [6].

## 7.1 ROBOT ANATOMY AND RELATED ATTRIBUTES

The manipulator of an industrial robot is constructed of a series of joints and links. Robot anatomy is concerned with the types and sizes of these joints and links and other aspects of the manipulator's physical construction.

### 7.1.1 Joints and Links

A *joint* of an industrial robot is similar to a joint in the human body: It provides relative motion between two parts of the body. Each joint, or *axis* as it is sometimes called, provides the robot with a so-called *degree-of-freedom* (d.o.f.) of motion. In nearly all cases, only one degree-of-freedom is associated with a joint. Robots are often classified according to the total number of degrees-of-freedom they possess. Connected to each joint are two links, an input link and an output link. *Links* are the rigid components of the robot manipulator. The purpose of the joint is to provide controlled relative movement between the input link and the output link.

Most robots are mounted on a stationary base on the floor. Let us refer to that base and its connection to the first joint as link 0. It is the input link to joint 1, the first in the series of joints used in the construction of the robot. The output link of joint 1 is link 1. Link 1 is the input link to joint 2, whose output link is link 2, and so forth. This joint-link numbering scheme is illustrated in Figure 7.1.

Nearly all industrial robots have mechanical joints that can be classified into one of five types: two types that provide translational motion and three types that provide rotary motion. These joint types are illustrated in Figure 7.2 and are based on a scheme described in [6]. The five joint types are:

(a) *Linear joint* (type L joint). The relative movement between the input link and the output link is a translational sliding motion, with the axes of the two links being parallel.
(b) *Orthogonal joint* (type O joint). This is also a translational sliding motion, but the input and output links are perpendicular to each other during the move.

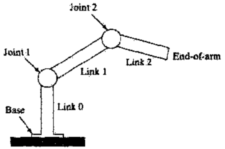



**Figure 7.1** Diagram of robot construction showing how a robot is made up of a series of joint-link combinations.

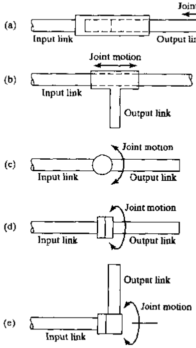



**Figure 7.2** Five types of joints commonly used in industrial robot construction: (a) linear joint (type L joint), (b) orthogonal joint (type O joint), (c) rotational joint (type R joint), (d) twisting joint (type T joint), and (e) revolving joint (type V joint).

(c) *Rotational joint* (type R joint). This type provides rotational relative motion, with the axis of rotation perpendicular to the axes of the input and output links.
(d) *Twisting joint* (type T joint). This joint also involves rotary motion, but the axis of rotation is parallel to the axes of the two links.
(e) *Revolving joint* (type V joint, V from the "v" in revolving). In this joint type, the axis of the input link is parallel to the axis of rotation of the joint, and the axis of the output link is perpendicular to the axis of rotation.

Each of these joint types has a range over which it can be moved. The range for a translational joint is usually less than a meter. The three types of rotary joints may have a range as small as a few degrees or as large as several complete turns.

### 7.1.2 Common Robot Configurations

A robot manipulator can be divided into two sections: a body-and-arm assembly and a wrist assembly. There are usually three degrees-of-freedom associated with the body-and-arm, and either two or three degrees-of-freedom associated with the wrist. At the end of the manipulator's wrist is a device related to the task that must be accomplished by the robot. The device, called an *end effector* (Section 7.3), is usually either (1) a gripper for holding a workpart or (2) a tool for performing some process. The body-and-arm of the robot is used to position the end effector, and the robot's wrist is used to orient the end effector.

*Body-and-Arm Configurations.* Given the five types of joints defined above, there are $5 \times 5 \times 5 = 125$ different combinations of joints that can be used to design the body-and-arm assembly for a three-degree-of-freedom robot manipulator. In addition, there are design variations within the individual joint types (e.g., physical size of the joint and range of motion). It is somewhat remarkable, therefore, that there are only five basic configurations commonly available in commercial industrial robots.[2] These five configurations are:

1. *Polar configuration.* This configuration (Figure 7.3) consists of a sliding arm (L joint) actuated relative to the body, that can rotate about both a vertical axis (T joint) and a horizontal axis (R joint).
2. *Cylindrical configuration.* This robot configuration (Figure 7.4) consists of a vertical column, relative to which an arm assembly is moved up or down. The arm can be moved in and out relative to the axis of the column. Our figure shows one possible way in which this configuration can be constructed, using a T joint to rotate the column about its axis. An L joint is used to move the arm assembly vertically along the column, while an O joint is used to achieve radial movement of the arm.
3. *Cartesian coordinate robot.* Other names for this configuration include rectilinear robot and *x-y-z* robot. As shown in Figure 7.5, it is composed of three sliding joints, two of which are orthogonal.
4. *Jointed-arm robot.* This robot manipulator (Figure 7.6) has the general configuration of a human arm. The jointed arm consists of a vertical column that swivels about the

[2] It should be noted that there are possible variations in the joint types that can be used to construct the five basic configurations.

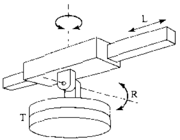



**Figure 7.3** Polar coordinate body-and-arm assembly.

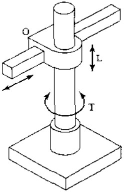



**Figure 7.4** Cylindrical body-and-arm assembly.

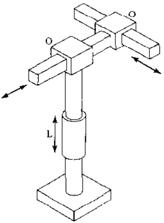



**Figure 7.5** Cartesian coordinate body-and-arm assembly.

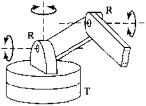



**Figure 7.6** Jointed-arm body-and-arm assembly.

base using a T joint. At the top of the column is a shoulder joint (shown as an R joint in our figure), whose output link connects to an elbow joint (another R joint).

5. *SCARA*. SCARA is an acronym for *S*elective *C*ompliance *A*ssembly *R*obot *A*rm. This configuration (Figure 7.7) is similar to the jointed arm robot except that the shoulder and elbow rotational axes are vertical, which means that the arm is very rigid in the vertical direction, but compliant in the horizontal direction. This permits the robot to perform insertion tasks (for assembly) in a vertical direction, where some side-to-side alignment may be needed to mate the two parts properly.

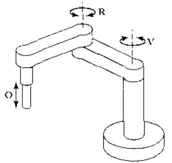



**Figure 7.7** SCARA body-and-arm assembly.

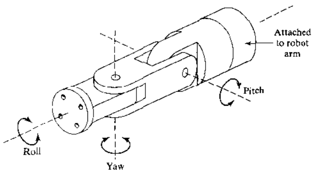



**Figure 7.8** Typical configuration of a three-degree-of-freedom wrist assembly showing roll, pitch, and yaw.

*Wrist Configurations.* The robot's wrist is used to establish the orientation of the end effector. Robot wrists usually consist of two or three degrees-of-freedom. Figure 7.8 illustrates one possible configuration for a three-degree-of-freedom wrist assembly. The three joints are defined as: (1) *roll*, using a T joint to accomplish rotation about the robot's arm axis; (2) *pitch*, which involves up-and-down rotation, typically using a R joint; and (3) *yaw*, which involves right-and-left rotation, also accomplished by means of an R-joint. A two-d.o.f wrist typically includes only roll and pitch joints (T and R joints).

To avoid confusion in the pitch and yaw definitions, the wrist roll should be assumed in its center position, as shown in our figure. To demonstrate the possible confusion, consider a two-jointed wrist assembly. With the roll joint in its center position, the second joint (R joint) provides up-and-down rotation (pitch). However, if the roll position were 90 degrees from center (either clockwise or counterclockwise), the second joint would provide a right-left rotation (yaw).

The SCARA robot configuration (Figure 7.7) is unique in that it typically does not have a separate wrist assembly. As indicated in our description, it is used for insertion type assembly operations in that the insertion is made from above. Accordingly, the orientation requirements are minimal, and the wrist is therefore not needed. Orientation of the object to be inserted is sometimes required, and an additional rotary joint can be provided for this purpose. The other four body-and-arm configurations possess wrist assemblies that almost always consist of combinations of rotary joints of types R and T.

*Joint Notation System.* The letter symbols for the five joint types (L, O, R, T, and V) can be used to define a joint notation system for the robot manipulator. In this notation system, the manipulator is described by the joint types that make up the body-and-arm assembly, followed by the joint symbols that make up the wrist. For example, the notation TLR : TR represents a five degree-of-freedom manipulator whose body-and-arm is made up of a twisting joint (joint 1 = T), a linear joint (joint 2 = L), and a rotational joint (joint 3 = R). The wrist consists of two joints, a twisting joint (joint 4 = T) and a rotational joint (joint 5 = R). A colon separates the body-and-arm notation from the wrist notation. Typical joint notations for the five common body-and-arm configurations are presented in Table 7.1. Common wrist joint notations are TRR and TR.

**TABLE 7.1** Joint Notations for Five Common Robot Body-and-Arm Configurations

| *Body-and-Arm* | *Joint Notation* | *Alternative Configurations* |
|---|---|---|
| Polar | TRL (Figure 7.3) | |
| Cylindrical | TLO (Figure 7.4) | LVL |
| Cartesian coordinate | LOO (Figure 7.5) | OOO |
| Jointed arm | TRR (Figure 7.6) | VVR |
| SCARA | VRO (Figure 7.7) | |

Note: In some cases, more than one joint notation is given because the configuration can be constructed using more than one series of joint types.

*Work Volume.* The *work volume* (the term *work envelope* is also used) of the manipulator is defined as the envelope or space within which the robot can manipulate the end of its wrist. Work volume is determined by the number and types of joints in the manipulator (body-and-arm and wrist), the ranges of the various joints, and the physical sizes of the links. The shape of the work volume depends largely on the robot's configuration. A polar configuration robot tends to have a partial sphere as its work volume, a cylindrical robot has a cylindrical work envelope, and a Cartesian coordinate robot has a rectangular work volume.

### 7.1.3 Joint Drive Systems

Robot joints are actuated using any of three possible types of drive systems: (1) electric, (2) hydraulic, or (3) pneumatic. Electric drive systems use electric motors as joint actuators (e.g., servomotors or stepping motors, the same types of motors used in NC positioning systems, Chapter 6). Hydraulic and pneumatic drive systems use devices such as linear pistons and rotary vane actuators to accomplish the motion of the joint.

Pneumatic drive is typically limited to smaller robots used in simple material transfer applications. Electric drive and hydraulic drive are used on more-sophisticated industrial robots. Electric drive has become the preferred drive system in commercially available robots, as electric motor technology has advanced in recent years. It is more readily adaptable to computer control, which is the dominant technology used today for robot controllers. Electric drive robots are relatively accurate compared with hydraulically powered robots. By contrast, the advantages of hydraulic drive include greater speed and strength.

The drive system, position sensors (and speed sensors if used), and feedback control systems for the joints determine the dynamic response characteristics of the manipulator. The speed with which the robot can achieve a programmed position and the stability of its motion are important characteristics of dynamic response in robotics. *Speed* refers to the absolute velocity of the manipulator at its end-of-arm. The maximum speed of a large robot is around 2 m/sec (6 ft/sec). Speed can be programmed into the work cycle so that different portions of the cycle are carried out at different velocities. What is sometimes more important than speed is the robot's capability to accelerate and decelerate in a controlled manner. In many work cycles, much of the robot's movement is performed in a confined region of the work volume; hence, the robot never achieves its top-rated velocity. In these cases, nearly all of the motion cycle is engaged in acceleration and deceleration rather than in constant speed. Other factors that influence speed of motion are the weight (mass) of the object that is being manipulated and the precision with which the object must be located at the end of a given move. A term that takes all of these factors into consideration is *speed of response*, that refers to the time required for the manipulator to move from one point in space to the next. Speed of response is important because it influences the robot's cycle time, that in turn affects the production rate in the application. *Stability* refers to the amount of overshoot and oscillation that occurs in the robot motion at the end-of-arm as it attempts to move to the next programmed location. More oscillation in the motion is an indication of less stability. The problem is that robots with greater stability are inherently slower in their response, whereas faster robots are generally less stable.

Load carrying capacity depends on the robot's physical size and construction as well as the force and power that can be transmitted to the end of the wrist. The weight carrying capacity of commercial robots ranges from less than 1 kg up to approximately 900 kg (2000 lb). Medium sized robots designed for typical industrial applications have capacities in the range 10 to 45 kg (25 to 100 lb). One factor that should be kept in mind when considering load carrying capacity is that a robot usually works with a tool or gripper attached to its wrist. Grippers are designed to grasp and move objects about the work cell. The net load carrying capacity of the robot is obviously reduced by the weight of the gripper. If the robot is rated at a 10 kg (22 lb) capacity and the weight of the gripper is 4 kg (9 lbs), then the net weight carrying capacity is reduced to 6 kg (13 lb).

## 7.2 ROBOT CONTROL SYSTEMS

The actuations of the individual joints must be controlled in a coordinated fashion for the manipulator to perform a desired motion cycle. Microprocessor-based controllers are commonly used today in robotics as the control system hardware. The controller is organized in a hierarchical structure as indicated in Figure 7.9 so that each joint has its own feedback control system, and a supervisory controller coordinates the combined actuations of the joints according to the sequence of the robot program. Different types of control are required for different applications. Robot controllers can be classified into four categories [6]: (1) limited sequence control, (2) playback with point-to-point control, (3) playback with continuous path control, and (4) intelligent control.

*Limited Sequence Control.* This is the most elementary control type. It can be utilized only for simple motion cycles, such as pick-and-place operations (i.e., picking an object up at one location and placing it at another location). It is usually implemented by setting limits or mechanical stops for each joint and sequencing the actuation of the joints to

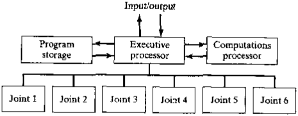



**Figure 7.9** Hierarchical control structure of a robot microcomputer controller.

accomplish the cycle. Feedback loops are sometimes used to indicate that the particular joint actuation has been accomplished so that the next step in the sequence can be initiated. However, there is no servo-control to accomplish precise positioning of the joint. Many pneumatically driven robots are limited sequence robots.

*Playback with Point-to-Point Control.* Playback robots represent a more-sophisticated form of control than limited sequence robots. *Playback control* means that the controller has a memory to record the sequence of motions in a given work cycle as well as the locations and other parameters (such as speed) associated with each motion and then to subsequently play back the work cycle during execution of the program. It is this playback feature that gives the control type its name. In point-to-point (PTP) control, individual positions of the robot arm are recorded into memory. These positions are not limited to mechanical stops for each joint as in limited sequence robots. Instead, each position in the robot program consists of a set of values representing locations in the range of each joint of the manipulator. For each position defined in the program, the joints are thus directed to actuate to their respective specified locations. Feedback control is used during the motion cycle to confirm that the individual joints achieve the specified locations in the program.

*Playback with Continuous Path Control.* Continuous path robots have the same playback capability as the previous type. The difference between continuous path and point-to-point is the same in robotics as it is in NC (Section 6.1.3). A playback robot with continuous path control is capable of one or both of the following:

1. *Greater storage capacity.* The controller has a far greater storage capacity than its point-to-point counterpart, so that the number of locations that can be recorded into memory is far greater than for point-to-point. Thus, the points constituting the motion cycle can be spaced very closely together to permit the robot to accomplish a smooth continuous motion. In PTP, only the final location of the individual motion elements are controlled, so the path taken by the arm to reach the final location is not controlled. In a continuous path motion, the movement of the arm and wrist is controlled during the motion.
2. *Interpolation calculations.* The controller computes the path between the starting point and the ending point of each move using interpolation routines similar to those used in NC. These routines generally include linear and circular interpolation (Table 6.1).

The difference between PTP and continuous path control can be distinguished in the following mathematical way. Consider a three-axis Cartesian coordinate manipulator in that the end-of-arm is moved in $x$-$y$-$z$ space. In point-to-point systems, the $x$, $y$, and $z$ axes are controlled to achieve a specified point location within the robot's work volume. In continuous path systems, not only are the $x$, $y$, and $z$ axes controlled, but the velocities $dx/dt$, $dy/dt$, and $dz/dt$ are controlled simultaneously to achieve the specified linear or curvilinear path. Servo-control is used to continuously regulate the position and speed of the manipulator. It should be mentioned that a playback robot with continuous path control has the capacity for PTP control.

*Intelligent Control.* Industrial robots are becoming increasingly intelligent. In this context, an *intelligent robot* is one that exhibits behavior that makes it seem intelligent. Some of the characteristics that make a robot appear intelligent include the capacity to:

- interact with its environment
- make decisions when things go wrong during the work cycle
- communicate with humans
- make computations during the motion cycle
- respond to advanced sensor inputs such as machine vision

In addition, robots with intelligent control possess playback capability for both PTP or continuous path control. These features require (1) a relatively high level of computer control and (2) an advanced programming language to input the decision-making logic and other "intelligence" into memory.

## 7.3 END EFFECTORS

In our discussion of robot configurations (Section 7.1.2), we mentioned that an end effector is usually attached to the robot's wrist. The end effector enables the robot to accomplish a specific task. Because of the wide variety of tasks performed by industrial robots, the end effector must usually be custom-engineered and fabricated for each different application. The two categories of end effectors are grippers and tools.

### 7.3.1 Grippers

*Grippers* are end effectors used to grasp and manipulate objects during the work cycle. The objects are usually workparts that are moved from one location to another in the cell. Machine loading and unloading applications fall into this category (Section 7.5.1). Owing to the variety of part shapes, sizes, and weights, grippers must usually be custom designed. Types of grippers used in industrial robot applications include the following:

- *mechanical grippers*, consisting of two or more fingers that can be actuated by the robot controller to open and close to grasp the workpart; Figure 7.10 shows a two-finger gripper
- *vacuum grippers*, in which suction cups are used to hold flat objects
- *magnetized devices*, for holding ferrous parts

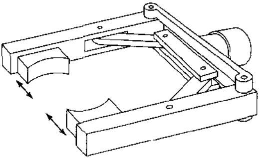


**Figure 7.10** Robot mechanical gripper.

- *adhesive devices*, where an adhesive substance is used to hold a flexible material such as a fabric
- *simple mechanical devices* such as hooks and scoops.

Mechanical grippers are the most common gripper type. Some of the innovations and advances in mechanical gripper technology include:

- *Dual grippers*, consisting of two gripper devices in one end effector, which are useful for machine loading and unloading. With a single gripper, the robot must reach into the production machine twice, once to unload the finished part from the machine, and the second time to load the next part into the machine. With a dual gripper, the robot picks up the next workpart while the machine is still processing the preceding part; when the machine finishes, the robot reaches into the machine once to remove the finished part and load the next part. This reduces the cycle time per part.
- *Interchangeable fingers* that can be used on one gripper mechanism. To accommodate different parts, different fingers are attached to the gripper.
- *Sensory feedback* in the fingers that provide the gripper with capabilities such as: (1) sensing the presence of the workpart or (2) applying a specified limited force to the workpart during gripping (for fragile workparts).
- *Multiple fingered grippers* that possess the general anatomy of a human hand.
- *Standard gripper products* that are commercially available, thus reducing the need to custom-design a gripper for each separate robot application.

### 7.3.2 Tools

Tools are used in applications where the robot must perform some processing operation on the workpart. The robot therefore manipulates the tool relative to a stationary or slowly moving object (e.g., workpart or subassembly). Examples of the tools used as end effectors by robots to perform processing applications include:

- spot welding gun
- arc welding tool
- spray painting gun
- rotating spindle for drilling, routing, grinding, and so forth
- assembly tool (e.g., automatic screwdriver)
- heating torch
- water jet cutting tool.

In each case, the robot must not only control the relative position of the tool with respect to the work as a function of time, it must also control the operation of the tool. For this purpose, the robot must be able to transmit control signals to the tool for starting, stopping, and otherwise regulating its actions.

In some applications, multiple tools must be used by the robot during the work cycle. For example, several sizes of routing or drilling bits must be applied to the workpart. Thus, a means of rapidly changing the tools must be provided. The end effector in this case takes the form of a fast-change tool holder for quickly fastening and unfastening the various tools used during the work cycle.

## 7.4 SENSORS IN ROBOTICS

The general topic of sensors as components in control systems is discussed in Chapter 5 (Section 5.1). Here we discuss sensors as they are applied in robotics. Sensors used in industrial robotics can be classified into two categories: (1) internal and (2) external. *Internal sensors* are those used for controlling position and velocity of the various joints of the robot. These sensors form a feedback control loop with the robot controller. Typical sensors used to control the position of the robot arm include potentiometers and optical encoders. To control the speed of the robot arm, tachometers of various types are used.

*External sensors* are used to coordinate the operation of the robot with other equipment in the cell. In many cases, these external sensors are relatively simple devices, such as limit switches that determine whether a part has been positioned properly in a fixture or that indicate that a part is ready to be picked up at a conveyor. Other situations require more-advanced sensor technologies, including the following:

- *Tactile sensors.* Used to determine whether contact is made between the sensor and another object. Tactile sensors can be divided into two types in robot applications: (1) touch sensors and (2) force sensors. *Touch sensors* are those that indicate simply that contact has been made with the object. *Force sensors* are used to indicate the magnitude of the force with the object. This might be useful in a gripper to measure and control the force being applied to grasp an object.
- *Proximity sensors.* Indicate when an object is close to the sensor. When this type of sensor is used to indicate the actual distance of the object, it is called a *range sensor.*
- *Optical sensors.* Photocells and other photometric devices can be utilized to detect the presence or absence of objects and are often used for proximity detection.
- *Machine vision.* Used in robotics for inspection, parts identification, guidance, and other uses. In Section 23.6, we provide a more-complete discussion of machine vision in automated inspection.
- *Other sensors.* This miscellaneous category includes other types of sensors that might be used in robotics, including devices for measuring temperature, fluid pressure, fluid flow, electrical voltage, current, and various other physical properties.

## 7.5 INDUSTRIAL ROBOT APPLICATIONS

One of the earliest installations of an industrial robot was around 1961 in a die casting operation [5]. The robot was used to unload castings from the die casting machine. The typical environment in die casting is not pleasant for humans due to the heat and fumes emitted by the casting process. It seemed quite logical to use a robot in this type of work environment in place of a human operator. Work environment is one of several characteristics that should be considered when selecting a robot application. The general characteristics of industrial work situations that tend to promote the substitution of robots for human labor are the following:

1. *Hazardous work environment for humans.* When the work environment is unsafe, unhealthful, hazardous, uncomfortable, or otherwise unpleasant for humans, there is reason to consider an industrial robot for the work. In addition to die casting, there are many other work situations that are hazardous or unpleasant for humans, in-

cluding forging, spray painting, continuous arc welding, and spot welding. Industrial robots are utilized in all of these processes.

2. *Repetitive work cycle.* A second characteristic that tends to promote the use of robotics is a repetitive work cycle. If the sequence of elements in the cycle is the same, and the elements consist of relatively simple motions, a robot is usually capable of performing the work cycle with greater consistency and repeatability than a human worker. Greater consistency and repeatability are usually manifested as higher product quality than can be achieved in a manual operation.
3. *Difficult handling for humans.* If the task involves the handling of parts or tools that are heavy or otherwise difficult to manipulate, it is likely that an industrial robot is available that can perform the operation. Parts or tools that are too heavy for humans to handle conveniently are well within the load carrying capacity of a large robot.
4. *Multishift operation.* In manual operations requiring second and third shifts, substitution of a robot will provide a much faster financial payback than a single shift operation. Instead of replacing one worker, the robot replaces two or three workers.
5. *Infrequent changeovers.* Most batch or job shop operations require a changeover of the physical workplace between one job and the next. The time required to make the changeover is nonproductive time since parts are not being made. In an industrial robot application, not only must the physical setup be changed, but the robot must also be reprogrammed, thus adding to the downtime. Consequently, robots have traditionally been easier to justify for relatively long production runs where changeovers are infrequent. As procedures for off-line robot programming improve, it will be possible to reduce the time required to perform the reprogramming procedure. This will permit shorter production runs to become more economical.
6. *Part position and orientation are established in the work cell.* Most robots in today's industrial applications are without vision capability. Their capacity to pick up an object during each work cycle relies on the fact that the part is in a known position and orientation. A means of presenting the part to the robot at the same location each cycle must be engineered.

These characteristics are summarized in Table 7.2, which might be used as a checklist of features to look for in a work situation to determine if a robot application is feasible. The more check marks falling in the "YES" column, the more likely that an industrial robot is suitable for the application.

Robots are being used in a wide field of applications in industry. Most of the current applications of industrial robots are in manufacturing. The applications can usually be classified into one of the following categories: (1) material handling, (2) processing operations, and (3) assembly and inspection. At least some of the work characteristics discussed in Table 7.2 must be present in the application to make the installation of a robot technically and economically feasible

### 7.5.1 Material Handling Applications

Material handling applications are those in which the robot moves materials or parts from one place to another. To accomplish the transfer, the robot is equipped with a gripper type end effector. The gripper must be designed to handle the specific part or parts that are to be moved in the application. Included within this application category are the following

**TABLE 7.2** Checklist to Determine Applicability of an Industrial Robot in a Given Work Situation

| *Characteristics of the Work Situation* | *NO (Characteristic Does Not Apply)* | *YES (Characteristic Applies)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Hazardous work environment for humans | | |
| 2. Repetitive work cycle | | |
| 3. Difficult handling for humans | | |
| 4. Multishift operation | | |
| 5. Infrequent changeovers | | |
| 6. Part position and orientation are established in the work cell | | |
| Total check marks in each column | | |

cases: (1) material transfer and (2) machine loading and/or unloading. In nearly all material handling applications, the parts must be presented to the robot in a known position and orientation. This requires some form of material handling device to deliver the parts into the work cell in this defined position and orientation.

*Material Transfer.* These applications are ones in which the primary purpose of the robot is to pick up parts at one location and place them at a new location. In many cases, reorientation of the part must be accomplished during the relocation. The basic application in this category is the relatively simple *pick-and-place* operation, where the robot picks up a part and deposits it at a new location. Transferring parts from one conveyor to another is an example. The requirements of the application are modest: a low-technology robot. (e.g., limited sequence type) is usually sufficient. Only two, three, or four joints are required for most of the applications. Pneumatically powered robots are often used.

A more-complex example of material transfer is *palletizing*, in which the robot must retrieve parts, cartons, or other objects from one location and deposit them onto a pallet or other container with multiple positions. The problem is illustrated in Figure 7.11. Al-

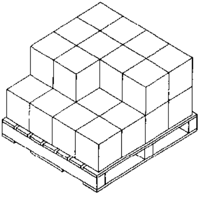


**Figure 7.11** Typical part arrangement for a robot palletizing operation.

though the pickup point is the same for every cycle. the deposit location on the pallet is different for each carton. This adds to the degree of difficulty of the task. Either the robot must be taught each position on the pallet using the powered leadthrough method (Section 7.6.1), or it must compute the location based on the dimensions of the pallet and the center distances between the cartons (in both $x$- and $y$-directions).

Other applications that are similar to palletizing include *depalletizing* (removing parts from an ordered arrangement in a pallet and placing them at one location, e.g., onto a moving conveyor), *stacking* operations (placing flat parts on top of each other, such that the vertical location of the drop-off position is continuously changing with each cycle). and *insertion* operations (where the robot inserts parts into the compartments of a divided carton).

*Machine Loading and/or Unloading.* In machine loading and/or unloading applications, the robot transfers parts into and/or from a production machine. The three possible cases are:

1. *Machine loading.* This is the case in which the robot loads parts into the production machine, but the parts are unloaded from the machine by some other means.
2. *Machine unloading.* In this case, the raw materials are fed into the machine without using the robot, and the robot unloads the finished parts.
3. *Machine loading and unloading.* This case involves both loading of the raw workpart and unloading of the finished part by the robot.

Industrial robot applications of machine loading and/or unloading include the following processes:

- *Die casting.* The robot unloads parts from the die casting machine. Peripheral operations sometimes performed by the robot include dipping the parts into a water bath for cooling.
- *Plastic molding.* Plastic molding is a robot application similar to die casting. The robot is used to unload molded parts from the injection molding machine.
- *Metal machining operations.* The robot is used to load raw blanks into the machine tool and unload finished parts from the machine. The change in shape and size of the part before and after machining often presents a problem in end effector design, and dual grippers (Section 7.3.1) are often used to deal with this issue.
- *Forging.* The robot is typically used to load the raw hot billet into the die, hold it during the forging blows, and remove it from the forge hammer. The hammering action and the risk of damage to the die or end effector are significant technical problems. Forging and related processes are difficult as robot applications because of the severe conditions under which the robot must operate.
- *Pressworking.* Human operators work at considerable risk in sheetmetal pressworking operations because of the action of the press. Robots are used as substitutes for the human workers to reduce the danger. In these applications, the robot loads the blank into the press, the stamping operation is performed, and the part falls out the back of the machine into a container. In high-production runs, pressworking operations can be mechanized by using sheetmetal coils instead of individual blanks. These operations require neither humans nor robots to participate directly in the process.
- *Heat treating.* These are often relatively simple operations in which the robot loads and/or unloads parts from a furnace.

### 7.5.2 Processing Operations

Processing applications are those in which the robot performs a processing operation on a workpart. A distinguishing feature of this category is that the robot is equipped with some type of tool as its end effector (Section 7.3.2). To perform the process, the robot must manipulate the tool relative to the part during the work cycle. In some processing applications, more than one tool must be used during the work cycle. In these instances, a fast-change tool holder is used to exchange tools during the cycle. Examples of industrial robot applications in the processing category include spot welding, continuous arc welding, spray painting, and various machining and other rotating spindle processes.

*Spot Welding.* Spot welding is a metal joining process in which two sheet metal parts are fused together at localized points of contact. Two copper-based electrodes are used to squeeze the metal parts together and then apply a large electrical current across the contact point to cause fusion to occur. The electrodes, together with the mechanism that actuates them, constitute the welding gun in spot welding. Because of its widespread use in the automobile industry for car body fabrication, spot welding represents one of the most common applications of industrial robots today. The end effector is the spot welding gun used to pinch the car panels together and perform the resistance welding process. The welding gun used for automobile spot welding is typically heavy. Prior to the use of robots in this application, human workers performed this operation, and the heavy welding tools were difficult for humans to manipulate accurately. As a consequence, there were many instances of missed welds, poorly located welds, and other defects, resulting in overall low quality of the finished product. The use of industrial robots in this application has dramatically improved the consistency of the welds.

Robots used for spot welding are usually large, with sufficient payload capacity to wield the heavy welding gun. Five or six axes are generally required to achieve the required positioning and orientation of the welding gun. Playback robots with point-to-point are used. Jointed arm coordinate robots are the most common anatomies in automobile spot welding lines, which may consist of several dozen robots.

*Continuous Arc Welding.* Continuous arc welding is used to provide continuous welds rather than individual welds at specific contact points as in spot welding. The resulting arc welded joint is substantially stronger than in spot welding. Since the weld is continuous, it can be used to make airtight pressure vessels and other weldments in which strength and continuity are required. There are various forms of continuous arc welding, but they all follow the general description given here.

The working conditions for humans who perform arc welding are not good. The welder must wear a face helmet for eye protection against the ultraviolet radiation emitted by the arc welding process. The helmet window must be dark enough to mask the ultraviolet. However, the window is so dark that the worker cannot see through it unless the arc is on. High electrical current is used in the welding process, and this creates a hazard for the welder. Finally, there is the obvious danger from the high temperatures in the process, high enough to melt the steel, aluminum, or other metal that is being welded. A significant amount of hand-eye coordination is required by human welders to make sure that the arc follows the desired path with sufficient accuracy to make a good weld. This, together with the conditions described above, results in a high level of worker fatigue. Consequently, the welder is only accomplishing the welding process for perhaps 20–30% of the time. This percentage is called the *arc-on time*, defined as the proportion of time during the shift when the welding arc is on and performing the process. To assist the welder, a second worker, called the *fitter*, is usually present at the work site to set up the parts to be welded and to perform other similar chores in support of the welder.

Because of these conditions in manual arc welding, automation is used where technically and economically feasible. For welding jobs involving long continuous joints that are accomplished repetitively, mechanized welding machines have been designed to perform the process. These machines are used for long straight sections and regular round parts, such as pressure vessels tanks, and pipes.

Industrial robots can also be used to automate the continuous arc welding process. The economics of robot arc welding suggest that the application should involve a relatively long production run. The cell consists of the robot, the welding apparatus (power unit, controller, welding tool, and wire feed mechanism), and a fixture that positions the components for the robot. The fixture might be mechanized with one or two degrees-of-freedom so that it can present different portions of the work to the robot for welding. For greater productivity, a double fixture is often used so that a human helper can be unloading the completed job and loading the components for the next work cycle while the robot is simultaneously welding the present job. Figure 7.12 illustrates this kind of workplace arrangement.

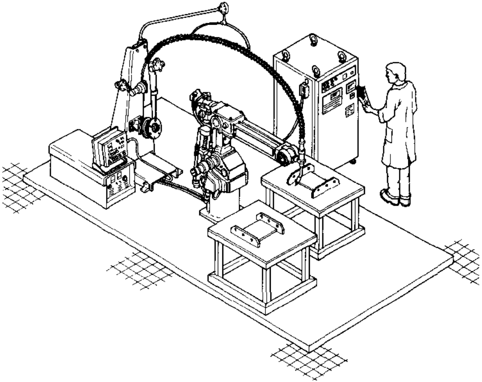


**Figure 7.12** Robot arc welding cell.

The robot used in arc welding jobs must be capable of continuous path control. Jointed arm robots consisting of five or six joints are frequently used. In addition, a fixture consisting of one or two more degrees-of-freedom is often used to hold the parts during welding. The fixture must be designed specifically for the job. Programming for arc welding is usually costly. Therefore, most applications require a large batch size to justify the robot cell. In the future, as quick-change fixtures are developed and programming effort is reduced, shorter production runs will be possible in robot arc welding applications.

*Spray Coating.* Spray coating makes use of a spray gun directed at the object to be coated. Fluid (e.g., paint) flows through the nozzle of the spray gun to be dispersed and applied over the surface of the object. Spray painting is the most common application in the category. The term *spray coating* indicates a broader range of applications that includes painting.

The work environment for humans who perform this process is filled with health hazards. These hazards include noxious fumes in the air, risk of flash fires, and noise from the spray gun nozzle. The environment is also believed to pose a carcinogenic risk for workers. Largely because of these hazards, robots are being used with increasing frequency for spray coating tasks.

Robot applications include spray coating of appliances, automobile car bodies, engines, and other parts, spray staining of wood products, and spraying of porcelain coatings on bathroom fixtures. The robot must be capable of continuous path control to accomplish the smooth motion sequences required in spray painting. The most convenient programming method is manual leadthrough (Section 7.6.1). Jointed arm robots seem to be the most common anatomy for this application. The robot must possess a long reach to access the areas of the workpart to be coated in the application.

The use of industrial robots for spray coating applications offers a number of benefits in addition to protecting workers from a hazardous environment. These other benefits include greater uniformity in applying the coating than humans can accomplish, reduced use of paint (less waste), lower needs for ventilating the work area since humans are not present during the process, and greater productivity.

*Other Processing Applications.* Spot welding, arc welding, and spray coating are the most familiar processing applications of industrial robots. The list of industrial processes that are being performed by robots is continually growing. Among these processes are the following:

- *Drilling, routing, and other machining processes.* These applications use a rotating spindle as the end effector. Mounted in the spindle chuck is the particular cutting tool. One of the problems with this application is the high cutting forces encountered in machining. The robot must be strong enough to withstand these cutting forces and maintain the required accuracy of the cut.
- *Grinding, wire brushing, and similar operations.* These operations also use a rotating spindle to drive the tool (grinding wheel, wire brush, polishing wheel, etc.) at high rotational speed to accomplish finishing and deburring operations on the work.
- *Waterjet cutting.* This is a process in which a high pressure stream of water is forced through a small nozzle at high speed to cut plastic sheets, fabrics, cardboard, and other materials with precision. The end effector is the waterjet nozzle that is directed over the desired cutting path by the robot.

- *Laser cutting.* The function of the robot in this application is similar to its function in waterjet cutting. The laser tool is attached to the robot as its end effector. Laser beam welding is a similar application.
- *Riveting.* Some work has been done in using robots to perform riveting operations in sheet metal fabrication. A riveting tool with a feed mechanism for feeding the rivets is mounted on the robot's wrist. The function of the robot is to place the riveting tool at the proper hole and actuate the device.

### 7.5.3 Assembly and Inspection

In some respects, assembly and inspection are hybrids of the previous two application categories: material handling and processing. Assembly and inspection applications can involve either the handling of materials or the manipulation of a tool. For example, assembly operations typically involve the addition of components to build a product. This requires the movement of components from a supply location in the workplace to the product being assembled, which is material handling. In some cases, the fastening of the components requires a tool to be used by the robot (e.g., staking, welding, driving a screw). Similarly, some robot inspection operations require that parts be manipulated, while other applications require that an inspection tool be manipulated.

Assembly and inspection are traditionally labor-intensive activities. They are also highly repetitive and usually boring. For these reasons, they are logical candidates for robotic applications. However, assembly work typically involves diverse and sometimes difficult tasks, often requiring adjustments to be made in parts that don't quite fit together. A sense of feel is often required to achieve a close fitting of parts. Inspection work requires high precision and patience, and human judgment is often needed to determine whether a product is within quality specifications or not. Because of these complications in both types of work, the application of robots has not been easy. Nevertheless, the potential rewards are so great that substantial efforts are being made to develop the necessary technologies to achieve success in these applications.

*Assembly.* Assembly involves the addition of two or more parts to form a new entity, called a subassembly (or assembly). The new subassembly is made secure by fastening two or more parts together using mechanical fastening techniques (such as screws, nuts, and rivets) or joining processes (e.g., welding, brazing, soldering, or adhesive bonding). We have already discussed robot applications in welding, which are often considered separately from mechanical assembly applications (as we have separated them in our coverage here).

Because of the economic importance of assembly, automated methods are often applied. Fixed automation (Chapter 1) is appropriate in mass production of relatively simple products, such as pens, mechanical pencils, cigarette lighters, and garden hose nozzles. Robots are usually at a disadvantage in these high-production situations because they cannot operate at the high speeds that fixed automated equipment can.

The most appealing application of industrial robots for assembly is where a mixture of similar products or models are produced in the same work cell or assembly line. Examples of these kinds of products include electric motors, small appliances, and various other small mechanical and electrical products. In these instances, the basic configuration of the different models is the same, but there are variations in size, geometry, options, and other features. Such products are often made in batches on manual assembly lines. However, the pressure to reduce inventories makes mixed model assembly lines (Section 17.2) more attractive. Robots can be used to substitute for some or all of the manual stations on these lines. What makes robots viable in mixed model assembly is their capability to execute programmed variations in the work cycle to accommodate different product configurations.

Industrial robots used for the types of assembly operations described here are typically small, with light load capacities. An internal study at General Motors revealed that a large proportion of assembly tasks require a robot capable of lifting parts weighing 5 lb or less [7]. The most common configurations are jointed arm, SCARA, and Cartesian coordinate. Accuracy requirements in assembly work are often more demanding than in other robot applications, and some of the more-precise robots in this category have repeatabilities as close as ±0.05 mm (±0.002 in). In addition to the robot itself, the requirements of the end effector are often demanding. The end effector may have to perform multiple functions at a single workstation to reduce the number of robots required in the cell. These multiple functions can include handling more than one part geometry and performing both as a gripper and an automatic assembly tool.

*Inspection.* There is often a need in automated production and assembly systems to inspect the work that is supposed to be done. These inspections accomplish the following functions: (1) making sure that a given process has been completed, (2) ensuring that parts have been added in assembly as specified, and (3) identifying flaws in raw materials and finished parts. The topic of automated inspection is considered in more detail in Chapter 22. Our purpose here is to identify the role played by industrial robots in inspection. Inspection tasks performed by robots can be divided into the following two cases:

1. The robot performs loading and unloading tasks to support an inspection or testing machine. This case is really machine loading and unloading, where the machine is an inspection machine. The robot picks parts (or assemblies) that enter the cell, loads and unloads them to carry out the inspection process, and places them at the cell output. In some cases, the inspection may result in parts sortation that must be accomplished by the robot. Depending on the quality level, the robot places the parts in different containers or on different exit conveyors.
2. The robot manipulates an inspection device, such as a mechanical probe, to test the product. This case is similar to a processing operation in which the end effector attached to the robot's wrist is the inspection probe. To perform the process, the part must be presented at the workstation in the correct position and orientation, and the robot manipulates the inspection device as required.

## 7.6 ROBOT PROGRAMMING

To do useful work, a robot must be programmed to perform its motion cycle. A *robot program* can be defined as a path in space to be followed by the manipulator, combined with peripheral actions that support the work cycle. Examples of the peripheral actions include opening and closing the gripper, performing logical decision making, and communicating with other pieces of equipment in the robot cell. A robot is programmed by entering the programming commands into its controller memory. Different robots use different methods of entering the commands.

In the case of limited sequence robots, programming is accomplished by setting limit switches and mechanical stops to control the endpoints of its motions. The sequence in which the motions occur is regulated by a sequencing device. This device determines the order in which each joint is actuated to form the complete motion cycle. Setting the stops and switches and wiring the sequencer is more manual setup than programming.

Today and in the foreseeable future, nearly all industrial robots have digital computers as their controllers, together with compatible storage devices as their memory units. For these robots, three programming methods can be distinguished: (1) leadthrough programming, (2) computer-like robot programming languages, and (3) off-line programming.

### 7.6.1 Leadthrough Programming

Leadthrough programming and robot language programming are the two methods most commonly used today for entering the commands into computer memory. Robot languages are discussed in Section 7.6.2. Leadthrough programming dates back to the early 1960s before computer control was prevalent. The same basic methods are used today for many computer controlled robots. In leadthrough programming, the task is taught to the robot by moving the manipulator through the required motion cycle, simultaneously entering the program into the controller memory for subsequent playback.

*Powered Leadthrough Versus Manual Leadthrough.* There are two methods of performing the leadthrough teach procedure: (1) powered leadthrough and (2) manual leadthrough. The difference between the two is in the manner in which the manipulator is moved through the motion cycle during programming. *Powered leadthrough* is commonly used as the programming method for playback robots with point-to-point control. It involves the use of a teach pendant (hand-held control box) that has toggle switches and/or contact buttons for controlling the movement of the manipulator joints. Figure 7.13 illustrates the important components of a teach pendant. Using the toggle switches or buttons, the programmer power drives the robot arm to the desired positions, in sequence, and records the positions into memory. During subsequent playback, the robot moves through the sequence of positions under its own power.

*Manual leadthrough* is convenient for programming playback robots with continuous path control where the continuous path is an irregular motion pattern such as in spray painting. This programming method requires the operator to physically grasp the end-of-arm or tool attached to the arm and manually move it through the motion sequence, recording the path into memory. Because the robot arm itself may have significant mass and would therefore be difficult to move, a special programming device often replaces the actual robot for the teach procedure. The programming device has the same joint configuration as the robot, and it is equipped with a trigger handle (or other control switch), which is activated when the operator wishes to record motions into memory. The motions are recorded as a series of closely spaced points. During playback, the path is recreated by controlling the actual robot arm through the same sequence of points.

*Motion Programming.* The leadthrough methods provide a very natural way of programming motion commands into the robot controller. In manual leadthrough, the operator simply moves the arm through the required path to create the program. In powered leadthrough, the operator uses a teach pendant to drive the manipulator. The teach pendant is equipped with a toggle switch or a pair of contact buttons for each joint. By activating these switches or buttons in a coordinated fashion for the various joints, the programmer moves the manipulator to the required positions in the work space.

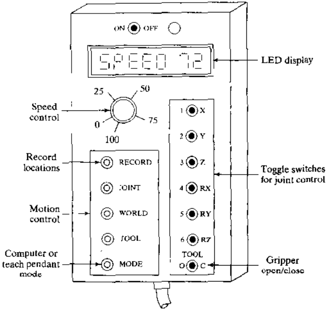



**Figure 7.13** A typical robot teach pendant.

Coordinating the individual joints with the teach pendant is sometimes an awkward way to enter motion commands to the robot. For example, it is difficult to coordinate the individual joints of a jointed-arm robot (TRR configuration) to drive the end-of-arm in a straight line motion. Therefore, many of the robots using powered leadthrough provide two alternative methods for controlling movement of the manipulator during programming, in addition to individual joint controls. With these methods, the programmer can control the robot's wrist end to move in straight line paths. The names given to these alternatives are (1) world coordinate system and (2) tool coordinate system. Both systems make use of a Cartesian coordinate system. In the *world coordinate* system, the origin and frame of reference are defined with respect to some fixed position and alignment relative to the robot base. This arrangement is illustrated in Figure 7.14(a). In the *tool coordinate* system, shown in Figure 7.14(b), the alignment of the axis system is defined relative to the orientation of the wrist faceplate (to which the end effector is attached). In this way, the programmer can orient the tool in a desired way and then control the robot to make linear moves in directions parallel or perpendicular to the tool.

The world coordinate system and the tool coordinate system are useful only if the robot has the capacity to move its wrist end in a straight line motion, parallel to one of the axes of the coordinate system. Straight line motion is quite natural for a Cartesian coordinate robot (LOO configuration) but unnatural for robots with any combination of rotational joints (types R, T, and V). To accomplish straight line motion for manipulators with these types of joints requires a linear interpolation process to be carried out by the robot's controller. In *straight line interpolation*, the control computer calculates the sequence of addressable points in space that the wrist end must move through to achieve a straight line path between two points.

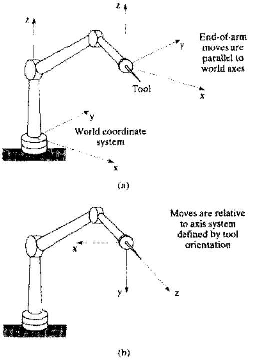



**Figure 7.14** (a) World coordinate system. (b) Tool coordinate system.

There are other types of interpolation that the robot can use. More common than straight line interpolation is joint interpolation. When a robot is commanded to move its wrist end between two points using *joint interpolation*, it actuates each of the joints simultaneously at its own constant speed such that all of the joints start and stop at the same time. The advantage of joint interpolation over straight line interpolation is that there is usually less total motion energy required to make the move. This may mean that the move could be made in slightly less time. It should be noted that in the case of a Cartesian coordinate robot, joint interpolation and straight line interpolation result in the same motion path.

Still another form of interpolation is that used in manual leadthrough programming. In this case, the robot must follow the sequence of closely space points that are defined during the programming procedure. In effect, this is an interpolation process for a path that usually consists of irregular smooth motions.

The speed of the robot is controlled by means of a dial or other input device, located on the teach pendant and/or the main control panel. Certain motions in the work cycle should be performed at high speeds (e.g., moving parts over substantial distances in the work cell), while other motions require low speed operation (e.g., motions that require high precision in placing the workpart). Speed control also permits a given program to be tried out at a safe slow speed and then at a higher speed to be used during production.

*Advantages and Disadvantages.* The advantage offered by the leadthrough methods is that they can be readily learned by shop personnel. Programming the robot by moving its arm through the required motion path is a logical way for someone to teach the work cycle. It is not necessary for the programmer to possess knowledge of computer programming. The robot languages described in the next section, especially the more advanced languages, are more easily learned by someone whose background includes computer programming.

There are several inherent disadvantages of the leadthrough programming methods. First, regular production must be interrupted during the leadthrough programming procedures. In other words, leadthrough programming results in downtime of the robot cell or production line. The economic consequence of this is that the leadthrough methods must be used for relatively long production runs and are inappropriate for small batch sizes.

Second, the teach pendant used with powered leadthrough and the programming devices used with manual leadthrough are limited in terms of the decision-making logic that can be incorporated into the program. It is much easier to write logical instructions using the computer-like robot languages than the leadthrough methods.

Third, since the leadthrough methods were developed before computer control became common for robots, these methods are not readily compatible with modern computer-based technologies such as CAD/CAM, manufacturing data bases, and local communications networks. The capability to readily interface the various computer-automated subsystems in the factory for transfer of data is considered a requirement for achieving computer integrated manufacturing.

### 7.6.2 Robot Programming Languages

The use of textual programming languages became an appropriate programming method as digital computers took over the control function in robotics. Their use has been stimulated by the increasing complexity of the tasks that robots are called on to perform, with the concomitant need to imbed logical decisions into the robot work cycle. These computer-like programming languages are really on-line/off-line methods of programming, because the robot must still be taught its locations using the leadthrough method. Textual programming languages for robots provide the opportunity to perform the following functions that leadthrough programming cannot readily accomplish:

- enhanced sensor capabilities, including the use of analog as well as digital inputs and outputs
- improved output capabilities for controlling external equipment
- program logic that is beyond the capabilities of leadthrough methods
- computations and data processing similar to computer programming languages
- communications with other computer systems

This section reviews some of the capabilities of the current generation robot programming languages. Many of the language statements are taken from actual robot programming languages.

*Motion Programming.* Motion programming with robot languages usually requires a combination of textual statements and leadthrough techniques. Accordingly, this method of programming is sometimes referred to as *on-line/off-line programming.* The textual statements are used to describe the motion, and the leadthrough methods are used to define the position and orientation of the robot during and/or at the end of the motion. To illustrate, the basic motion statement is

MOVE P1

which commands the robot to move from its current position to a position and orientation defined by the variable name P1. The point P1 must be defined, and the most convenient way to define P1 is to use either powered leadthrough or manual leadthrough to place the robot at the desired point and record that point into memory. Statements such as

HERE P1

or

LEARN P1

are used in the leadthrough procedure to indicate the variable name for the point. What is recorded into the robot's control memory is the set of joint positions or coordinates used by the controller to define the point. For example, the aggregate

(236, 158, 65, 0, 0, 0)

could be utilized to represent the joint positions for a six-jointed manipulator. The first three values (236, 158, 65) give the joint positions of the body-and-arm, and the last three values (0, 0, 0) define the wrist joint positions. The values are specified in millimeters or degrees, depending on the joint types.

There are variants of the MOVE statement. These include the definition of straight line interpolation motions, incremental moves, approach and depart moves, and paths. For example, the statement

MOVES P1

denotes a move that is to be made using straight line interpolation. The suffix S on MOVE designates straight line motion.

An incremental move is one whose endpoint is defined relative to the current position of the manipulator rather than to the absolute coordinate system of the robot. For example, suppose the robot is presently at a point defined by the joint coordinates (236, 158, 65, 0, 0, 0), and it is desired to move joint 4 (corresponding to a twisting motion of the wrist) from 0 to 125. The following form of statement might be used to accomplish this move:

DMOVE (4, 125)

The new joint coordinates of the robot would therefore be given by (236, 158, 65, 125, 0, 0). The prefix D is interpreted as delta, so DMOVE represents a delta move, or incremental move.

Approach and depart statements are useful in material handling operations. The APPROACH statement moves the gripper from its current position to within a certain distance of the pickup (or drop-off) point, and then a MOVE statement is used to position the end effector at the pickup point. After the pickup is made, a DEPART statement is used to move the gripper away from the point. The following statements illustrate the sequence:

APPROACH P1, 40 MM

MOVE P1

(actuate gripper)

DEPART 40 MM

The final destination is point P1, but the APPROACH command moves the gripper to a safe distance (40 mm) above the point. This might be useful to avoid obstacles such as other parts in a tote pan. The orientation of the gripper at the end of the APPROACH move is the same as that defined for the point P1, so that the final MOVE P1 is really a spatial translation of the gripper. This permits the gripper to be moved directly to the part for grasping.

A path in a robot program is a series of points connected together in a single move. The path is given a variable name, as illustrated in the following statement:

DEFINE PATH123 = PATH(P1,P2,P3)

This is a path that consists of points P1, P2, and P3. The points are defined in the manner described above. A MOVE statement is used to drive the robot through the path.

MOVE PATH123

The speed of the robot is controlled by defining either a relative velocity or an absolute velocity. The following statement represents the case of relative velocity definition:

SPEED 75

When this statement appears within the program, it is typically interpreted to mean that the manipulator should operate at 75% of the initially commanded velocity in the statements that follow in the program. The initial speed is given in a command that precedes the execution of the robot program. For example,

SPEED 0.5 MPS

EXECUTE PROGRAM1

indicates that the program named PROGRAM1 is to be executed by the robot, and that the commanded speed during execution should be 0.5 m/sec.

***Interlock and Sensor Commands.*** The two basic interlock commands (Section 4.3.2) used for industrial robots are WAIT and SIGNAL. The WAIT command is used to implement an input interlock. For example,

WAIT 20, ON

would cause program execution to stop at this statement until the input signal coming into the robot controller at port 20 was in an "on" condition. This might be used to cause the robot to wait for the completion of an automatic machine cycle in a loading and unloading application.

The SIGNAL statement is used to implement an output interlock. This is used to communicate to some external piece of equipment. For example,

SIGNAL 10, ON

would switch on the signal at output port 10, perhaps to actuate the start of an automatic machine cycle.

Both of the above examples indicate on/off signals. Some robot controllers possess the capacity to control analog devices that operate at various levels. Suppose it were desired to turn on an external device that operates on variable voltages in the range 0 to 10 V. The command

SIGNAL 10, 6.0

is typical of a control statement that might be used to output a voltage level of 6.0 V to the device from controller output port 10.

All of the above interlock commands represent situations where the execution of the statement occurs at the point in the program where the statement appears. There are other situations in which it is desirable for an external device to be continuously monitored for any change that might occur in the device. This might be useful, for example, in safety monitoring where a sensor is set up to detect the presence of humans who might wander into the robot's work volume. The sensor reacts to the presence of the humans by signaling the robot controller. The following type of statement might be used for this case:

REACT 25, SAFESTOP

This command would be written to continuously monitor input port 25 for any changes in the incoming signal. If and when a change in the signal occurs, regular program execution is interrupted, and control is transferred to a subroutine called SAFESTOP. This subroutine would stop the robot from further motion and/or cause some other safety action to be taken.

End effectors are devices that, although they are attached to the wrist of the manipulator, are actuated very much like external devices. Special commands are usually written for controlling the end effector. In the case of grippers, the basic commands are

OPEN

and

CLOSE

which cause the gripper to actuate to fully open and fully closed positions, respectively. Greater control over the gripper is available in some sensored and servo-controlled hands.

For grippers that have force sensors that can be regulated through the robot controller, a command such as

CLOSE 2.0 N

controls the closing of the gripper until a 2.0-N force is encountered by the gripper fingers. A similar command used to close the gripper to a given opening width is:

CLOSE 25 MM

A special set of statements is often required to control the operation of tool-type end effectors, such as spot welding guns, arc welding tools, spray painting guns, and powered spindles (for drilling, grinding, etc.). Spot welding and spray painting controls are typically simple binary commands (e.g., open/close and on/off), and these commands would be similar to those used for gripper control. In the case of arc welding and powered spindles, a greater variety of control statements is needed to control feed rates and other parameters of the operation.

*Computations and Program Logic.* Many of the current generation robot languages possess capabilities for performing computations and data processing operations that are similar to computer programming languages. Most present-day robot applications do not require a high level of computational power. As the complexity of robot applications grows in the future, it is expected that these capabilities will be better utilized than at present.

Many of today's applications of robots require the use of branches and subroutines in the program. Statements such as

GO TO 150

and

IF (logical expression) GO TO 150

cause the program to branch to some other statement in the program (e.g., to statement number 150 in the above illustrations).

A subroutine in a robot program is a group of statements that are to be executed separately when called from the main program. In a preceding example, the subroutine SAFESTOP was named in the REACT statement for use in safety monitoring. Other uses of subroutines include making calculations or performing repetitive motion sequences at a number of different places in the program. Rather than write the same steps several times in the program, the use of a subroutine is more efficient.

### 7.6.3 Simulation and Off-Line Programming

The trouble with leadthrough methods and textual programming techniques is that the robot must be taken out of production for a certain length of time to accomplish the programming. *Off-line programming* permits the robot program to be prepared at a remote computer terminal and downloaded to the robot controller for execution. In true off-line programming, there is no need to physically locate the positions in the workspace for the robot as required with present textual programming languages. Some form of graphical computer simulation is required to validate the programs developed off-line, similar to off-line procedures used in NC part programming. The advantage of true off-line programming is that new programs can be prepared and downloaded to the robot without interrupting production.

The off-line programming procedures being developed and commercially offered use graphical simulation to construct a three-dimensional model of a robot cell for evaluation and off-line programming. The cell might consist of the robot, machine tools, conveyors, and other hardware. The simulator permits these cell components to be displayed on the graphics monitor and for the robot to perform its work cycle in animated computer graphics. After the program has been developed using the simulation procedure, it is then converted into the textual language corresponding to the particular robot employed in the cell. This is a step in the off-line programming procedure that is equivalent to post-processing in NC part programming.

In the current commercial off-line programming packages, some adjustment must be performed to account for geometric differences between the three-dimensional model in the computer system and the actual physical cell. For example, the position of a machine tool in the physical layout might be slightly different than in the model used to do the off-line programming. For the robot to reliably load and unload the machine, it must have an accurate location of the load/unload point recorded in its control memory. This module is used to calibrate the 3-D computer model by substituting location data from the actual cell for the approximate values developed in the original model. The disadvantage with calibrating the cell is that time is lost in performing this procedure.

In future programming systems, the off-line procedure described above will probably be augmented by means of machine vision and other sensors located in the cell. The vision and sensor systems would be used to update the three-dimensional model of the workplace and thus avoid the necessity for the calibration step in current off-line programming methods. The term sometimes used to describe these future programming systems in which the robot possesses accurate knowledge of its three-dimensional workplace is *world modeling*. Associated with the concept of world modeling is the use of very high-level language statements, in which the programmer specifies a task to be done without giving details of the procedure used to perform the task. Examples of this type of statement might be

ASSEMBLE PRINTING MECHANISM TO BRACKET

or

WELD UPPER PLATE TO LOWER PLATE

The statements are void of any reference to points in space or motion paths to be followed by the robot. Instead, the three-dimensional model residing in the robot's control memory would identify the locations of the various items to be assembled or welded. The future robot would possess sufficient intelligence to figure out its own sequence of motions and actions for performing the task indicated.

## 7.7 ENGINEERING ANALYSIS OF INDUSTRIAL ROBOTS

In this section, we discuss two problem areas that are central to the operation of an industrial robot: (1) manipulator kinematics and (2) accuracy and repeatability with which the robot can position its end effector.

### 7.7.1 Introduction to Manipulator Kinematics

*Manipulator kinematics* is concerned with the position and orientation of the robot's end-of-arm, or the end effector attached to it, as a function of time but without regard for the effects of force or mass. Of course, the mass of the manipulator's links and joints, not to mention the mass of the end effector and load being carried by the robot, will affect position and orientation as a function of time, but kinematic analysis neglects this effect. Our treatment of manipulator kinematics will be limited to the mathematical representation of the position and orientation of the robot's end-of-arm.

Let us begin by defining terms. The robot manipulator consists of a sequence of joints and links. Let us name the joints $J_1, J_2$, and so on, starting with the joint closest to the base of the manipulator. Similarly, the links are identified as $L_1$, $L_2$, and so on, where $L_1$ is the output link of $J_1$, $L_2$ is the output link of $J_2$, and so on. Thus, the input link to $J_2$ is $L_1$, and the input link to $J_1$ is $L_0$. The final link for a manipulator with n degrees-of-freedom ($n$ joints) is $L_n$, and its position and orientation determine the position and orientation of the end effector attached to it. Figure 7.15 illustrates the joint and link identification method for two different manipulators, each having two joints. In Figure 7.15(a), both joints are orthogonal types, so this is an OO robot according to our notation scheme of Section 7.1.2. Let us define the values of the O joints as $\lambda_1$ and $\lambda_2$, where these values represent the po-

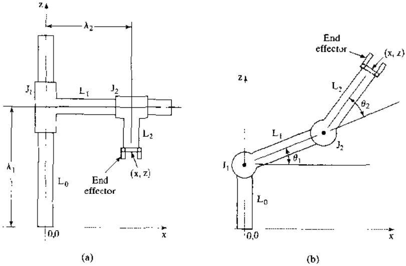



**Figure 7.15** Two manipulators with two degrees-of-freedom: (a) an OO robot and (b) an RR robot.

sitions of the joints relative to their respective input links. Figure 7.15(b) shows a two degree-of-freedom robot with configuration RR. Let us define the values of the two joints as the angles $\theta_1$ and $\theta_2$, where $\theta_1$ is defined with respect to the horizontal base, and $\theta_2$ is defined relative to the direction of the input link to joint $J_2$, as illustrated in our diagram.

One way to mathematically represent the position and orientation of the manipulator's end-of-arm is by means of its joints. Thus, for the OO robot of Figure 7.15(a), the position and orientation are identified as follows:

$$P_j = (\lambda_1, \lambda_2) \tag{7.1}$$

and similarly for the RR robot of Figure 7.15(b),

$$P_j = (\theta_1, \theta_2) \tag{7.2}$$

where $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \theta_1$, and $\theta_2$ are the values of the joints in the two robots, respectively. We might refer to this method of representation as the *joint space* method, because it defines position and orientation (symbolized as $P_j$) in terms of the joint values.

An alternative way to represent position is by the familiar Cartesian coordinate system, in robotics called the *world space* method. The origin of the Cartesian coordinates in world space is usually located in the robot's base. The end-of-arm position $P_w$ is defined in world space as

$$P_w = (x, z) \tag{7.3}$$

where $x$ and $z$ are the coordinates of point $P_w$. Only two axes are needed for our two-axis robots because the only positions that can be reached by the robots are in the $x$-$z$ plane. For a robot with six joints operating in 3-D space, the end-of-arm position and orientation $P_w$ can be defined as

$$P_w = (x, y, z, \alpha, \beta, \chi) \tag{7.4}$$

where $x$, $y$, and $z$ specify the Cartesian coordinates in world space (position); and $\alpha, \beta$, and $\chi$ specify the angles of rotation of the three wrist joints (orientation).

Notice that orientation cannot be independently established for our two robots in Figure 7.15. For the OO manipulator, the end-of-arm orientation is always vertical; and for the RR manipulator, the orientation is determined by the joint angles $\theta_1$ and $\theta_2$. The reader will observe that the RR robot has two possible ways of reaching a given set of $x$ and $z$ coordinates, and so there are two alternative orientations of the end-of-arm that are possible for all $x$-$z$ values within the manipulator's reach except for those coordinate positions making up the outer circle of the work volume when $\theta_2$ is zero. The two alternative pairs of joint values are illustrated in Figure 7.16.

***Forward and Backward Transformation for a Robot with Two Joints.*** Both the joint space and world space methods of defining position in the robot's space are important. The joint space method is important because the manipulator positions its end-of-arm by moving its joints to certain values. The world space method is important because applications of the robot are defined in terms of points in space using the Cartesian coordinate system. What is needed is a means of mapping from one space method to the other.

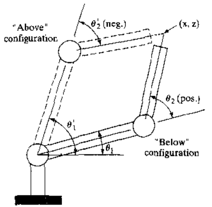



**Figure 7.16** For most $x$-$z$ coordinates in the RR robot's work volume, two alternative pairs of joint values are possible, called "above" and "below."

Mapping from joint space to world space is called *forward transformation*, and converting from world space to joint space is called *backward transformation*.

The forward and backward transformations are readily accomplished for the Cartesian coordinate robot of Figure 7.15(a), because the $x$ and $z$ coordinates correspond directly with the values of the joints. For the forward transformation,

$$x = \lambda_2 \quad \text{and} \quad z = \lambda_1 \tag{7.5}$$

and for the backward transformation,

$$\lambda_1 = z \quad \text{and} \quad \lambda_2 = x \tag{7.6}$$

where $x$ and $z$ are the coordinate values in world space, and $\lambda_1$ and $\lambda_2$ are the values in joint space.

For the RR robot of Figure 7.15(b), the forward transformation is calculated by noting that the lengths and directions of the two links might be viewed as vectors in space:

$$\mathbf{r}_1 = \{L_1 \cos\theta_1, L_1 \sin\theta_2\} \tag{7.7a}$$

$$\mathbf{r}_2 = \{L_2 \cos(\theta_1 + \theta_2), L_2 \sin(\theta_1 + \theta_2)\} \tag{7.7b}$$

Vector addition of $\mathbf{r}_1$ and $\mathbf{r}_2$ (and taking account of link $L_0$) yields the coordinate values of $x$ and $y$ at the end-of-arm:

$$x = L_1 \cos\theta_1 + L_2 \cos(\theta_1 + \theta_2) \tag{7.8a}$$

$$z = L_0 + L_1 \sin\theta_1 + L_2 \sin(\theta_1 + \theta_2) \tag{7.8b}$$

For the backward transformation, we are given the coordinate positions $x$ and $z$ in world space, and we must calculate the joint values that will provide those coordinate values. For our RR robot, we must first decide whether the robot will be positioned at the $x$; $z$ coordinates using an "above" or "below" configuration, as defined in Figure 7.16. Let us assume that the application calls for the below configuration, so that both $\theta_1$ and $\theta_2$ will take on positive values in our figure. Given the link values $L_1$ and $L_2$, the following equations can be derived for the two angles $\theta_1$ and $\theta_2$:

$$\cos\theta_2 = \frac{x^2 + (z - L_0)^2 - L_1^2 - L_2^2}{2L_1L_2} \tag{7.9a}$$

$$\tan\theta_1 = \frac{\{(z - L_0)(L_1 + L_2\cos\theta_2) - xL_2\sin\theta_2\}}{\{x(L_1 + L_2\cos\theta_2) + (z - L_0)L_2\sin\theta_2\}} \tag{7.9b}$$

***Forward and Backward Transformation for a Robot with Three Joints.*** Let us consider a manipulator with three degrees-of-freedom, all rotational, in which the third joint represents a simple wrist. The robot is a RR:R configuration, shown in Figure 7.17. We might argue that the arm-and-body (RR:) provides position of the end-of-arm, and the wrist (:R) provides orientation. The robot is still limited to the $x$-$z$ plane. Note that we have defined the origin of the axis system at the center of joint 1 rather than at the base of link 0, as in the previous RR robot of Figure 7.15(b). This was done to simplify the equations.

For the forward transformation, we can compute the $x$ and $z$ coordinates in a way similar to that used for the previous RR robot.

$$x = L_1\cos\theta_1 + L_2\cos(\theta_1 + \theta_2) + L_3\cos(\theta_1 + \theta_2 + \theta_3) \tag{7.10a}$$

$$z = L_1\sin\theta_1 + L_2\sin(\theta_1 + \theta_2) + L_3\sin(\theta_1 + \theta_2 + \theta_3) \tag{7.10a}$$

Let us define $\alpha$ as the orientation angle in Figure 7.17. It is the angle made by the wrist with the horizontal. It equals the algebraic sum of the three joint angles:

$$\alpha = \theta_1 + \theta_2 + \theta_3 \tag{7.10c}$$

In the backward transformation, we are given the world coordinates $x$, $z$, and $\alpha$, and we want to calculate the joint values $\theta_1$, $\theta_2$, and $\theta_3$ that will achieve those coordinates. This is accomplished by first determining the coordinates of joint 3 ($x_3$ and $z_3$ as shown in Figure 7.17). The coordinates are:

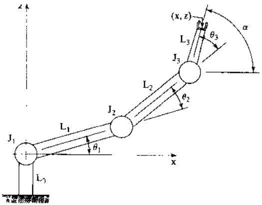



**Figure 7.17** A robot with RR:R configuration.

$$x_3 = x - L_3 \cos\alpha \tag{7.11a}$$

$$z_3 = z - L_3 \sin\alpha \tag{7.11b}$$

Knowing the coordinates of joint 3, the problem of determining $\theta_1$ and $\theta_2$ is the same as for the previous RR configuration robot.

$$\cos\theta_2 = \frac{x_3^2 + z_3^2 - L_1^2 - L_2^2}{2L_1 L_2} \tag{7.12a}$$

$$\tan\theta_1 = \frac{\{z_3(L_1 + L_2\cos\theta_2) - x_3 L_2 \sin\theta_2\}}{\{x_3(L_1 + L_2\cos\theta_2) + z_3 L_2 \sin\theta_2\}} \tag{7.12b}$$

The value of joint 3 is then determined as

$$\theta_3 = \alpha - (\theta_1 + \theta_2) \tag{7.12c}$$

**EXAMPLE 7.1 Backward Transformation for a RR:R Robot**

Given the world coordinates for a RR:R robot (similar to that in Figure 7.17) as $x = 300$ mm, $z = 400$ mm, and $\alpha = 30°$; and given that the links have values $L_1 = 350$ mm, $L_2 = 250$ mm, and $L_3 = 50$ mm, determine the joint angles $\theta_1$, $\theta_2$, and $\theta_3$.

***Solution:*** The first step is to find $x_3$ and $z_3$ using Eqs. (7.11) and the given coordinates $x = 300$ and $z = 400$.

$$x_3 = 300 - 50\cos 30 = 256.7$$

$$z_3 = 400 - 50\sin 30 = 375$$

Next, we find $\theta_2$ using Eq. (7.12a):

$$\cos\theta_2 = \frac{256.7^2 + 375^2 - 350^2 - 250^2}{2(350)(250)} = 0.123 \qquad \theta_2 = 82.9°$$

The angle $\theta_1$ is found using Eq. (7.12b):

$$\tan\theta_1 = \frac{375(350 + 250\cos 82.9) - 256.7(250)\sin 82.9}{256.7(350 + 250\cos 82.9) + 375(250)\sin 82.9} = 0.4146 \qquad \theta_1 = 22.5°$$

Finally, $\theta_3 = 30° - 82.9° - 22.5°$ $\qquad \theta_3 = -75.4°$

*A Four-Jointed Robot in Three Dimensions.* Most robots possess a work volume with three dimensions. Consider the four degree-of-freedom robot in Figure 7.18. Its configuration is TRL:R. Joint 1 (type T) provides rotation about the $z$ axis. Joint 2 (type R) provides rotation about a horizontal axis whose direction is determined by joint 1. Joint 3 (type L) is a piston that allows linear motion in a direction determined by joints 1 and 2. And joint 4 (type R) provides rotation about an axis that is parallel to the axis of joint 2.

The values of the four joints are, respectively, $\theta_1, \theta_2, \lambda_3$, and $\theta_4$. Given these values, the forward transformation is given by:

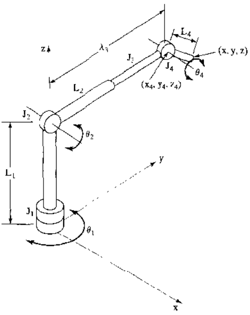



**Figure 7.18** A four degree-of-freedom robot with configuration TRL:R.

$$x = \cos\theta_1(\lambda_3 \cos\theta_2 + L_4 \cos\alpha) \tag{7.13a}$$

$$y = \sin\theta_1(\lambda_3 \cos\theta_2 + L_4 \cos\alpha) \tag{7.13b}$$

$$z = L_1 + \lambda_3 \sin\theta_2 + L_4 \sin\alpha \tag{7.13c}$$

where $\alpha = \theta_2 + \theta_4$

In the backward transformation, we are given the world coordinates $x$, $y$, $z$, and $\alpha$, where $\alpha$ specifies orientation, at least to the extent that this configuration is capable of orienting with only one wrist joint. To find the joint values, we define the coordinates of joint 4 as follows, using an approach similar to that used for the RR:R robot analyzed previously:

$$\tan\theta_1 = \frac{y}{x} \tag{7.14a}$$

$$x_4 = x - \cos\theta_1(L_4 \cos\alpha) \tag{7.14b}$$

$$y_4 = y - \sin\theta_1(L_4 \cos\alpha) \tag{7.14c}$$

$$z_4 = z - L_4 \sin\alpha \tag{7.14d}$$

$$\lambda_3 = \sqrt{x_4^2 + y_4^2 + (z_4 - L_1)^2} \tag{7.14e}$$

$$\sin\theta_2 = \frac{z_4 - L_1}{\lambda_3} \tag{7.14f}$$

$$\theta_4 = \alpha - \theta_2 \tag{7.14g}$$

**EXAMPLE 7.2 Backward Transformation for a TRL:R Robot**

Given the world coordinates for a TRL:R robot (similar to that in Figure 7.18) as $x = 300$ mm, $y = 350$ mm, $z = 400$ mm, and $\alpha = 45°$; and given that the links have values $L_0 = 0$, $L_1 = 325$ mm, $\lambda_3$ has a range from 300 to 500 mm, and $L_4 = 25$ mm, determine the joint angles $\theta_1, \theta_2, \lambda_3$, and $\theta_4$.

***Solution:*** We begin by finding $\theta_1$ using Eq. (7.14a):

$$\tan\theta_1 = \frac{350}{300} = 1.1667 \qquad \theta_1 = 49.4°$$

Next, the position of joint 4 must be offset from the given $x$-$y$-$z$ world coordinates:

$$x_4 = 300 - \cos 49.4(25\cos 45) = 288.5$$

$$y_4 = 350 - \sin 49.4(25\cos 45) = 336.6$$

$$z_4 = 400 - 25\sin 45 = 382.3$$

The required extension of linear joint 3 can now be determined:

$$\lambda_3 = \sqrt{288.5^2 + 336.6^2 + (382.2 - 325)^2} = \sqrt{199815.1} \qquad \lambda_3 = 447.0 \text{ mm}$$

Now $\theta_2$ can be found from Eq. (7.14f):

$$\sin\theta_2 = \frac{382.3 - 325}{447.0} = 0.1282 \qquad \theta_2 = 7.36°$$

Finally,
$$\theta_4 = 45° - 7.36° \qquad \theta_4 = 37.64°$$

***Homogeneous Transformations for Manipulator Kinematics.*** Each of the previous manipulators required its own individual analysis, resulting in its own set of trigonometric equations, to accomplish the forward and backward transformations. There is a general approach for solving the manipulator kinematic equations based on homogeneous transformations. Here we briefly describe the approach to make the reader aware of its availability. For those who are interested in homogeneous transformations for robot kinematics, more complete treatments of the topic are presented in several of our references, including Craig [3], Groover et al. [6], and Paul [9].

The homogeneous transformation approach utilizes vector and matrix algebra to define the joint and link positions and orientations with respect to a fixed coordinate system (world space). The end-of-arm is defined by the following $4 \times 4$ matrix:

$$\mathbf{T} = \begin{bmatrix} n_x & o_x & a_x & p_x \\ n_y & o_y & a_y & p_y \\ n_z & o_z & a_z & p_z \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \tag{7.15}$$

where $\mathbf{T}$ consists of four column vectors representing the position and orientation of the end-of-arm or end effector of the robot, as illustrated in Figure 7.19. The vector $\mathbf{p}$ defines the position coordinates of the end effector relative to the world $x$-$y$-$z$ coordinate system. The vectors $\mathbf{a}$, $\mathbf{o}$, and $\mathbf{n}$ define the orientation of the end effector. The $\mathbf{a}$ vector, called the *approach vector*, points in the direction of the end effector. The $\mathbf{o}$ vector, or *orientation*

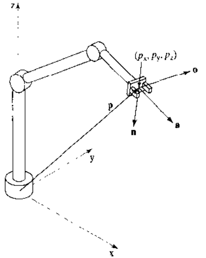



**Figure 7.19** The four vectors representing position and orientation of the robot's end effector relative to the world coordinates $x$, $y$, and $z$.

*vector*, specifies the side-to-side direction of the end effector. For a gripper, this is in the direction from one fingertip to the opposite fingertip. The **n** vector is the *normal vector*, which is perpendicular to **a** and **o**. Together, the vectors **a**, **o**, and **n** constitute the coordinate axes of the tool coordinate system (Section 7.6.1).

A *homogeneous transformation* is a 4 × 4 matrix used to define the relative translation and rotation between coordinate systems in three-dimensional space. In manipulator kinematics, calculations based on homogeneous transformations are used to establish the geometric relationships among links of the manipulator. For example, let $\mathbf{A}_1$ = a 4 × 4 matrix that defines the position and orientation of link 1 with respect to the world coordinate axis system. Similarly, $\mathbf{A}_2$ = a 4 × 4 matrix that defines the position and orientation of the link 2 with respect to link 1. Then the position and orientation of link 2 with respect to the world coordinate system (call it $\mathbf{T}_2$) is given by:

$$\mathbf{T}_2 = \mathbf{A}_1 \mathbf{A}_2$$

where $\mathbf{T}_2$ might represent the position and orientation of the end-of-arm (end of link 2) of a manipulator with two joints; and $\mathbf{A}_1$ and $\mathbf{A}_2$ define the changes in position and orientation resulting from the actuations of joints 1 and 2 on links 1 and 2, respectively.

This approach can be extended to manipulators with more than two links. In general, the position and orientation of the end-of-arm or end effector can be determined as the product of a series of homogeneous transformations, usually one transformation for each joint-link combination of the manipulator. These homogeneous transformations mathematically define the rotations and translations that are provided by the manipulator's joints and links. For the four-jointed robot analyzed earlier, the tool coordinate system (position and orientation of the end effector) might be represented relative to the world coordinate system as:

$$\mathbf{T} = \mathbf{A}_1 \mathbf{A}_2 \mathbf{A}_3 \mathbf{A}_4 \tag{7.16}$$

where $\mathbf{T}$ = the transformation matrix defining the tool coordinate system, as defined in Eq. (7.15); and $\mathbf{A}_i$ = transformation matrices ($4 \times 4$) for each of the four links of the manipulator.

### 7.7.2 Accuracy and Repeatability

The capacity of the robot to position and orient the end of its wrist with accuracy and repeatability is an important control attribute in nearly all industrial applications. Some assembly applications require that objects be located with a precision of 0.05 mm (0.002 in). Other applications, such as spot welding, usually require accuracies of 0.5-1.0 mm (0.020-0.040 in). Let us examine the question of how a robot is able to move its various joints to achieve accurate and repeatable positioning. There are several terms that must be defined in the context of this discussion: (1) control resolution, (2) accuracy, and (3) repeatability. These terms have the same basic meanings in robotics that they have in NC. In robotics, the characteristics are defined at the end of the wrist and in the absence of any end effector attached at the wrist.

*Control resolution* refers to the capability of the robot's controller and positioning system to divide the range of the joint into closely spaced points that can be identified by the controller. These are called *addressable points* because they represent locations to which the robot can be commanded to move. Recall from Section 6.6.3 that the capability to divide the range into addressable points depends on two factors: (1) limitations of the electromechanical components that make up each joint-link combination and (2) the controller's bit storage capacity for that joint.

If the joint-link combination consists of a leadscrew drive mechanism, as in the case of an NC positioning system, then the methods of Section 6.6.3 can be used to determine the control resolution. We identified this electromechanical control resolution as $CR_1$. Unfortunately, from our viewpoint of attempting to analyze the control resolution of the robot manipulator, there is a much wider variety of joints used in robotics than in NC machine tools. And it is not possible to analyze the mechanical details of all of the types here. Let it suffice to recognize that there is a mechanical limit on the capacity to divide the range of each joint-link system into addressable points, and that this limit is given by $CR_1$.

The second limit on control resolution is the bit storage capacity of the controller. If B = the number of bits in the bit storage register devoted to a particular joint, then the number of addressable points in that joint's range of motion is given by $2^B$. The control resolution is therefore defined as the distance between adjacent addressable points. This can be determined as

$$CR_2 = \frac{R}{2^B - 1} \tag{7.17}$$

where $CR_2$ = control resolution determined by the robot controller; and R = range of the joint-link combination, expressed in linear or angular units, depending on whether the joint provides a linear motion (joint types L or O) or a rotary motion (joint types R, T, or V). The control resolution of each joint-link mechanism will be the maximum of $CR_1$ and $CR_2$; that is,

$$CR = \text{Max}\{CR_1, CR_2\} \tag{7.18}$$

In our discussion of control resolution for NC (Section 6.6.3), we indicated that it is desirable for $CR_2 \leq CR_1$, which means that the limiting factor in determining control resolution is the mechanical system, not the computer control system. Because the mechanical structure of a robot manipulator is much less rigid than that of a machine tool, the control resolution for each joint of a robot will almost certainly be determined by mechanical factors ($CR_1$).

Similar to the case of an NC positioning system, the ability of a robot manipulator to position any given joint-link mechanism at the exact location defined by an addressable point is limited by mechanical errors in the joint and associated links. The mechanical errors arise from such factors as gear backlash, link deflection, hydraulic fluid leaks, and various other sources that depend on the mechanical construction of the given joint-link combination. If we characterize the mechanical errors by a normal distribution, as we did in Section 6.6.3, with mean $\mu$ at the addressable point and standard deviation $\sigma$ characterizing the magnitude of the error dispersion, then accuracy and repeatability for the axis can be defined.

Repeatability is the easier term to define. *Repeatability* is a measure of the robot's ability to position its end-of-wrist at a previously taught point in the work volume. Each time the robot attempts to return to the programmed point it will return to a slightly different position. Repeatability errors have as their principal source the mechanical errors previously mentioned. Therefore, as in NC, for a single joint-link mechanism,

$$\text{Repeatability} = \pm 3\sigma \tag{7.19}$$

where $\sigma$ = standard deviation of the error distribution.

*Accuracy* is a measure of the robot's ability to position the end of its wrist at a desired location in the work volume. For a single axis, using the same reasoning used to define accuracy in our discussion of NC, we have

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{CR}{2} + 3\sigma \tag{7.20}$$

where CR = control resolution from Eq. (7.18).

The terms control resolution, accuracy, and repeatability are illustrated in Figure 6.29 of the previous chapter for one axis that is linear. For a rotary joint, these parameters can be conceptualized as either an angular value of the joint itself or an arc length at the end of the joint's output link.

**EXAMPLE 7.3 Control Resolution, Accuracy, and Repeatability in Robotic Arm Joint**

One of the joints of a certain industrial robot has a type L joint with a range of 0.5 m. The bit storage capacity of the robot controller is 10 bits for this joint. The mechanical errors form a normally distributed random variable about a given taught point. The mean of the distribution is zero and the standard deviation is 0.06 mm in the direction of the output link of the joint. Determine the control resolution ($CR_2$), accuracy, and repeatability for this robot joint.

***Solution:*** The number of addressable points in the joint range is $2^{10} = 1024$. The control resolution is therefore

$$CR_2 = \frac{0.5}{1024 - 1} = 0.004888 \text{ m} = 0.4888 \text{ mm}$$

Accuracy is given by Eq. (7.20):

$$\text{Accuracy} = \frac{0.4888}{2} + 3(0.06) = 0.4244 \text{ mm}$$

Repeatability is defined as ± 3 standard deviations

$$\text{Repeatability} = 3 \times 0.06 = 0.18 \text{ mm}$$

Our definitions of control resolution, accuracy, and repeatability have been depicted using a single joint or axis. To be of practical value, the accuracy and repeatability of a robot manipulator should include the effect of all of the joints, combined with the effect of their mechanical errors. For a multiple degree-of-freedom robot, accuracy and repeatability will vary depending on where in the work volume the end-of-wrist is positioned. The reason for this is that certain joint combinations will tend to magnify the effect of the control resolution and mechanical errors. For example, for a polar configuration robot (TRL) with its linear joint fully extended, any errors in the R or T joints will be larger than when the linear joint is fully retracted.

Robots move in three-dimensional space, and the distribution of repeatability errors is therefore three-dimensional. In 3-D, we can conceptualize the normal distribution as a sphere whose center (mean) is at the programmed point and whose radius is equal to three standard deviations of the repeatability error distribution. For conciseness, repeatability is usually expressed in terms of the radius of the sphere; for example, ±1.0 mm (±0.040 in). Some of today's small assembly robots have repeatability values as low as ±0.05 mm (±0.002 in).

In reality, the shape of the error distribution will not be a perfect sphere in three dimensions. In other words, the errors will not be isotropic. Instead, the radius will vary because the associated mechanical errors will be different in certain directions than in others. The mechanical arm of a robot is more rigid in certain directions, and this rigidity influences the errors. Also, the so-called sphere will not remain constant in size throughout the robot's work volume. As with spatial resolution, it will be affected by the particular combination of joint positions of the manipulator. In some regions of the work volume, the repeatability errors will be larger than in other regions.

Accuracy and repeatability have been defined above as static parameters of the manipulator. However, these precision parameters are affected by the dynamic operation of the robot. Such characteristics as speed, payload, and direction of approach will affect the robot's accuracy and repeatability.

## REFERENCES


[1] ABB Product Literature (various pieces), ABB Flexible Automation Inc., New Berlin, Wisconsin.

[2] Automatix Inc. *RAIL Software Reference Manual*, Document No. MN-RB-07, Rev. 5.00, October 1983.

[3] CRAIG, J. J., *Introduction to Robotics: Mechanics and Control*, Second Edition, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, Massachusetts, 1989.

[4] CRAWFORD, K. R., "Designing Robot End Effectors," *Robotics Today*, October 1985, pp 27–29.

[5] ENGELBERGER, J. F., *Robotics in Practice*, AMACOM (American Management Association, New York, 1980.

[6] GROOVER, M. P., M. WEISS, R. N. NAGEL, and N. G. ODREY. *Industrial Robotics: Technology, Programming, and Applications*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1986.

[7] JABLONOWSKI, J., "Robots that Assemble," Special Report 739, *American Machinist*, November 1981. pp. 175–190.

[8] OWEN, T., *Assembly With Robots*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1985.

[9] PAUL, R. P., *Robot Manipulators: Mathematics, Programming, and Control*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981.

[10] SCHREIBER, R. R., "How to Teach a Robot," *Robotics Today*, June 1984, pp. 51–56.

[11] SNYDER, W. E., *Industrial Robotics-Computer Interfacing and Control*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1985.

[12] TOEPPERWEIN, L. L., M. T. BLACKMAN, et al., "ICAM Robotics Application Guide," *Technical Report AFWAL-TR-80-4042*, Vol. II, Material Laboratory, Air Force Wright Aeronautical Laboratories, Ohio, April 1980.

[13] Unimation, Inc., *Programming Manual - User's Guide to VAL II* (398T1), Version 1.1, August 1984.

[14] WAURZYNIAK, P., "Robotics Evolution," *Manufacturing Engineering*, February, 1999, pp. 40–50.

[15] WEIMER, G., "Robots Lead Material Handling to Automation," *Material Handling Engineering*, August, 1999, pp. 85–88.

## PROBLEMS

### Robot Anatomy

**7.1** Using the notation scheme for defining manipulator configurations (Section 7.1.2), draw diagrams (similar to Figure 7.1) of the following robots: (a) TRT, (b) VVR, (c) VROT.

**7.2** Using the notation scheme for defining manipulator configurations (Section 7.1.2), draw diagrams (similar to Figure 7.1) of the following robots: (a) TRL, (b) OLO, (c) LVL.

**7.3** Using the notation scheme for defining manipulator configurations (Section 7.1.2), draw diagrams (similar to Figure 7.1) of the following robots: (a) TRT:R, (b) TVR:TR, (c) RR:T.

**7.4** Discuss and sketch the work volumes of the robot configurations for each of the configurations in Problem 7.1.

**7.5** Using the robot configuration notation scheme discussed in Section 7.1, write the configuration notations for some of the robots in your laboratory or shop.

**7.6** Describe the differences in orientation capabilities and work volumes for a :TR and a :RT wrist assembly. Use sketches as needed.

### Robot Applications

**7.7** A robot performs a loading and unloading operation for a machine tool. The work cycle consists of the following sequence of activities:

| *Seq.* | *Activity* | *Time (sec)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Robot reaches and picks part from incoming conveyor and loads into fixture on machine tool. | 5.5 |
| 2 | Machining cycle (automatic). | 33.0 |
| 3 | Robot reaches in, retrieves part from machine tool, and deposits it onto outgoing conveyor. | 4.8 |
| 4 | Move back to pickup position. | 1.7 |

The activities are performed sequentially as listed. Every 30 workparts, the cutting tools in the machine must be changed. This irregular cycle takes 3.0 min to accomplish. The uptime efficiency of the robot is 97%; and the uptime efficiency of the machine tool is 98%, not including interruptions for tool changes. These two efficiencies are assumed not to overlap (i.e., if the robot breaks down, the cell will cease to operate, so the machine tool will not have the opportunity to break down: and vice versa). Downtime results from electrical and mechanical malfunctions of the robot, machine tool, and fixture. Determine the hourly production rate, taking into account the lost time due to tool changes and the uptime efficiency.

**7.8** In Problem 7.7, suppose that a double gripper is used instead of a single gripper as indicated in that problem. The activities in the cycle would be changed as follows:

| *Seq.* | *Activity* | *Time (sec)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Robot reaches and picks raw part from incoming conveyor in one gripper and awaits completion of machining cycle. This activity is performed simultaneously with machining cycle. | 3.3 |
| 2 | At completion of previous machining cycle, robot reaches in, retrieves finished part from machine, loads raw part into fixture, and moves a safe distance from machine. | 5.0 |
| 3 | Machining cycle (automatic). | 33.0 |
| 4 | Robot moves to outgoing conveyor and deposits part. This activity is performed simultaneously with machining cycle. | 3.0 |
| 5 | Robot moves back to pickup position. This activity is performed simultaneously with machining cycle. | 1.7 |

Steps 1, 4, and 5 are performed simultaneously with the automatic machining cycle. Steps 2 and 3 must be performed sequentially. The same tool change statistics and uptime efficiencies are applicable. Determine the hourly production rate when the double gripper is used, taking into account the lost time due to tool changes and the uptime efficiency.

**7.9** Since the robot's portion of the work cycle requires much less time than the machine tool in Problem 7.7 does, the possibility of installing a cell with two machines is being considered. The robot would load and unload both machines from the same incoming and outgoing conveyors. The machines would be arranged so that distances between the fixture and the conveyors are the same for both machines. Thus, the activity times given in Problem 7.7 are valid for the two-machine cell. The machining cycles would be staggered so that the robot would be servicing only one machine at a time. The tool change statistics and uptime efficiencies in Problem 7.7 are applicable. Determine the hourly production rate for the two-machine cell. The lost time due to tool changes and the uptime efficiency should be accounted for. Assume that if one of the two machine tools is down, the other machine can continue to operate, but if the robot is down, the cell operation is stopped.

**7.10** Determine the hourly production rate for a two-machine cell as in Problem 7.9, only that the robot is equipped with a double gripper as in Problem 7.8. Assume the activity times from Problem 7.8 apply here.

**7.11** The arc-on time is a measure of efficiency in an arc welding operation. As indicated in our discussion of arc welding in Section 7.5.2, typical arc-on times in manual welding range between 20% and 30%. Suppose that a certain welding operation is currently performed using a welder and a fitter. Production requirements are steady at 500 units per week. The fitter's job is to load the component parts into the fixture and clamp them in position for the welder. The welder then welds the components in two passes, stopping to reload the welding rod between the two passes. Some time is also lost each cycle for repositioning the welding rod on the work. The fitter's and welder's activities are done sequentially, with times for the various elements as follows:

| Seq. | Worker and Activity | Time (min) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fitter: load and clamp parts | 4.2 |
| 2 | Welder: weld first pass | 2.5 |
| 3 | Welder: reload weld rod | 1.8 |
| 4 | Welder: weld second pass | 2.4 |
| 5 | Welder: repositioning time | 2.0 |
| 6 | Delay time between work cycles | 1.1 |

Because of fatigue, the welder must take a 20-min rest at mid-morning and mid-afternoon and a 40-min lunch break around noon. The fitter joins the welder in these rest breaks. The nominal time of the work shift is 8 hr, but the last 20 min of the shift is nonproductive time for clean-up at each workstation. A proposal has been made to install a robot welding cell to perform the operation. The cell would be set up with two fixtures so that the robot could be welding one job (the set of parts to be welded) while the fitter is unloading the previous job and loading the next job. In this way, the welding robot and the human fitter could be working simultaneously rather than sequentially. Also, a continuous wire feed would be used rather than individual welding rods. It has been estimated that the continuous wire feed must be changed only once every 40 parts, and the lost time will be 20 min to make the wire change. The times for the various activities in the regular work cycle are as follows:

| Seq. | Fitter and Robot Activities | Time (min) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fitter: load and clamp parts | 4.2 |
| 2 | Robot: weld complete | 4.0 |
| 3 | Repositioning time | 1.0 |
| 4 | Delay time between work cycles | 0.3 |

A 10-min break would be taken by the fitter in the morning and another in the afternoon, and 40 min would be taken for lunch. Clean-up time at the end of the shift is 20 min. In your calculations, assume that the proportion uptime of the robot will be 98%. Determine the following: (a) arc-on times (expressed as a percentage, using the 8-hr shift as the base) for the manual welding operation and the robot welding station, and (b) hourly production rate on average throughout the 8-hr shift for the manual welding operation and the robot welding station.

## Programming Exercises

Note: The following problems require access to industrial robots and their associated programming manuals in a laboratory setting.

**7.12** The setup for this problem requires a felt-tipped pen mounted to the robot's end-of-arm (or held securely in the robot's gripper). Also required is a thick cardboard, mounted on the surface of the work table. Pieces of plain white paper will be pinned or taped to the cardboard surface. The exercise is the following: Program the robot to write your initials on the paper with the felt-tipped pen.

**7.13** As an enhancement of the previous programming exercise, consider the problem of programming the robot to write any letter that is entered at the alphanumeric keyboard. Obviously, a textual programming language is required to accomplish this exercise.

**7.14** Apparatus required for this exercise consists of two wood or plastic blocks of two different colors that can be grasped by the robot gripper. The blocks should be placed in specific positions (call the positions A and B on either side of a center location (called position C). The robot should be programmed to do the following: (1) pick up the block at position A and place it at the central position C, (2) pick up the block at position B and place it at position A, (3) pick up the block at position C and place it at position B. (4) Repeat steps (1), (2), and (3) continually.

**7.15** Apparatus for this exercise consists of a cardboard box and a dowel about 4 in long (any straight thin cylinder will suffice, e.g., pen or pencil). The dowel is attached to the robot's end-of-arm or held in its gripper. The dowel is intended to simulate an arc welding torch, and the edges of the cardboard box are intended to represent the seams that are to be welded. The programming exercise is the following: With the box oriented with one of its corners pointing toward the robot, program the robot to weld the three edges that lead into the corner. The dowel (welding torch) must be continuously oriented at a 45° angle with respect to the edge being welded. See Figure P7.15.

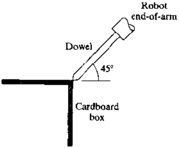



**Figure P7.15** Orientation of arc welding torch for Problem 7.15.

**7.16** This exercise is intended to simulate a palletizing operation. The apparatus includes: six wooden (or plastic or metal) cylinders approximately 20 mm in diameter and 75 mm in length, and a 20-mm thick wooden block approximately 100 mm by 133 mm. The block is to have six holes of diameter 25 mm drilled in it as illustrated in Figure P7.16. The wooden cylinders represent workparts, and the wooden block represents a pallet. (As an alternative to the wooden block, the layout of the pallet can be sketched on a plain piece of paper attached to the work table.) The programming exercise is the following: Using the powered leadthrough programming method, program the robot to pick up the parts from a fixed position on the work table and place them into the six positions in the pallet. The fixed position on the table might be a stop point on a conveyor. (The student may have to manually place the parts at the position if a real conveyor is not available.)

**7.17** This is the same problem as the previous exercise, except that a robot programming language should be used, and the positions of the pallet should be defined by calculating their $x$ and $y$ coordinates by whatever method is available in the particular programming language used.

**7.18** Repeat Problem 7.17, only in the reverse order, to simulate a depalletizing operation.

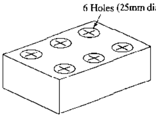



**Figure P7.16** Approximate pallet dimensions for Problem 7.16.

### Manipulator Kinematics

**7.19** The joints and links of the RR manipulator in Figure 7.15 have the following values: $\theta_1 = 20°, \theta_2 = 35°, L_0 = 500$ mm, $L_1 = 400$ mm, and $L_2 = 300$ mm. Determine the values of $x$ and $z$ in world space coordinates.

**7.20** The joints and links of the RR manipulator in Figure 7.15 have the following values: $\theta_1 = 45°, \theta_2 = -45°, L_0 = 500$ mm, $L_1 = 400$ mm, and $L_2 = 300$ mm. Determine the values of $x$ and $z$ in world space coordinates.

**7.21** The links of the RR manipulator in Figure 7.15 have the following lengths: $L_0 = 500$ mm, $L_1 = 400$ mm, and $L_2 = 300$ mm. Determine the values of $\theta_1$ and $\theta_2$ that position the end-of-arm at the $(x, z)$ world coordinate values of (550 mm, 650 mm). Assume the manipulator is in the "below" orientation (see Figure 7.16).

**7.22** The joints and links of the RR:R manipulator in Figure 7.17 have the following values: $\theta_1 = 20°, \theta_2 = 15°, \theta_3 = 25°, L_1 = 500$ mm, $L_2 = 400$ mm, and $L_3 = 25$ mm. Determine the values of $x$ and $z$ in world space coordinates.

**7.23** The joints and links of the RR:R manipulator in Figure 7.17 have the following values: $\theta_1 = 45°, \theta_2 = 45°, \theta_3 = -135°, L_1 = 500$ mm, $L_2 = 400$ mm, and $L_3 = 25$ mm. Determine the values of $x$ and $z$ in world space coordinates.

**7.24** The links of the RR:R manipulator in Figure 7.17 have the following lengths: $L_1 = 500$ mm, $L_2 = 400$ mm, and $L_3 = 25$ mm. Determine the values of $\theta_1, \theta_2$, and $\theta_3$ that position the end-of-arm at the $(x, z)$ world coordinate values of (650 mm, 250 mm), and $\alpha = 0°$. Assume the manipulator is in the "below" orientation (see Figure 7.16).

**7.25** Given the world coordinates for the RR:R robot in Figure 7.17 as $x = 400$ mm, $z = 300$ mm, and $\alpha = 150°$; and given that the links have values $L_1 = 350$ mm, $L_2 = 250$ mm, and $L_3 = 50$ mm, determine the joint angles $\theta_1, \theta_2$, and $\theta_3$. Assume the manipulator is in the "below" orientation (see Figure 7.16).

**7.26** The joints and links of the TRL:R manipulator in Figure 7.18 have the following values: $\theta_1 = 0°, \theta_2 = 45°, \lambda_3 = 400$ mm, $\theta_4 = 30°, L_0 = 0, L_1 = 500$ mm, and $L_4 = 20$ mm. Determine the values of $x$, $y$, and $z$ in world space coordinates.

**7.27** The joints and links of the TRL:R manipulator in Figure 7.18 have the following values: $\theta_1 = 45°, \theta_2 = 45°, \lambda_3 = 300$ mm, $\theta_4 = -30°, L_0 = 0, L_1 = 500$ mm, and $L_4 = 20$ mm. Determine the values of $x$, $y$, and $z$ in world space coordinates.

**7.28** Given the world coordinates for the TRL:R robot in Figure 7.18 as $x = 300$ mm, $y = 0$, $z = 500$ mm, and $\alpha = 45°$; and given that the links have values $L_0 = 0, L_1 = 400$ mm, $\lambda_3$ has a range from 200 mm to 350 mm, and $L_4 = 25$ mm, determine the joint values $\theta_1, \theta_2, \lambda_3$, and $\theta_4$.

**7.29** Given the world coordinates for the TRL:R robot in Figure 7.18 as $x = 200$ mm, $y = 300$, $z = 500$ mm, and $\alpha = 15°$; and given that the links have values $L_0 = 0, L_1 = 500$ mm, $\lambda_3$

has a range from 300 mm to 550 mm, and $L_4 = 25$ mm, determine the joint values $\theta_1$, $\theta_2$, $\lambda_3$, and $\theta_4$.

### Accuracy and Repeatabilty

**7.30** The linear joint (type L) of a certain industrial robot is actuated by a piston mechanism. The length of the joint when fully retracted is 600 mm and when fully extended is 1000 mm. If the robot's controller has an 8-bit storage capacity, determine the control resolution for this robot.

**7.31** In the previous problem, the mechanical errors associated with the linear joint form a normal distribution in the direction of the joint actuation with standard deviation = 0.08 mm. Determine: (a) the spatial resolution, (b) the accuracy, and (c) the repeatability for the robot.

**7.32** The revolving joint (type V) of an industrial robot has a range of 240° rotation. The mechanical errors in the joint and the input/output links can be described by a normal distribution with its mean at any given addressable point and a standard deviation of 0.25°. Determine the number of storage bits required in the controller memory so that the accuracy of the joint is as close as possible to, but less than, its repeatability. Use six standard deviations as the measure of repeatability.

**7.33** A cylindrical robot has a T-type wrist axis that can be rotated a total of five rotations (each rotation is a full 360°). It is desired to be able to position the wrist with a control resolution of 0.5° between adjacent addressable points. Determine the number of bits required in the binary register for that axis in the robot's control memory.

**7.34** One axis of a RRL robot is a linear slide with a total range of 950 mm. The robot's control memory has a 10-bit capacity. It is assumed that the mechanical errors associated with the arm are normally distributed with a mean at the given taught point and an isotropic standard deviation of 0.10 mm. Determine: (a) the control resolution for the axis under consideration, (b) the spatial resolution for the axis, (c) the defined accuracy, and (d) the repeatability.

**7.35** A TLR robot has a rotational joint (type R) whose output link is connected to the wrist assembly. Considering the design of this joint only, the output link is 600 mm long, and the total range of rotation of the joint is 40°. The spatial resolution of this joint is expressed as a linear measure at the wrist and is specified to be ±0.5 mm. It is known that the mechanical inaccuracies in the joint result in an error of ±0.018° rotation, and it is assumed that the output link is perfectly rigid so as to cause no additional errors due to deflection. (a) With the given level of mechanical error in the joint, show that it is possible to achieve the spatial resolution specified. (b) Determine the minimum number of bits required in the robot's control memory to obtain the spatial resolution specified.

chapter 8

# Discrete Control Using Programmable Logic Controllers and Personal Computers

## CHAPTER CONTENTS



Numerical control (Chapter 6) and industrial robotics (Chapter 7) are primarily concerned with motion control, because the applications of machine tools and robots involve the movement of a cutting tool or end effector, respectively. A more general control category is discrete control, defined in Section 4.2.2. In the present chapter, we provide a more-complete discussion of discrete control, and we examine the two principal industrial controllers used to implement discrete control: (1) programmable logic controllers (PLCs) and (2) personal computers (PCs).

## 8.1 DISCRETE PROCESS CONTROL

Discrete process control systems deal with parameters and variables that change at discrete moments in time. In addition, the parameters and variables themselves are discrete, typically binary. They can have either of two possible values, 1 or 0. The values mean ON or OFF, true or false, object present or not present, high voltage value or low voltage value, and so on, depending on the application. The binary variables in discrete process control are associated with input signals to the controller and output signals from the controller. Input signals are typically generated by binary sensors, such as limit switches or photosensors that are interfaced to the process. Output signals are generated by the controller to operate the process in response to the input signals and as a function of time. These output signals turn on and off switches, motors, valves, and other binary actuators related to the process. We have compiled a list of binary sensors and actuators, along with the interpretation of their 0 and 1 values, in Table 8.1. The purpose of the controller is to coordinate the various actions of the physical system, such as transferring parts into the workholder, feeding the machining workhead, and so on. Discrete process control can be divided into two categories: (1) logic control, which is concerned with event-driven changes in the system; and (2) sequencing, which is concerned with time-driven changes in the system. Both are referred to as *switching systems* in the sense that they switch their output values on and off in response to changes in events or time.

### 8.1.1 Logic Control

A *logic control* system, also referred to as *combinational logic control*, is a switching system whose output at any moment is determined exclusively by the values of the inputs. A logic control system has no memory and does not consider any previous values of input signals in determining the output signal. Neither does it have any operating characteristics that perform directly as a function of time.

Let us use an example from robotics to illustrate logic control. Suppose that in a machine-loading application, the robot is programmed to pick up a raw workpart from a known stopping point along a conveyor and place it into a forging press. Three conditions must be satisfied to initiate the loading cycle. First, the raw workpart must be at the stopping point; second, the forge press must have completed the process on the previous part; and third, the previous part must be removed from the die. The first condition can be indicated by means of a simple limit switch that senses the presence of the part at the conveyor stop and transmits an ON signal to the robot controller. The second condition can be indicated by the forge press, which sends an ON signal after it has completed the previous cycle. The third condition might be determined by a photodetector located so as to sense the presence or absence of the part in the forging die. When the finished part is removed from the die, an ON signal is transmitted by the photocell. All three of these ON signals must be received by the robot controller to initiate the next work cycle. When these

**TABLE 8.1** Binary Sensors and Actuators Used in Discrete Process Control

| *Sensor* | *One/Zero Interpretation* | *Actuator* | *One/Zero Interpretation* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Limit switch | Contact/no contact | Motor | On/off |
| Photodetector | On/off | Control relay | Contact/no contact |
| Push-button switch | On/off | Light | On/off |
| Timer | On/off | Valve | Closed/open |
| Control relay | Contact/no contact | Clutch | Engaged/not engaged |
| Circuit breaker | Contact/no contact | Solenoid | Energized/not energized |

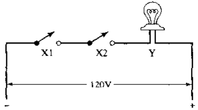



**Figure 8.1** Electrical circuit illustrating the operation of the logical AND gate.

input signals have been received by the controller, the robot loading cycle is switched on. No previous conditions or past history are needed.

*Elements of Logic Control.* The basic elements of logic control are the logic gates AND, OR, and NOT. In each case, the logic gate is designed to provide a specified output value based on the values of the input(s). For both inputs and outputs, the values can be either of two levels, the binary values 0 or 1. For purposes of industrial control, we define 0 (zero) to mean OFF, and 1 (one) to mean ON.

The logical AND gate outputs a value of 1 if all of the inputs are 1, and 0 otherwise. Figure 8.1 illustrates the operation of a logical AND gate. If both switches X1 and X2 (representing inputs) in the circuit are closed, then the lamp Y (representing the output) is on. The truth table is often used to present the operation of logic systems. A *truth table* is a tabulation of all of the combinations of input values to the corresponding logical output values. The truth table for the AND gate is presented in Table 8.2. The AND gate might be used in an automated production system to indicate that two (or more) actions have been successfully completed, therefore signaling that the next step in the process should be initiated. The interlock system in our previous robot forging example illustrates the AND gate. All three conditions must be satisfied before loading of the forge press is allowed to occur.

The logical OR gate outputs a value of 1 if either of the inputs has a value of 1, and 0 otherwise. Figure 8.2 shows how the OR gate operates. In this case, the two input signals X1 and X2 are arranged in a parallel circuit, so that if either switch is closed, the lamp Y will be on. The truth table for the OR gate is presented in Table 8.3. A possible use of the OR gate in a manufacturing system is for safety monitoring. Suppose that two sensors are

**TABLE 8.2** Truth Table for the Logical AND Gate

| *Inputs* | | *Output* |
|---|---|---|
| X1 | X2 | Y |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 |

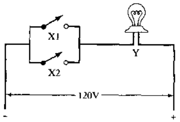



**Figure 8.2** Electrical circuit illustrating the operation of the logical OR gate.

**TABLE 8.3** Truth Table for the Logical OR Gate

| *Inputs* | | *Output* |
|---|---|---|
| X1 | X2 | Y |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 |

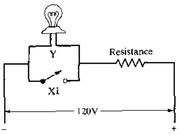



**Figure 8.3** Electrical circuit illustrating the operation of the logical NOT gate.

utilized to monitor two different safety hazards. When either hazard is present, the respective sensor emits a positive signal that sounds an alarm buzzer.

Both the AND and OR gates can be used with two or more inputs. The NOT gate has a single input. The logical NOT gate reverses the input signal: If the input is 1, then the output is 0; if the input is 0, then the output is 1. Figure 8.3 shows a circuit in which the input switch X1 is arranged in parallel with the output so that the voltage flows through the lower path when the switch is closed (thus Y = 0), and through the upper path when the switch is open (thus Y = 1). The truth table for the NOT gate is shown in Table 8.4.

In addition to the three basic elements, there are two more elements that can be used in switching circuits: the NAND and NOR gates. The logical NAND gate is formed by combining an AND gate and a NOT gate in sequence, yielding the truth table shown in Table 8.5(a). The logical NOR gate is formed by combining an OR gate followed by a NOT gate, providing the truth table in Table 8.5(b).

Various diagramming techniques have been developed to represent the logic elements and their relationships in a given logic control system. The logic network diagram is one of the most common methods. Symbols used in the logic network diagram are illustrated in Figure 8.4. We demonstrate the use of the logic network diagram in several examples later in this section.

**TABLE 8.4** Truth Table for the Logical NOT Gate

| *Inputs* | *Output* |
|---|---|
| X1 | Y |
| 0 | 1 |
| 1 | 0 |

**TABLE 8.5** Truth Tables for the Logical NAND Gate and Logical NOR Gate

| (a) NAND | | | (b) NOR | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Inputs* | | *Output* | *Inputs* | | *Output* |
| X1 | X2 | Y | X1 | X2 | Y |
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

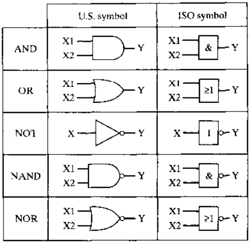



**Figure 8.4** Symbols used for logical gates: U.S. and ISO.

*Boolean Algebra.* The logic elements form the foundation for a special algebra that was developed around 1847 by George Boole and that bears his name. Its original purpose was to provide a symbolic means of testing whether complex statements of logic were TRUE or FALSE. It was not until about a century later that Boolean algebra was shown to be useful in digital logic systems. We briefly describe some of the fundamentals of Boolean algebra here, with minimum elaboration. In Boolean algebra, the AND function is expressed as

$$Y = X1 \cdot X2 \tag{8.1}$$

This is called the logical product of X1 and X2. The results of the AND function for four possible combinations of two input binary variables are listed in the truth table of previous Table 8.2. The OR function in Boolean algebra notation is given by

$$Y = X1 + X2 \tag{8.2}$$

This is called the logical sum of X1 and X2. The output of the OR function for four possible combinations of two input binary variables are listed in the truth table of Table 8.3.

The NOT function is referred to as the negation or inversion of the variable. It is indicated by placing a bar above the variable (e.g., NOT X1 $= \overline{X1}$). The truth table for the NOT function is listed in Table 8.4.

There are certain laws and theorems of Boolean algebra. We cite them in Table 8.6. These laws and theorems can often be applied to simplify logic circuits and reduce the number of elements required to implement the logic, with resulting savings in hardware and/or programming time.

**EXAMPLE 8.1 Robot Machine Loading**

The robot machine loading example described at the beginning of Section 8.1.1 required three conditions to be satisfied before the loading sequence was

**TABLE 8.6** Laws and Theorems of Boolean Algebra

| | |
|---|---|
| Commutative Law: | Law of Absorption: |
| $X + Y = Y + X$ | $X \cdot (X + Y) = X + X \cdot Y = X$ |
| $X \cdot Y = Y \cdot X$ | De Morgan's Laws: |
| Associative Law: | $(\overline{X + Y}) = \bar{X} \cdot \bar{Y}$ |
| $X + Y + Z = X + (Y + Z)$ | $(\overline{X + Y}) = \bar{X} + \bar{Y}$ |
| $X + Y + Z = (X + Y) + Z$ | Consistency Theorem: |
| $X \cdot Y \cdot Z = X \cdot (Y \cdot Z)$ | $X \cdot Y + X \cdot \bar{Y} = X$ |
| $X \cdot Y \cdot Z = (X \cdot Y) \cdot Z$ | $(X + Y) \cdot (X + \bar{Y}) = X$ |
| Distributive Law: | Inclusion Theorem: |
| $X \cdot Y + X \cdot Z = X \cdot (Y + Z)$ | $X \cdot \bar{X} = 0$ |
| $(X + Y) \cdot (Z + W) = X \cdot Z + X \cdot W + Y \cdot Z + Y \cdot W$ | $X + \bar{X} = 1$ |

initiated. Determine the Boolean algebra expression and the logic network diagram for this interlock system.

***Solution:*** Let X1 = whether the raw workpart is present at the conveyor stopping point (X1 = 1 for present, X1 = 0 for not present). Let X2 = whether the press cycle for the previous part has completed (X2 = 1 for completed, 0 for not completed). Let X3 = whether the previous part has been removed from the die (X3 = 1 for removed, X3 = 0 for not removed). Finally, let Y = whether the loading sequence can be started (Y = 1 for begin, Y = 0 for wait).

The Boolean algebra expression is:

$$Y = X1 \cdot X2 \cdot X3$$

All three conditions must be satisfied, so the logical AND function is used. All of the inputs X1, X2, and X3 must have values of 1 before Y = 1, hence initiating the start of the loading sequence. The logic network diagram for this interlock condition is presented in Figure 8.5.

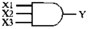



**Figure 8.5** Logic network diagram for the robotic machine loading interlock system in Example 8.1.

**EXAMPLE 8.2 Push-Button Switch**

A push-button switch used for starting and stopping electric motors and other powered devices is a common hardware component in an industrial control system. As shown in Figure 8.6(a), it consists of a box with two buttons, one for START and the other for STOP. When the START button is depressed momentarily by a human operator, power is supplied and maintained to the motor (or other load) until the STOP button is pressed. POWER-TO-MOTOR is the output of the push-button switch. The values of the variables can be defined as follows:

START = 0 normally open contact status

START = 1 when the START button is pressed to contact

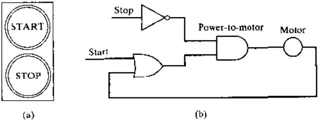



**Figure 8.6** (a) Push-button switch of Example 8.2 and (b) its logic network diagram.

STOP = 0 is normally closed contact status

STOP = 1 when the STOP button is pressed to break contact

MOTOR = 0 when off (not running)

MOTOR = 1 when on

POWER-TO-MOTOR = 0 when the contacts are open

POWER-TO-MOTOR = 1 when the contacts are closed

The truth table for the push-button is presented in Table 8.7. From an initial motor off condition (MOTOR = 0), the motor is started by depressing the start button (START = 1). If the stop button is in its normally closed condition (STOP = 0), power will be supplied to the motor (POWER-TO-MOTOR = 1). While the motor is running (MOTOR = 1), it can be stopped by depressing the stop button (STOP = 1). The corresponding network logic diagram is shown in Figure 8.6(b).

**TABLE 8.7** Truth Table for Push-Button Switch of Example 8.2

| *Start* | *Stop* | *Motor* | *Power-to-Motor* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

In a sense, the push-button switch of Example 8.2 goes slightly beyond our definition of a pure logic system because it exhibits characteristics of memory. The MOTOR and POWER-TO-MOTOR variables are virtually the same signal. The conditions that determine whether power will flow to the motor are different depending on the motor ON/OFF status. Compare the first four lines of the truth table with the last four lines in Table 8.7. It is as if the control logic must remember whether the motor is on or off to decide what conditions will determine the value of the output signal. This memory feature is exhibited by the feedback loop (the lower branch) in the logic network diagram of Figure 8.6(b).

### 8.1.2 Sequencing

A *sequencing system* uses internal timing devices to determine when to initiate changes in output variables. Washing machines, dryers, dishwashers, and similar appliances use sequencing systems to time the start and stop of cycle elements. There are many industrial applications of sequencing systems. For example, suppose an induction heating coil is used to heat the workpart in our previous example of a robotics forging application. Rather than use a temperature sensor, the heating cycle could be timed so that enough energy is provided to heat the workpart to the desired temperature. The heating process is sufficiently reliable and predictable that a certain duration of time in the induction coil will consistently heat the part to a certain temperature (with minimum variation).

Many applications in industrial automation require the controller to provide a prescheduled set of ON/OFF values for the output variables. The outputs are often generated in an open-loop fashion, meaning that there is no feedback verification that the control function has actually been executed. Another feature that typifies this mode of control is that the sequence of output signals is usually cyclical; the signals occur in the same repeated pattern within each regular cycle. Timers and counters illustrate this type of control component. They are briefly described in Table 8.8.

## 8.2 LADDER LOGIC DIAGRAMS

The logic network diagrams of the type shown in Figures 8.5 and 8.6(b) are useful for displaying the relationships between logic elements. Another diagramming technique that exhibits the logic and, to some extent, the timing and sequencing of the system is the ladder logic diagram. This graphical method also has an important virtue in that it is analogous to the electrical circuits used to accomplish the logic and sequence control. In addition, ladder logic diagrams are familiar to shop personnel who must construct, test, maintain, and repair the discrete control system.

**TABLE 8.8** Common Sequencing Elements Used in Discrete Process Control Systems

| |
|---|
| *Timer.* This device switches its output on and off at preset time intervals. |
| *Drum timer.* A device with multiple on/off outputs, each of which can be independently set with its own time intervals. |
| *Counters.* The counter is a component used to count electrical pulses and store the results of the counting procedure. The instantaneous contents can be displayed or used in some control algorithm. |

In a *ladder logic diagram*, the various logic elements and other components are displayed along horizontal lines or rungs connected on either end to two vertical rails, as illustrated in Figure 8.7. The diagram has the general configuration of a ladder, hence its name. The elements and components are contacts (usually representing logical inputs) and loads (representing outputs). The power (e.g., 120 V ac) to the components is provided by the two vertical rails. It is customary in ladder diagrams to locate the inputs to the left of each rung and the outputs to the right.

Symbols used in ladder diagrams for the common logic and sequencing components are presented in Figure 8.8. Normally open contacts of a switch or other similar device are symbolized by two short vertical lines along a horizontal rung of the ladder, as in Figure 8.8(a). Normally closed contacts are shown as the same vertical lines only with a diagonal line across them as in Figure 8.8(b). Both types of contacts are used to represent ON/OFF inputs to the logic circuit. In addition to switches, inputs include relays, on/off sensors (e.g., limit switches and photodetectors), timers, and other binary contact devices.

Output loads such as motors, lights, alarms, solenoids, and other electrical components that are turned on and off by the logic control system are shown as nodes (circles) as in Figure 8.8(c). Timers and counters are symbolized by squares (or rectangles) with appropriate inputs and outputs to properly drive the device as shown in Figure 8.8(d), (e). The simple timer requires the specification of the time delay and the input signal that activates the delay. When the input signal is received, the timer waits the specified delay time before switching on the output signal. The timer is reset (the output is set back to its initial value) by turning off the input signal.

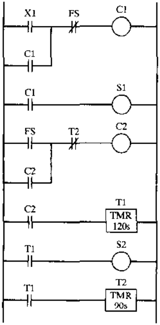


**Figure 8.7** A ladder logic diagram.

| Ladder symbol | Hardware component |
|---|---|
| (a) | Normally open contacts (switch, relay, other ON/OFF devices) |
| (b) | Normally closed contacts (switch, relay, etc.) |
| (c) | Output loads (motor, lamp, solenoid, alarm, etc.) |
| (d) TMR 3s | Timer |
| (e) CTR | Counter |

**Figure 8.8** Symbols for common logic and sequence elements used in ladder logic diagrams.

Counters require two inputs. The first is the pulse train (series of on/off signals) that is counted by the counter. The second is a signal to reset the counter and restart the counting procedure. Resetting the counter means zeroing the count for a count-up device and setting the starting value for a count-down device. The accumulated count is retained in memory for use if required for the application.

**EXAMPLE 8.3 Three Simple Lamp Circuits**

The three basic logic gates (AND, OR, and NOT) can be symbolized in ladder logic diagrams. Consider the three lamp circuits illustrated in Figures 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.

***Solution:*** The three ladder diagrams corresponding to these circuits are presented in Figure 8.9(a)-(c). Note the similarity between the original circuit diagrams and the ladder diagrams shown here. Notice that the NOT symbol is the same as a normally closed contact, which is the logical inverse of a normally open contact.

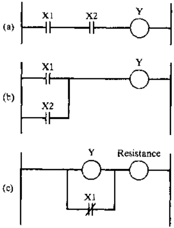



**Figure 8.9** Three ladder logic diagrams for lamp circuits in (a) Figure 8.1, (b) Figure 8.2, and (c) Figure 8.3.

**EXAMPLE 8.4 Push-Button Switch**

The operation of the push-button switch of Example 8.2 can be depicted in a ladder logic diagram. From Figure 8.6, let START be represented by X1, STOP by X2, and MOTOR by Y.

***Solution:*** The ladder diagram is presented in Figure 8.10. X1 and X2 are input contacts, and Y is a load in the diagram. Note how Y also serves as an input contact to provide the POWER-TO-MOTOR connection.

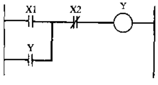



**Figure 8.10** Ladder logic diagram for the push-button switch in Example 8.4.

**EXAMPLE 8.5 Control Relay**

The operation of a control relay can be demonstrated by means of the ladder logic diagram presented in Figure 8.11. A relay can be used to control on/off actuation of a powered device at some remote location. It can also be used to define alternative decisions in logic control. Our diagram illustrates both uses. The relay is indicated by the load C (for control relay), which controls the on/off operation of two motors (or other types of output loads) Y1 and Y2. When the control switch X is open, the relay is deenergized, thereby connecting the load Y1 to the power lines. In effect, the open switch X turns on motor Y1 by means of the relay. When the control switch is closed, the relay becomes energized. This opens the normally closed contact of the second rung of the ladder and closes the normally open contact of the third rung. In effect, power is shut off to load Y1 and turned on to load Y2.

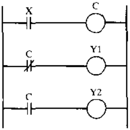



**Figure 8.11** Ladder logic diagram for the control relay in Example 8.5.

Example 8.5 illustrates several important features of a ladder logic diagram. First, the same input can be used more than once in the diagram. In our example, the relay contact R was used as an input on both the second and third rungs of the ladder. As we shall see in the following section, this feature of using a given relay contact in several different rungs of the ladder diagram to serve multiple logic functions provides a substantial advantage for the programmable controller over hardwired control units. With hardwired relays, separate contacts would have to be built into the controller for each logic function. A second feature of Example 8.5 is that it is possible for an output (load) on one rung of the diagram to be an input (contact) for another rung. The relay C was the output on the top rung in Figure 8.11, but that output was used as an input elsewhere in the diagram. This same feature was illustrated in the push-button ladder diagram of Example 8.4.

**EXAMPLE 8.6**

Consider the fluid storage tank illustrated in Figure 8.12. When the start button X1 is depressed, this energizes the control relay C1. In turn, this energizes solenoid S1, which opens a valve allowing fluid to flow into the tank. When the tank becomes full, the float switch FS closes, which opens relay C1, causing the solenoid S1 to be deenergized, thus turning off the in-flow. Switch FS also activates timer T1, which provides a 120-sec delay for a certain chemical reaction to occur in the tank. At the end of the delay time, the timer energizes a second relay C2, which controls two devices: (1) It energizes solenoid S2, which opens a valve to allow the fluid to flow out of the tank; and (2) it initiates timer T2, which waits

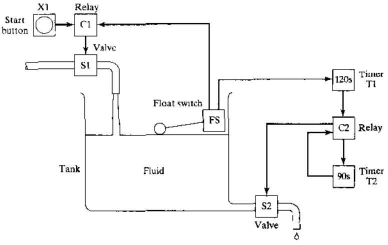



**Figure 8.12** Fluid filling operation of Example 8.6.

90 sec to allow the contents of the tank to be drained. At the end of the 90 sec, the timer breaks the current and deenergizes solenoid S2, thus closing the outflow valve. Depressing the start button X1 resets the timers and opens their respective contacts. Construct the ladder logic diagram for the system.

***Solution:*** The ladder logic diagram is constructed as shown in Figure 8.7.

The ladder logic diagram is an excellent way to represent the combinatorial logic control problems in which the output variables are based directly on the values of the inputs. As indicated by Example 8.6, it can also be used to display sequential control (timer) problems, although the diagram is somewhat more difficult to interpret and analyze for this purpose. The ladder diagram is the principal technique for setting up the control programs in PLCs.

## 8.3 PROGRAMMABLE LOGIC CONTROLLERS

A *programmable logic controller* can be defined as a microcomputer-based controller that uses stored instructions in programmable memory to implement logic, sequencing, timing, counting, and arithmetic functions through digital or analog input/output (I/O) modules, for controlling machines and processes. PLC applications are found in both the process industries and discrete manufacturing, but it is primarily associated with the latter industries to control machines, transfer lines, and material handling equipment. Before the PLC was introduced around 1970, hard-wired controllers composed of relays, coils, counters, timers, and similar components were used to implement this type of industrial control (Historical Note 8.1).

**Historical Note 8.1** Programmable logic controllers [2], [6], [8], [9].

In the mid-1960s, Richard Morley was a partner in Bedford Associates, a New England consulting firm specializing in control systems for machine tool companies. Most of the firm's work involved replacing relays with minicomputers in machine tool controls. In January 1968, Morley devised the notion and wrote the specifications for the first programmable controller.[1] It would overcome some of the limitations of conventional computers used for process control at the time; namely, it would be a real-time processor (Section 4.3.1), it would be predictable and reliable, and it would be modular and rugged. Programming would be based on ladder logic, which was widely used in the industrial controls. The controller that emerged was named the Modicon Model 084. MODICON was an abbreviation of MOdular DIgital CONtroller. Model 084 was derived from the fact that this was the 84th product developed by Bedford Associates. Morley and his associates elected to start up a new company to produce the controllers, and Modicon was incorporated in October 1968. In 1977, Modicon was sold to Gould and became Gould's PLC division.

In the same year that Morley invented the PLC, the Hydramatic Division of General Motors Corporation developed a set of specifications for a PLC. The specifications were motivated by the high cost and lack of flexibility of electromechanical relay-based controllers used extensively in the automotive industry to control transfer lines and other mechanized and automated systems. The requirements included: (1) The device must be programmable and reprogrammable. (2) It must be designed to operate in an industrial environment. (3) It must accept 120 V ac signals from standard push-buttons and limit switches. (4) Its outputs must be designed to switch and continuously operate loads such as motors and relays of 2-A rating. (5) Its price and installation cost must be competitive with relay and solid-state logic devices then in use. In addition to Modicon, several other companies saw a commercial opportunity in the GM specifications and developed various versions of the PLC.

Capabilities of the first PLCs were similar to those of the relay controls they replaced. They were limited to on/off control. Within five years, product enhancements included better operator interfaces, arithmetic capability, data manipulation, and computer communications. Improvements over the next five years included larger memory, analog and positioning control, and remote I/O (permitting remote devices to be connected to a satellite I/O subsystem that was multiplexed to the PLC using twisted pair). Much of the progress was based on advancements taking place in microprocessor technology. By the mid-1980s, the micro PLC had been introduced. This was a down-sized PLC with much lower size (typical size = 75 mm by 75 mm by 125 mm) and cost (less than $500). By the mid-1990s, the nano PLC had arrived, which was still smaller and less expensive.

[1] Morley used the abbreviation PC to refer to the programmable controller This term was used for many years until IBM began to call their personal computers by the same abbreviation in the early 1980s. The term PLC, widely used today for programmable logic controller, was coined by Allen-Bradley, a leading PLC supplier.

There are significant advantages in using a PLC rather than conventional relays, timers, counters, and other hardware elements. These advantages include: (1) programming the PLC is easier than wiring the relay control panel; (2) the PLC can be reprogrammed, whereas conventional controls must be rewired and are often scrapped instead; (3) PLCs take less floor space than do relay control panels; (4) reliability of the PLC is greater, and maintenance is easier; (5) the PLC can be connected to computer systems more easily than relays; and (6) PLCs can perform a greater variety of control functions than can relay controls.

In this section, we describe the components, programming, and operation of the PLC. Although its principal applications are in logic control and sequencing (discrete control), many PLCs also perform additional functions, and we survey some of these at the end of the section.

### 8.3.1 Components of the PLC

A schematic diagram of a PLC is presented in Figure 8.13. The basic components of the PLC are the following: (1) processor, (2) memory unit, (3) power supply, (4) I/O module, and (5) programming device. These components are housed in a suitable cabinet designed for the industrial environment.

The *processor* is the central processing unit (CPU) of the programmable controller. It executes the various logic and sequencing functions by operating on the PLC inputs to determine the appropriate output signals. The typical CPU operating cycle is described in Section 8.3.2. The CPU consists of one or more microprocessors similar to those used in PCs and other data processing equipment but are designed to facilitate I/O transactions. PLC microprocessors include a range of bit sizes and clock speeds. At the smaller end of the range are 8-bit devices operating at a clock speed of 4 MHz. Medium-sized and larger PLCs use 16- or 32-bit microprocessors running at 33 MHz or faster.

Connected to the CPU is the PLC *memory unit*, which contains the programs of logic, sequencing, and I/O operations. It also holds data files associated with these programs, including I/O status bits, counter and timer constants, and other variable and parameter values. This memory unit is referred to as the user or application memory because its contents are entered by the user. In addition, the processor also has a *system memory* that directs the execution of the control program and coordinates I/O operations. The contents of the system memory are entered by the PLC manufacturer and cannot be accessed or altered by the user. Typical PLC memory capacities range from less than 1K (1000) words for small controllers to more than 64K.

A *power supply* of 120 V alternating current (ac) is typically used to drive the PLC (some units operate on 240 V ac). The power supply converts the 120 V ac into direct current (dc) voltages of ±5 V. These low voltages are used to operate equipment that may

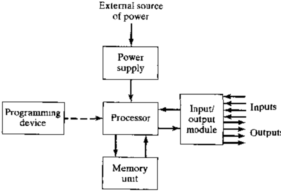



**Figure 8.13** Components of a PLC.

**TABLE 8.9** Typical Classification of PLCs by Number of Input/Output Terminals

| *PLC Size* | *I/O Count* |
|---|---|
| Large PLC | $\geq$ 1024 |
| Medium PLC | $<$ 1024 |
| Small PLC | $<$ 256 |
| Micro PLC | $\leq$ 32 |
| Nano PLC | $\leq$ 16 |

have much higher voltage and power ratings than the PLC itself. The power supply often includes a battery backup that switches in automatically in the event of an external power source failure.

The *input/output module* provides the connections to the industrial equipment or process that is to be controlled. Inputs to the controller are signals from limit switches, push-buttons, sensors, and other on/off devices. Outputs from the controller are on/off signals to operate motors, valves, and other devices required to actuate the process. In addition, many PLCs are capable of accepting continuous signals from analog sensors and generating signals suitable for analog actuators. The size of a PLC is usually rated in terms of the number of its I/O terminals, as indicated in Table 8.9.

The PLC is programmed by means of a programming device. The *programming device* is usually detachable from the PLC cabinet so that it can be shared among different controllers. Different PLC manufacturers provide different devices, ranging from simple teach pendant type devices, similar to those used in robotics, to special PLC programming keyboards and CRT displays. Personal computers can also be used to program PLCs. A PC used for this purpose sometimes remains connected to the PLC to serve a process monitoring or supervision function and for conventional data processing applications related to the process.

### 8.3.2 PLC Operating Cycle

As far as the PLC user is concerned, the steps in the control program are executed simultaneously and continuously. In truth, a certain amount of time is required for the PLC processor to execute the user program during one cycle of operation. The typical operating cycle of the PLC, called a *scan*, consists of three parts: (1) input scan, (2) program scan, and (3) output scan. During the *input scan*, the inputs to the PLC are read by the processor and the status of these inputs is stored in memory. Next, the control program is executed during the *program scan*. The input values stored in memory are used in the control logic calculations to determine the values of the outputs. Finally, during the *output scan*, the outputs are updated to agree with the calculated values. The time to perform the scan is called the *scan time*, and this time depends on the number of inputs that must be read, the complexity of control functions to be performed, and the number of outputs that must be changed. Scan time also depends on the clock speed of the processor. Scan times typically vary between 1 and 25 msec [5].

One of the potential problems that can occur during the scan cycle is that the value of an input can change immediately after it has been sampled. Since the program uses the input value stored in memory, any output values that are dependent on that input are determined incorrectly. There is obviously a potential risk involved in this mode of operation. However, the risk is minimized because the time between updates is so short that it is unlikely that the output value being incorrect for such a short time duration will have a serious effect on process operation. The risk becomes most significant in processes in which the response times are very fast and where hazards can occur during the scan time. Some PLCs have special features for making "immediate" updates of output signals when input variables are known to cycle back and forth at frequencies faster than the scan time.

### 8.3.3 Additional Capabilities of a PLC

The logic control and sequencing functions described in Section 8.1 are likely to be the principal control operations accomplished by the PLC. These are the functions for which the programmable controller was originally designed. However, the PLC has evolved to include several capabilities in addition to logic control and sequencing. Some of these additional capabilities available on many commercial PLCs include:

- *Analog control.* Proportional-integral-derivative (PID) control is available on some programmable controllers. These control algorithms have traditionally been implemented on analog controllers. Today the analog control schemes are approximated using the digital computer, with either a PLC or a computer process controller.
- *Arithmetic functions.* These functions are addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Use of these functions permits more-complex control algorithms to be developed than what is possible with conventional logic and sequencing elements.
- *Matrix functions.* Some PLCs have the capability to perform matrix operations on stored values in memory. The capability can be used to compare the actual values of a set of inputs and outputs with the values stored in the PLC memory to determine if some error has occurred.
- *Data processing and reporting.* These functions are typically associated with business applications of PCs. PLC manufacturers have found it necessary to include these PC capabilities in their controller products. The distinction between PCs and PLCs is becoming less and less clear.

### 8.3.4 Programming the PLC

Programming is the means by which the user enters the control instructions to the PLC through the programming device. The most basic control instructions consist of switching, logic, sequencing, counting, and timing. Virtually all PLC programming methods provide instruction sets that include these functions. Many control applications require additional instructions to accomplish analog control of continuous processes, complex control logic, data processing and reporting, and other advanced functions not readily performed by the basic instruction set. Owing to these differences in requirements, a variety of PLC programming languages have been developed. A standard for PLC programming was published by the International Electrotechnical Commission and released in 1992 entitled *International Standard for Programmable Controllers* (IEC 1131-3). This standard specifies three graphical languages and two text-based languages for programming PLCs, respectively: (1) ladder logic diagrams, (2) function block diagrams, (3) sequential functions

**TABLE 8.10** Features of the Five PLC Languages Specified in the IEC 1131-3 Standard

| *Language* | *Abbreviation* | *Type* | *Applications Best Suited for* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ladder logic diagram | (LD) | Graphical | Discrete control |
| Function block diagram | (FBD) | Graphical | Continuous control |
| Sequential function chart | (SFC) | Graphical | Sequencing |
| Instruction list | (IL) | Textual | Similar to ladder diagrams |
| Structured text | (ST) | Textual | Complex logic, computations, etc. |

charts, (4) instruction list, and (5) structured text. Table 8.10 lists the five languages along with the most suitable application of each. IEC 1131-3 also states that the five languages must be able to interact with each other to allow for all possible levels of control sophistication in any given application.

*Ladder Logic Diagram.* The most widely used PLC programming language today involves ladder diagrams (LDs), examples of which are shown in several previous figures. As indicated in Section 8.2, ladder diagrams are very convenient for shop personnel who are familiar with ladder and circuit diagrams but may not be familiar with computers and computer programming. The use of ladder logic diagrams does not require them to learn an entirely new programming language.

Direct entry of the *ladder logic diagram* into the PLC memory requires the use of a keyboard and CRT with graphics capability to display symbols representing the components and their interrelationships in the ladder logic diagram. The symbols are similar to those presented in Figure 8.8. The PLC keyboard device is often designed with keys for each of the individual symbols. Programming is accomplished by inserting the appropriate components into the rungs of the ladder diagram. The components are of two basic types: contacts and coils. *Contacts* are used to represent input switches, relay contacts, and similar elements. *Coils* are used to represent loads such as motors, solenoids, relays, timers, and counters. In effect, the programmer inputs the ladder logic circuit diagram rung by rung into the PLC memory with the CRT displaying the results for verification.

*Function Block Diagrams.* The *function block diagram* (FBD) provides a means of inputting high-level instructions. Instructions are composed of operational blocks. Each block has one or more inputs and one or more outputs. Within a block, certain operations take place on the inputs to transform the signals into the desired outputs. The function blocks include operations such as timers and counters, control computations using equations (e.g., proportional-integral-derivative control), data manipulation, and data transfer to other computer-based systems. We leave further description of these function blocks to other references, such as [5] and the operating manuals for commercially available PLC products.

*Sequential Function Charts.* The *sequential function chart* (SFC, also called the *Grafcet* method) graphically displays the sequential functions of an automated system as a series of steps and transitions from one state of the system to the next. The sequential function chart is described in Boucher [1]. It has become a standard method for documenting logic control and sequencing in much of Europe. However, its use in the United States is more limited, and we refer the reader to the cited reference for more details on the method.

*Instruction List.* Instruction list (IL) programming also provides a way of entering the ladder logic diagram into PLC memory. In this method, a low-level computer language is employed by the programmer to construct the ladder logic diagram by entering statements that specify the various components and their relationships for each rung of the ladder diagram. Let us explain this approach by introducing a hypothetical PLC instruction set. Our PLC "language" is a composite of various manufacturers' languages containing fewer features than most commercially available PLCs. We assume that the programming device consists of a suitable keyboard for entering the individual components on each rung of the ladder logic diagram. A CRT capable of displaying each ladder rung (and perhaps several rungs that precede it) is useful to verify the program. The instruction set for our PLC is presented in Table 8.11 with a concise explanation of each instruction. Let us examine the use of these commands with several examples.

### EXAMPLE 8.7 Language Commands for AND, OR, and NOT Circuits

Using the command set in Table 8.11, write the PLC programs for the three ladder diagrams from Figure 8.10, depicting the AND, OR, and NOT circuits from Figures 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.

***Solution:*** Commands for the three circuits are listed below, with explanatory comments.

| | Command | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| (a) | STR X1 | Store input X1 |
| | AND X2 | Input X2 in series with X1 |
| | OUT Y | Output Y |
| (b) | STR X1 | Store input X1 |
| | OR X2 | Input X2 parallel with X1 |
| | OUT Y | Output Y |
| (c) | STR NOT X1 | Store inverse of X1 |
| | OUT Y | Output Y |

**TABLE 8.11** Typical Low-Level Language Instruction Set for a PLC

| | |
|---|---|
| STR | Store a new input and start a new rung of the ladder. |
| AND | Logical AND referenced with the previously entered element. This is interpreted as a series circuit relative to the previously entered element. |
| OR | Logical OR referenced with the previously entered element. This is interpreted as a parallel circuit relative to the previously entered element. |
| NOT | Logical NOT or inverse of entered element. |
| OUT | Output element for the rung of the ladder diagram. |
| TMR | Timer element. Requires one input signal to initiate timing sequence. Output is delayed relative to input by a duration specified by the programmer in seconds. Resetting the timer is accomplished by interrupting (stopping) the input signal. |
| CTR | Counter element. Requires two inputs: One is the incoming pulse train that is counted by the CTR element, the other is the reset signal indicating a restart of the counting procedure. |

**EXAMPLE 8.8 Language Commands for Control Relay**

Using the command set in Table 8.11, write the PLC program for the control relay depicted in the ladder logic diagram of Figure 8.11.

***Solution:*** Commands for the three circuits are listed below, with explanatory comments.

| Command | Comment |
|---|---|
| STR X | Store input X |
| OUT C | Output contact relay C |
| STR NOT C | Store inverse of C output |
| OUT Y1 | Output load Y1 |
| STR C | Store C output |
| OUT Y2 | Output load Y2 |

The low-level languages are generally limited to the kinds of logic and sequencing functions that can be defined in a ladder logic diagram. Although timers and counters have not been illustrated in the two preceding examples, some of the exercise problems at the end of the chapter require the reader to make use of them.

*Structured Text.* *Structured text* (ST) is a high-level computer-type language likely to become more common in the future to program PLCs and PCs for automation and control applications. The principal advantage of a high-level language is its capability to perform data processing and calculations on values other than binary. Ladder diagrams and low-level PLC languages are usually quite limited in their ability to operate on signals that are other than on/off types. The capability to perform data processing and computation permits the use of more-complex control algorithms, communications with other computer-based systems, display of data on a CRT console, and input of data by a human operator. Another advantage is the relative ease with which a complicated control program can be interpreted by a user. Explanatory comments can be inserted into the program to facilitate interpretation.

## 8.4 PERSONAL COMPUTERS USING SOFT LOGIC

In the early 1990s, PCs began to encroach into applications formerly dominated by PLCs. Previously, PLCs were always seen to have the advantage of being designed for the harsh environment of the factory, while PCs were designed for the office environment. In addition, with its built-in I/O interface, the PLC could be readily connected to external equipment, whereas the PC required special I/O cards to enable such connections. These advantages notwithstanding, the technological evolution of PLCs has not kept pace with the development of PCs, new generations of which are introduced with much greater frequency than PLCs are. There is much more proprietary software and architecture in PLCs than in PCs. Over time, this has resulted in a performance disadvantage for PLCs. At time of writing, PLC performance lags its PC counterpart by as much as two years, and the gap is increasing. PC speeds are typically doubling every 18 months or so, accordingly to Moore's Law (Section 4.4.6 and Table 4.5), much more rapidly than in PLC technology, which requires that individual companies redesign their proprietary software and architectures for each new generation of microprocessors.

PCs are now available in more-sturdy enclosures for use in the plant. They can be equipped with membrane-type keyboards for protection against factory moisture, oil, and dirt. They can be ordered with I/O cards and related hardware to provide the necessary devices to connect to the plant's equipment and processes. They come with Windows NT or other operating system designed for implementing control applications in addition to traditional office software. And they can be programmed with *soft logic*, a term used to describe a family of software products that emulate the operations of the built-in control software used in PLCs. PLC makers are responding to the PC challenge by including PC components and features in their controller products, calling them *softPLC* or similar names to distinguish them from conventional PLCs. Nevertheless, the future is likely to see PCs used in increasing numbers in factory control applications where PLCs would have formerly been used.

An example of the soft logic products is *FloPro*[2], a software package for PCs that uses a flowchart-based language rather than ladder logic diagrams. The argument for flowchart programming is that most computer software is developed using flowcharts. Before writing any computer code, the programmer develops a logical and sequential plan using flowcharts that detail what decisions and actions the software is to accomplish. With FloPro, the flowchart is entered directly into the computer. In fact, the FloPro programming tools allow the flowchart to be developed on the computer rather than manually beforehand. The control program can be written, debugged, and simulated on a conventional office PC before being loaded into the industrial control computer for the given application.

FloPro permits the development of multiple flowcharts, each designed to accomplish a relatively simple control task. The flowcharts execute their respective tasks simultaneously and utilize a common database, so that a change in a parameter value is available to all of the flowcharts that use that parameter. The typical program, consisting of many separate flowcharts, executes in a very short scan cycle, typically less than 10 msec for several hundred I/O points and less than 85 msec for 11,000 I/O points [4]. This makes the execution of a FloPro control program on a modern PC comparable to or faster than executing the same control functions on a PLC.

There are three basic types of graphical symbols in a FloPro flowchart, as illustrated in Figure 8.14: (a) enable criteria, (b) action blocks, and (c) test blocks. The ***enable criteria*** is used to determine whether a given flowchart in the larger flowchart program is permit-

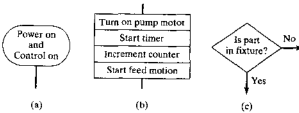



**Figure 8.14** Three types of flowchart symbols in FloPro: (a) enable criteria, (b) action blocks, and (c) test blocks.

[2]FloPro is a software product of NemaSoft, a division of Nematron Corporation in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

ted to execute. It is generally placed at the beginning of a flowchart. The *action block* causes an activity to occur in the control system. The activity may be to turn off a pump motor, start a timer, increment or decrement a counter, begin a feed motion at a transfer line station, turn on an alarm signal, or set a parameter value that will be used by another flowchart. As our example in Figure 8.14(b) indicates, a single action block can control multiple activities simultaneously. The *test block* is a decision block that is used to branch to other blocks in the flowchart, depending on the status of a system parameter. Accordingly, the test block provides the control program with an interlock feature (Section 4.3.2) so that the activities of two or more devices in the system can be safely coordinated. In addition to Flo-Pro, there are other soft logic products designed for implementation using PCs. These include (at time of writing) [7]: *ControlSuite* (Arbor Coast Software, Inc., affiliate of Xycom, Inc.), *Gello* (Event Technologies Inc.), *OptoControl* (Opto 22), and *Visual Logic Controller* (Steeplechase Software Inc.).

## REFERENCES


[1] BOUCHER, T. O., *Computer Automation in Manufacturing*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1996.

[2] CLEVELAND, P., "PLCs get smaller, adapt to newest technology," *Instrumentation and Control Systems*, April 1997, pp. 23-32.

[3] CLEVELAND, P., "PLCs: The action is in the I/O and networks," *Instrumentation and Control Systems*, April 1998, pp. 20-30.

[4] *FloPro Softlogic Control*, Nematron Corporation, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

[5] HUGHES, T. A., *Programmable Controllers*, Second Edition, Instrument Society of America, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, 1997.

[6] JONES, T., and L. A. BRYAN, *Programmable Controllers*, International Programmable Controls, Inc., An IPC/ASTEC Publication, Atlanta, Georgia, 1983.

[7] LAVALEE, R., "Soft Logic's New Challenge: Distributed Machine Control," *Control Engineering*, August, 1996, pp. 51-58.

[8] *MICROMENTOR: Understanding and Applying Micro Programmable Controllers*, Allen-Bradley Company, Inc., 1995.

[9] *International Standard for Programmable Controllers*, Standard IEC 1131-3, International Electrotechnical Commission, 1993.

[10] MORLEY, R., "The Techy History of Modicon," manuscript submitted to *Technology* magazine, 1989.

[11] *PLC-2/30 Programmable Controller, Programming and Operations Manual*, Publication 1772-806, Allen-Bradley Company, Inc., March 1986.

[12] *Series One Programmable Controller*, Series One Manual, Publication GEK-25375A, General Electric Company, February 1984.

[13] WEBB, J. W., and R. A. REIS, *Programmable Logic Controllers: Principles and Applications*, Fourth Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1999.

[14] WILHELM, E. *Programmable Controller Handbook*, Hayden Book Company, Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey, 1985.


## PROBLEMS

**8.1** Write the Boolean logic expression for the push-button switch of Example 8.2 using the following symbols: X1 = START, X2 = STOP, Y1 = MOTOR, and Y2 = POWER-TO-MOTOR.

**8.2** Construct the ladder logic diagram for the robot interlock system in Example 8.1.

**8.3** In the circuit of Figure 8.1, suppose a photodetector is used to determine whether the lamp worked. If the lamp does not light when both switches are closed, the photodetector causes a buzzer to sound. Construct the ladder logic diagram for this system.

**8.4** Construct the ladder logic diagrams for (a) the NAND gate and (b) the NOR gate.

**8.5** Construct the ladder logic diagrams for the following Boolean logic equations: (a) $Y = (X1 + X2)X3$, (b) $Y = (X1 + X2)(X3 + X4)$, (c) $Y = (X1\,X2) + X3$, (d) $Y = X1\,X2$.

**8.6** Write the low-level language statements for the robot interlock system in Example 8.1 using the instruction set in Table 8.11.

**8.7** Write the low-level language statements for the lamp and photodetector system in Problem 8.4 using the instruction set in Table 8.11.

**8.8** Write the low-level language statements for the fluid filling operation in Example 8.5 using the instruction set in Table 8.11.

**8.9** Write the low-level language statements for the four parts of Problem 8.5 using the instruction set in Table 8.11.

**8.10** In the fluid filling operation of Example 8.6, suppose a sensor (e.g., a submerged float switch) is used to determine whether the contents of the tank have been evacuated, rather than rely on timer T2 to empty the tank. (a) Construct the ladder logic diagram for this revised system. (b) Write the low-level language statements for the system using the PLC instruction set in Table 8.11.

**8.11** In the manual operation of a sheet metal stamping press, a two-button safety interlock system is often used to prevent the operator from inadvertently actuating the press while his hand is in the die. Both buttons must be depressed to actuate the stamping cycle. In this system, one press button is located on one side of the press while the other button is located on the opposite side. During the work cycle, the operator inserts the part into the die and depresses both push-buttons, using both hands. (a) Write the truth table for this interlock system. (b) Write the Boolean logic expression for the system. (c) Construct the logic network diagram for the system. (d) Construct the ladder logic diagram for the system.

**8.12** An emergency stop system is to be designed for a certain automatic production machine. A single "start" button is used to turn on the power to the machine at the beginning of the day. In addition, there are three "stop" buttons located at different locations around the machine, any one of which can be pressed to immediately turn off power to the machine. (a) Write the truth table for this system. (b) Write the Boolean logic expression for the system. (c) Construct the logic network diagram for the system. (d) Construct the ladder logic diagram for the system.

**8.13** An industrial robot performs a machine loading and unloading operation. A PLC is used as the robot cell controller. The cell operates as follows: (1) a human worker places a workpart into a nest, (2) the robot reaches over and picks up the part and places it into an induction heating coil, (3) a time of 10 sec is allowed for the heating operation, and (4) the robot reaches in and retrieves the part and places it on an outgoing conveyor. A limit switch X1 (normally open) will be used in the nest to indicate part presence in step (1). Output contact Y1 will be used to signal the robot to execute step (2) of the work cycle. This is an output contact for the PLC but an input interlock for the robot controller. Timer T1 will be used to provide the 10-sec delay in step (3). Output contact Y2 will be used to signal the robot to execute step (4). (a) Construct the ladder logic diagram for the system. (b) Write the low-level language statements for the system using the PLC instruction set in Table 8.11.

**8.14** A PLC is used to control the sequence in an automatic drilling operation. A human operator loads and clamps a raw workpart into a fixture on the drill press table and presses a start button to initiate the automatic cycle. The drill spindle turns on, feeds down into the part to a certain depth (the depth is determined by limit switch), and then retracts. The fixture then indexes to a second drilling position, and the drill feed-and-retract is repeated. After the second drilling operation, the spindle turns off, and the fixture moves back to the first position. The worker then unloads the finished part and loads another raw part. (a) Specify the I/O variables for this system operation and define symbols for them (e.g., X1, X2, C1, Y1, etc.). (b) Construct the ladder logic diagram for the system. (c) Write the low-level language statements for the system using the PLC instruction set in Table 8.11.

**8.15** An industrial furnace is to be controlled as follows: The contacts of a bimetallic strip inside the furnace close if the temperature falls below the set point, and open when the temperature is above the set point. The contacts regulate a control relay that turns the heating elements of the furnace on and off. If the door to the furnace is opened, the heating elements are temporarily turned off until the door is closed. (a) Specify the I/O variables for this system operation and define symbols for them (e.g., X1, X2, C1, Y1). (b) Construct the ladder logic diagram for the system. (c) Write the low-level language statements for the system using the PLC instruction set in Table 8.11.

# PART II
# Material Handling and Identificatian Technologies

## chapter 9

# Introduction to Material Handling

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



*Material handling* is defined by the Material Handling Industry of America[1] as "the movement, storage, protection and control of materials throughout the manufacturing and distribution process including their consumption and disposal" [5]. The handling of materials must be performed safely, efficiently, at low cost, in a timely manner, accurately (the right materials in the right quantities to the right locations), and without damage to the materials. Material handling is an important yet often overlooked issue in production. The cost of material handling is a significant portion of total production cost, estimates averaging around 20–25% of total manufacturing labor cost in the United States [1]. The proportion varies, depending on the type of production and degree of automation in the material handling function.

In this part of the book, we discuss the types of material handling equipment used in production systems The position of material handling in the larger production system is

[1] The Material Handling Industry of America (MHIA) is the trade association for material handling companies that do business in North America. The definition is published in their Annual Report each year [5].

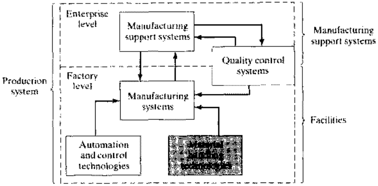



**Figure 9.1** Material handling in the production system.

shown in Figure 9.1. Material transport equipment is surveyed in Chapter 10. Storage systems are discussed in Chapter 11. And material identification and tracking are described in Chapter 12. In addition, several kinds of material handling devices are discussed in other chapters of the text, including: industrial robots used for material handling (Section 7.5.1), pallet shuttles in NC machining centers (Section 14.2.2), conveyors in manual assembly lines (Section 17.1.2), transfer mechanisms in automated transfer lines (Section 18.1.2), and parts feeding devices in automated assembly (Section 19.1.2).

This opening chapter serves as an introduction to the subject of material handling. Here we discuss some of the general considerations and principles that are useful in designing and managing material handling systems. Let us begin by defining the various types of material handling equipment.

## 9.1 OVERVIEW OF MATERIAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT

A great variety of material handling equipment is available commercially. Material handling equipment includes: (1) transport equipment, (2) storage systems, (3) unitizing equipment, and (4) identification and tracking systems.

*Material Transport Equipment.* Material transport includes equipment that is used to move materials inside a factory, warehouse, or other facility. This equipment can be divided into the following five categories, illustrated in Figure 9.2:

(a) *Industrial trucks.* Industrial trucks divide into two types: non-powered and powered. Nonpowered trucks are platforms or containers with wheels that are pushed or pulled by human workers to move materials. Powered industrial trucks are steered by human workers. They provide mechanized movement of materials.

(b) *Automated guided vehicles* (AGVs). AGVs are battery-powered, automatically steered vehicles that follow defined pathways in the floor. The pathways are unobtrusive. AGVs are used to move unit loads between load and unload stations in the facility. Routing variations are possible, meaning that different loads move between differ-

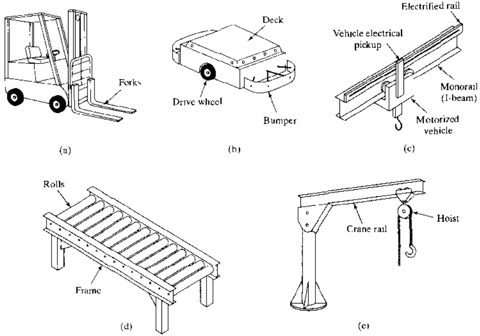



**Figure 9.2** Examples of the five basic types of material handling equipment: (a) fork lift truck, industrial truck, (b) unit load automated guided vehicle, (c) monorail, (d) roller conveyor, and (e) jib crane with hoist.

ent stations. They are usually interfaced with other systems to achieve the full benefits of integrated automation.

(c) *Monorails and other rail guided vehicles.* These are self-propelled vehicles that ride on a fixed rail system that is either on the floor or suspended from the ceiling. The vehicles operate independently and are usually driven by electric motors that pick up power from an electrified rail. Like AGVs, routing variations are possible in rail-guided vehicle systems.

(d) *Conveyors.* Conveyors constitute a large family of material transport equipment that are designed to move materials over fixed paths, generally in large quantities or volumes. Examples include roller, belt, and tow-line conveyors. Conveyors can be either powered or nonpowered. Powered conveyors are distinguished from other types of powered material transport equipment in that the mechanical drive system is built into the fixed path. Nonpowered conveyors are activated either by human workers or by gravity.

(e) *Cranes and hoists.* These are handling devices for lifting, lowering, and transporting materials, often as very heavy loads. Hoists accomplish vertical lifting; both manually operated and powered types are available. Cranes provide horizontal travel and generally include one or more hoists.

In addition to the equipment types listed here, which are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 10, there are many kinds of transport equipment that move materials outside the factory or warehouse, including highway tractor-trailer trucks, railway trains, cargo aircraft, ships, and barges.

*Storage Systems.* Although it is generally desirable to reduce the storage of materials in manufacturing, it seems unavoidable that raw materials and work-in-process will spend some time being stored, even if only temporarily. And finished products are likely to spend some time in a warehouse or distribution center before being delivered to the final customer. Accordingly, companies must give consideration to the most appropriate methods for storing materials and products prior to, during, and after manufacture. Storage methods and equipment can be classified as follows:

(a) *Bulk storage.* This consists of simply storing materials in an open floor area, generally in pallet loads or other containers. It requires little or no storage equipment.
(b) *Rack systems.* Rack systems are structural frames designed to stack unit loads vertically, thus increasing the vertical storage efficiency compared to bulk storage.
(c) *Shelving and bins.* Steel shelving comes in standard widths, depths, and heights to serve a variety of storage requirements. Shelves can include bins, which are containers for loose items.
(d) *Drawer storage.* This storage medium is more costly than shelves, but it is more convenient. Finding items stored in shelves can be difficult if the shelf level is too high or too low or too deep. Drawers compensate for this by pulling out to reveal their entire contents. Drawer storage is generally used for tools, hardware, and other small items.
(e) *Automated storage systems.* Automated and semiautomated systems are available to deposit and withdraw items into and from the storage compartments. There are two basic types: (1) automated storage/retrieval systems, consisting of rack and shelf systems that are accessed by an automated or mechanized crane, and (2) carousel systems that rotate storage bins past a stationary load/unload station.

These storage methods are described in greater detail in Chapter 11. Mathematical models are developed to predict throughput and other performance measures of the automated systems.

*Unitizing Equipment.* The term unitizing equipment refers to (1) containers used to hold individual items during handling and (2) equipment used to load and package the containers. Containers include pallets, boxes, baskets, barrels, pails, and drums, some of which are shown in Figure 9.3. Although seemingly mundane, this type of equipment is very important for moving materials efficiently as a unit load, rather than as individual items. A given facility must often standardize on a specific type and size of container if it utilizes automatic transport and/or storage equipment to handle the loads.

The second category of unitizing equipment, loading and packaging equipment, includes *palletizers,* designed to automatically load cartons onto pallets and shrink-wrap plastic film around them for shipping. Other wrapping and packaging machines are also included in this equipment category, as are *depalletizers,* designed to unload cartons from pallets.

*Identification and Tracking Systems.* Material handling must include a means of keeping track of the materials being moved or stored. This is usually done by affixing

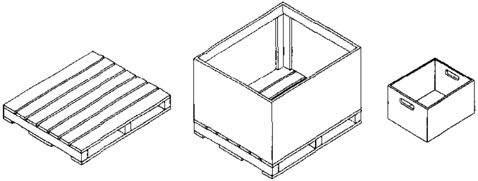



**Figure 9.3** Examples of unit load containers for material handling: (a) wooden pallet, (b) pallet box, and (c) tote box.

some kind of label to the item, carton, or unit load that uniquely identifies it. The most common label used today consists of bar codes that can be read quickly and automatically by bar code readers. This is the same basic technology used by grocery stores and retail merchandisers. Other types of labels include magnetic stripes and radio frequency tags that are generally capable of encoding more data than bar codes. These and other automatic identification techniques are discussed in Chapter 12.

## 9.2 CONSIDERATIONS IN MATERIAL HANDLING SYSTEM DESIGN

Material handling equipment is usually assembled into a system. The system must be specified and configured to satisfy the requirements of a particular application. Design of the system depends on the materials to be handled, quantities and distances to be moved, type of production facility served by the handling system, and other factors, including available budget. In this section, we consider these factors that influence the design of the material handling system.

### 9.2.1 Material Characteristics

For handling purposes, materials can be classified by the physical characteristics presented in Table 9.1, suggested by a classification scheme of Muther and Haganas [7]. Design of the material handling system must take these factors into account. For example, if the material is a liquid and is to be moved in this state over long distances in great volumes, then a pipeline is probably the appropriate transport means. But this handling method would be quite inappropriate for moving a liquid contained in barrels or other containers. Materials in a factory usually consist of solid items: raw materials, parts, and finished or semifinished products.

**TABLE 9.1** Characteristics of Materials in Material Handling

| *Category* | *Measures or Descriptors* |
|---|---|
| Physical state | Solid, liquid, or gas |
| Size | Volume; length, width, height |
| Weight | Weight per piece, weight per unit volume |
| Shape | Long and flat, round, square, etc. |
| Condition | Hot, cold, wet, dirty, sticky |
| Risk of damage | Fragile, brittle, sturdy |
| Safety risk | Explosive, flammable, toxic, corrosive, etc. |

### 9.2.2 Flow Rate, Routing, and Scheduling

In addition to material characteristics, other factors must be considered in analyzing system requirements and determining which type of equipment is most appropriate for the application. These other factors include: (1) quantities and flow rates of materials to be moved, (2) routing factors, and (3) scheduling of the moves.

The amount or quantity of material to be moved affects the type of handling system that should be installed. If large quantities of material must be handled, then a dedicated handling system is appropriate. If the quantity of a particular material type is small but there are many different material types to be moved, then the handling system must be designed to be shared by the various materials moved. The amount of material moved must be considered in the context of time, that is, how much material is moved within a given time period. We refer to the amount of material moved per unit time as the *flow rate*. Depending on the form of the material, flow rate is measured in pieces/hr, pallet loads/hr, tons/hr, $ft^3$/day, or similar units. Whether the material must be moved as individual units, in batches, or continuously has an effect on the selection of handling method.

*Routing* factors include pickup and drop-off locations, move distances, routing variations, and conditions that exist along the routes. Given that other factors remain constant, handling cost is directly related to the distance of the move: The longer the move distance, the greater the cost. Routing variations occur because different materials follow different flow patterns in the factory or warehouse. If these differences exist, the material handling system must be flexible enough to deal with them. Conditions along the route include floor surface condition, traffic congestion, whether a portion of the move is outdoors, whether the path is straight line or involves turns and changes in elevation, and the presence or absence of people along the path. All of these routing factors affect the design of the material transport system. Figure 9.4 is presented as a rough guide to the selection of material

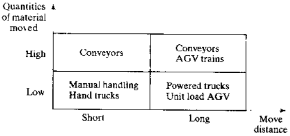



**Figure 9.4** General types of material transport equipment as a function of material quantity and distance moved.

handling equipment for some of the application characteristics we have discussed here, specifically flow rate and distance moved.

*Scheduling* relates to the timing of each individual delivery. In production as well as in many other material handling applications, the material must be picked up and delivered promptly to its proper destination to maintain peak performance and efficiency of the overall system. To the extent required by the application, the handling system must be responsive to this need for timely pickup and delivery of the items. Rush jobs increase material handling cost. Scheduling urgency is often mitigated by providing space for buffer stocks of materials at pickup and drop-off points. This allows a "float" of materials to exist in the system, thus reducing the pressure on the handling system for immediate response to a delivery request.

### 9.2.3 Plant Layout

Plant layout is an important factor in the design of a material handling system. In the case of a new facility, the design of the handling system should be considered part of the layout design. In this way, there is greater opportunity to create a layout that optimizes material flow in the building and utilizes the most appropriate type of handling system. In the case of an existing facility, there is less flexibility in the design of the handling system. The present arrangement of departments and equipment in the building usually limits the attainment of optimum flow patterns.

The plant layout design should provide the following data for use in the design of the handling system: total area of the facility and areas within specific departments in the plant, arrangement of equipment in the layout, locations where materials must be picked up (load stations) and delivered (unload stations), possible routes between these locations, and distances traveled. Opportunities to combine deliveries and potential locations in the layout where congestion might occur must be considered. Each of these factors affects flow patterns and selection of material handling equipment.

In Section 1.1, we described the conventional types of plant layout used in manufacturing: fixed-position layout, process layout, and product layout. Different material handling systems are generally required for the three layout types. In a *fixed-position layout*, the product is large and heavy and therefore remains in a single location during most of its fabrication. Heavy components and subassemblies must be moved to the product. Handling systems used for these moves in fixed-position layouts are large and often mobile. Cranes, hoists, and trucks are common in this situation.

In *process layouts*, a variety of different products are manufactured in small or medium batch sizes. The handling system must be flexible to deal with the variations. Considerable work-in-process is usually one of the characteristics of batch production, and the material handling system must be capable of accommodating this inventory. Hand trucks and forklift trucks (for moving pallet loads of parts) are commonly used in process type layouts. Factory applications of automated guided vehicle systems are growing because they represent a versatile means of handling the different load configurations in medium and low volume production. Work-in-progress is often stored on the factory floor near the next scheduled machines. More systematic ways of managing in-process inventory include automated storage systems (Section 11.4).

Finally, a *product layout* involves production of a standard or nearly identical types of product in relatively high quantities. Final assembly plants for cars, trucks, and appliances are usually designed as product layouts. The transport system that moves the product is typically characterized as fixed route, mechanized, and capable of large flow rates. It

**TABLE 9.2** Types of Material Handling Equipment Associated with Three Layout Types

| *Layout Type* | *Characteristics* | *Typical Material Handling Equipment* |
|---|---|---|
| Fixed-position | Large product size, low production rate | Cranes, hoists, industrial trucks |
| Process | Variations in product and processing, low and medium production rates | Hand trucks, forklift trucks, automated guided vehicle systems |
| Product | Limited product variety, high production rate | Conveyors for product flow, trucks to deliver components to stations. |

sometimes serves as a storage area for work-in-process to reduce effects of downtime between production areas along the line of product flow. Conveyor systems are common in product layouts. Delivery of component parts to the various assembly workstations along the flow path is accomplished by trucks and similar unit load vehicles.

Table 9.2 summarizes the characteristics of the three conventional layout types and the kinds of material handling equipment usually associated with each layout type.

## 9.3 THE 10 PRINCIPLES OF MATERIAL HANDLING

Over time certain principles have been found to be applicable in the analysis, design, and operation of material handling systems. The 10 principles of material handling[2] are listed and explained in Table 9.3. Implementing these principles will result in safer operating conditions, lower costs, and better utilization and performance of material handling systems.

The *unit load principle* stands as one of the most important and widely applied principles in material handling. In material handling, a *unit load* is simply the mass that is to be moved or otherwise handled at one time. The unit load may consist of only one part, it may consist of a container loaded with multiple parts, or it may consist of a pallet loaded with multiple containers of parts. In general, the unit load should be designed to be as large as is practical for the material handling system that will move or store it, subject to considerations of safety, convenience, and access to the materials making up the unit load. This principle is widely applied in the truck, rail, and ship industries. Palletized unit loads are collected into truck loads, which then become unit loads themselves, but larger. Then these truck loads are aggregated once again on freight trains or ships, in effect becoming even larger unit loads.

There are good reasons for using unit loads in material handling [9]: (1) Multiple items can be handled simultaneously, (2) the required number of trips is reduced, (3) loading and unloading times are reduced, and (4) product damage is decreased. These reasons result in lower cost and higher operating efficiency.

Included in the definition of unit load is the container that holds or supports the materials to be moved. To the extent possible, these containers are standardized in size and configuration to be compatible with the material handling system. Examples of containers used to form unit loads in material handling are illustrated in Figure 9.3. Of the available

[2]The 10 principles were developed by the College Industry Council on Material Handling Education (CICMHE), a Council of the Material Handling Institute (MHI), which is the educational division of the Material Handling Industry of America. MHI first published the 10 principles in 1997 They are based on two earlier versions of material handling principles published in 1968 and 1993 by CICMHE.

**TABLE 9.3** The 10 Principles of Material Handling [CICMHE]

**Principle 1.** **Planning Principle:** *All material handling should be the result of a deliberate plan where the needs, performance objectives, and functional specification of the proposed methods are completely defined at the outset.*

- The plan should be developed in consultation between the planner(s) and all who will use and benefit from the equipment to be employed.
- Success in planning large-scale material handling projects generally requires a team approach involving suppliers, consultants when appropriate, and end user specialists from management, engineering, computer and information systems, finance, and operations.
- The plan should promote concurrent engineering of product, process design, process layout, and material handling methods as opposed to independent and sequential design practices.
- The plan should reflect the strategic objectives of the organization as well as the more immediate needs.

**Principle 2.** **Standardization Principle:** *Material handling methods, equipment, controls, and software should be standardized within the limits of achieving overall performance objectives and without sacrificing needed flexibility, modularity, and throughput.*

- Standardization means less variety and customization in the methods and equipment employed.
- Standardization applies to sizes of containers and other load forming components as well as operating procedures and equipment.
- The planner should select methods and equipment that can perform a variety of tasks under a variety of operating conditions and in anticipation of changing future requirements.
- Standardization, flexibility, and modularity must not be incompatible.

**Principle 3.** **Work Principle:** *Material handling work should be minimized without sacrificing productivity or the level of service required of the operation.*

- The measure of material handling work is flow rate (volume, weight, or count per unit of time) multiplied by distance moved.
- Consider each pickup and set-down, or placing material in and out of storage, as distinct moves and components of the distance moved.
- Simplifying processes by reducing, combining, shortening, or eliminating unnecessary moves will reduce work.
- Where possible, gravity should be used to move materials or to assist in their movement while respecting consideration of safety and the potential for product damage.
- The Work Principle applies universally, from mechanized material handling in a factory to over-the-road trucking.
- The Work Principle is implemented best by appropriate layout planning: locating the production equipment into a physical arrangement corresponding to the flow of work. This arrangement tends to minimize the distances that must be traveled by the materials being processed.

**Principle 4.** **Ergonomic Principle:** *Human capabilities and limitations must be recognized and respected in the design of material handling tasks and equipment to ensure safe and effective operations.*

- Ergonomics is the science that seeks to adapt work or working conditions to suit the abilities of the worker.
- The material handling workplace and the equipment must be designed so they are safe for people.
- The ergonomic principle embraces both physical and mental tasks.
- Equipment should be selected that eliminates repetitive and strenuous manual labor and that effectively interacts with human operators and users.

**Principle 5.** **Unit Load Principle:** *Unit loads shall be appropriately sized and configured in a way which achieves the material flow and inventory objectives at each stage in the supply chain.*

- A unit load is one that can be stored or moved as a single entity at one time, such as a pallet, container, or tote, regardless of the number of individual items that make up the load.
- Less effort and work are required to collect and move many individual items as a single load than to move many items one at a time.
- Large unit loads are common both pre- and postmanufacturing in the form of raw materials and finished goods.
- Smaller unit loads are consistent with manufacturing strategies that embrace operating objectives such as flexibility, continuous flow and just-in-time delivery. Smaller unit loads (as few as one item) yield less in-process inventory and shorter item throughput times.

*Continued on next page*

**TABLE 9.3** *Continued*

**Principle 6.** **Space Utilization Principle:** *Effective and efficient use must be made of all available space.*
- Space in material handling is three-dimensional and therefore is counted as cubic space.
- In storage areas, the objective of maximizing storage density must be balanced against accessibility and selectivity.
- When transporting loads within a facility, the use of overhead space should be considered as an option. Use of overhead material handling systems saves valuable floor space for productive purposes.

**Principle 7.** **System Principle:** *Material movement and storage activities should be fully integrated to form a coordinated, operational system that spans receiving, inspection, storage, production, assembly, packaging, unitizing, order selection, shipping, transportation, and the handling of returns.*
- Systems integration should encompass the entire supply chain, including reverse logistics. It should include suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and customers.
- Inventory levels should be minimized at all stages of production and distribution while respecting considerations of process variability and customer service.
- Information flow and physical material flow should be integrated and treated as concurrent activities.
- Methods should be provided for easily identifying materials and products, for determining their location and status within facilities and within the supply chain, and for controlling their movement.

**Principle 8.** **Automation Principle:** *Material handling operations should be mechanized and/or automated where feasible to improve operational efficiency, increase responsiveness, improve consistency and predictability, decrease operating costs, and eliminate repetitive or potentially unsafe manual labor.*
- In any project in which automation is being considered, pre-existing processes and methods should be simplified and/or re-engineered before any efforts to install mechanized or automated systems. Such analysis may lead to elimination of unnecessary steps in the method. If the method can be sufficiently simplified, it may not be necessary to automate the process.
- Items that are expected to be handled automatically must have standard shapes and/or features that permit mechanized and/or automated handling.
- Interface issues are critical to successful automation, including equipment-to-equipment, equipment-to-load, equipment-to-operator, and in-control communications.
- Computerized material handling systems should be considered where appropriate for effective integration of material flow and information management.

**Principle 9.** **Environmental Principle:** *Environmental impact and energy consumption should be considered as criteria when designing or selecting alternative equipment and material handling systems.*
- Environmental consciousness stems from a desire not to waste natural resources and to predict and eliminate the possible negative effects of our daily actions on the environment.
- Containers, pallets, and other products used to form and protect unit loads should be designed for reusability when possible and/or biodegradability after disposal.
- Materials specified as hazardous have special needs with regard to spill protection, combustibility, and other risks.

**Principle 10.** **Life Cycle Cost Principle:** *A thorough economic analysis should account for the entire life cycle of all material handling equipment and resulting systems.*
- Life cycle costs include all cash flows that occur between the time the first dollar is spent to plan a new material handling method or piece of equipment until that method and/or equipment is totally replaced.
- Life cycle costs include capital investment, installation, setup and equipment programming, training, system testing and acceptance, operating (labor, utilities, etc.), maintenance and repair, reuse value, and ultimate disposal.
- A plan for preventive and predictive maintenance should be prepared for the equipment, and the estimated cost of maintenance and spare parts should be included in the economic analysis.
- A long-range plan for replacement of the equipment when it becomes obsolete should be prepared.
- Although measurable cost is a primary factor, it is certainly not the *only factor* in selecting among alternatives. Other factors of a strategic nature to the organization and that form the basis for competition in the market place should be considered and quantified whenever possible.

**TABLE 9.4** Standard Pallet Sizes Commonly Used in Factories and Warehouses

| *Depth = x Dimension* | *Width = y Dimension* |
|---|---|
| 800 mm (32 in) | 1000 mm (40 in) |
| 900 mm (36 in) | 1200 mm (48 in) |
| 1000 mm (40 in) | 1200 mm (48 in) |
| 1060 mm (42 in) | 1060 mm (42 in) |
| 1200 mm (48 in) | 1200 mm (48 in) |

*Sources:* [MHHB], IT&W .

containers, pallets are probably the most widely used, owing to their versatility, low cost, and compatibility with various types of material handling equipment. Most factories and warehouses use forklift trucks to move materials on pallets. Table 9.4 lists some of the most popular standard pallet sizes in use today. We make use of these standard pallet sizes in some of our analysis of automated storage/retrieval systems in Chapter 11.

## REFERENCES


[1] EASTMAN, R. M., *Materials Handling*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1987.

[2] KULWIEC, R. A., *Basics of Material Handling*, Material Handling Institute, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1981.

[3] KULWIEC, R. A., Editor, *Materials Handling Handbook* 2nd Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1985.

[4] MALONEY, D., "Get a Load of These Trends in Pallets," *Modern Materials Handling*, August 1999, pp 63-65.

[5] Material Handling Industry, *1998-1999 Annual Report*, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1999.

[6] MULCAHY, D. E., *Materials Handling Handbook*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1999.

[7] MUTHER, R., AND K. HAGANAS, *Systematic Handling Analysis*, Management and Industrial Research Publications, Kansas City, Missouri, 1969.

[8] *The Ten Principles of Material Handling*, College Industry Council on Material Handling Education, Material Handling Institute, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1997.

[9] TOMPKINS, J. A., J. A. WHITE, Y. A. BOZER, E. H. FRAZELLE, J. M. TANCHOCO, AND J. TREVINO, *Facilities Planning*, Second Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1996.

[10] WITT, C. E., "Palletizing Unit Loads: Many Options," *Material Handling Engineering*, January 1999, pp 99-106.

[11] ZOLLINGER, H. A., "Methodology to Concept Horizontal Transportation Problem Solutions," paper presented at the *MHI 1994 International Research Colloquium*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 1994.

chapter 10

# Material Transport Systems

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



In this chapter we examine the five categories of material transport equipment commonly used to move parts and other materials in manufacturing and warehouse facilities: (1) industrial trucks, (2) automated guided vehicles, (3) monorails and other rail guided vehicles, (4) conveyors, and (5) cranes and hoists. Table 10.1 summarizes the principal features and kinds of applications for each equipment category. In Section 10.6, we consider quantitative techniques by which material transport systems consisting of this equipment can be analyzed.

**TABLE 10.1** Summary of Features and Applications of Five Categories of Material Handling Equipment

| *Material Handling Equipment* | *Features* | *Typical Applications* |
|---|---|---|
| Industrial trucks, manual | Low cost<br>Low rate of deliveries/hr | Moving light loads in a factory |
| Industrial trucks, powered | Medium cost | Movement of pallet loads and palletized containers in a factory or warehouse |
| Automated guided vehicle systems | High cost<br>Battery-powered vehicles<br>Flexible routing<br>Nonobstructive pathways | Moving pallet loads in factory or warehouse<br>Moving work-in-process along variable routes in low and medium production |
| Monorails and other rail guided vehicles | High cost<br>Flexible routing<br>On-the-floor or overhead types | Moving single assemblies, products, or pallet loads along variable routes in factory or warehouse<br>Moving large quantities of items over fixed routes in a factory or warehouse |
| Conveyors, powered | Great variety of equipment<br>In-floor, on-the-floor, or overhead<br>Mechanical power to move loads resides in pathway | Moving products along a manual assembly line<br>Sortation of items in a distribution center |
| Cranes and hoists | Lift capacities ranging up to more than 100 tons | Moving large, heavy items in factories, mills, warehouses, etc. |

## 10.1 INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS

Industrial trucks are divided into two categories: nonpowered and powered. The nonpowered types are often referred to as *hand trucks* because they are pushed or pulled by human workers. Quantities of material moved and distances are relatively low when this type of equipment is used to transport materials. Hand trucks are classified as either two-wheel or multiple-wheel. Two-wheel hand trucks, Figure 10.1(a), are generally easier to manipulate

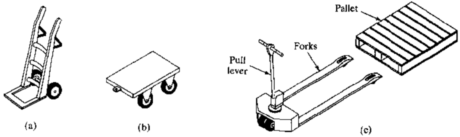



**Figure 10.1** Examples of non-powered industrial trucks (hand trucks): (a) two-wheel hand truck, (b) four-wheel dolly, and (c) hand-operated low-lift pallet truck.

by the worker but are limited to lighter loads. Multiple-wheeled hand trucks are available in several types and sizes. Two common types are dollies and pallet trucks. *Dollies* are simple frames or platforms as shown in Figure 10.1(b). Various wheel configurations are possible, including fixed wheels and caster-type wheels. *Pallet trucks*, Figure 10.1(c), have two forks that can be inserted through the openings in a pallet. A lift mechanism is actuated by the worker to lift and lower the pallet off the ground using small diameter wheels near the end of the forks. In operation, the worker inserts the forks into the pallet, elevates the load, pulls the truck to its destination, then lowers the pallet, and removes the forks.

Powered trucks are self-propelled to relieve the worker of manually having to move the truck. Three common types are used in factories and warehouses: (a) walkie trucks, (b) forklift rider trucks, and (c) towing tractors. *Walkie trucks*, Figure 10.2(a), are battery-powered vehicles equipped with wheeled forks for insertion into pallet openings but with no provision for a worker to ride on the vehicle. The truck is steered by a worker using a control handle at the front of the vehicle. The forward speed of a walkie truck is limited to around 3 mi/hr (5 km/hr), which is about equal to the normal walking speed of a human.

*Forklift rider trucks*, Figure 10.2(b), are distinguished from walkie trucks by the presence of a modest cab for the worker to sit in and drive the vehicle. Forklift trucks range in load carrying capacity from about 450 kg (1,000 lb) up to more than 4,500 kg (10,000 lb). The various applications for which forklift trucks are used have resulted in a variety of vehicle features and configurations. These include trucks with high reach capacities for accessing pallet loads on high rack systems and trucks capable of operating in the narrow

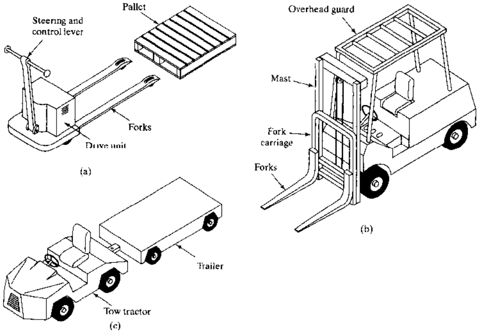



**Figure 10.2** Three principal types of powered trucks: (a) walkie truck, (b) fork lift truck, and (c) towing tractor.

aisles of high-density storage racks. Power sources for forklift trucks are either internal combustion engines (gasoline, liquefied petroleum gas, or compressed natural gas) or electric motors (using on-board batteries).

Industrial *towing tractors*, Figure 10.2(c), are designed to pull one or more trailing carts over the relatively smooth surfaces found in factories and warehouses. They are generally used for moving large amounts of materials between major collection and distribution areas. The runs between origination and destination points are usually fairly long. Power is supplied either by electrical motor (battery-powered) or internal combustion engine. Tow tractors also find significant applications in air transport operations for moving baggage and air freight in airports.

## 10.2 AUTOMATED GUIDED VEHICLE SYSTEMS

An automated guided vehicle system (AGVS) is a material handling system that uses independently operated, self-propelled vehicles guided along defined pathways. The vehicles are powered by on-board batteries that allow many hours of operation (8–16 hr is typical) between recharging. A distinguishing feature of an AGVS, compared to rail guided vehicle systems and most conveyor systems, is that the pathways are unobtrusive. An AGVS is appropriate where different materials are moved from various load points to various unload points. An AGVS is therefore suitable for automating material handling in batch production and mixed model production. The first AGV was operated in 1954 (Historical Note 10.1)

**Historical Note 10.1** Automated guided vehicles [2], [6]

The first automated guided vehicle was developed in 1954 by A. M. Barrett, Jr. who used an overhead wire to guide a modified towing truck pulling a trailer in a grocery warehouse. Commercial AGVs were subsequently introduced by Barrett.

Around 1973, Volvo, the Swedish carmaker, developed automated guided vehicles to serve as assembly platforms for moving car bodies through its final assembly plants. The primary purpose of Volvo's development project was not to market the AGV commercially, but rather to advance a new method of assembly as an alternative to the traditional assembly line. The new assembly system emphasized teamwork, job enlargement, and asynchronous movement of products through the plant. However, by developing the guided moving platforms in assembly, the company had introduced a new type of AGV, the unit load vehicle. Volvo later entered the AGVS business and marketed their unit load AGVs to other car companies.

Advances in AGVS technology have been motivated largely by rapid developments in electronics and computer technologies. By exploiting these technologies, the AGVS industry has made improvements and refinements in vehicle guidance and navigation, on-board vehicle intelligence and control, overall system management, and safety.

### 10.2.1 Types of Vehicles and AGVS Applications

Automated guided vehicles can be divided into the following three categories: (1) driverless trains, (2) pallet trucks, and (3) unit load carriers, illustrated in Figure 10.3. A *driverless train* consists of a towing vehicle (which is the AGV) that pulls one or more trailers to form a train, as in Figure 10.3(a). It was the first type of AGVS to be introduced and is still widely used today. A common application is moving heavy payloads over large distances

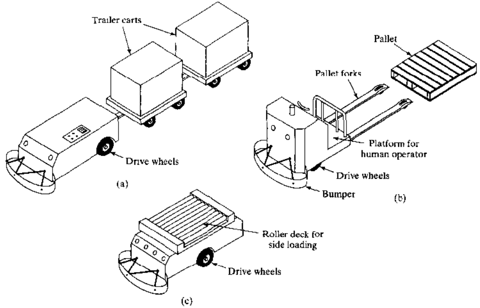



**Figure 10.3** Three types of automated guided vehicles: (a) driverless automated guided train, (b) AGV pallet truck, and (c) unit load carrier.

in warehouses or factories with or without intermediate pickup and drop-off points along the route. For trains consisting of five to ten trailers, this is an efficient transport system.

*Automated guided pallet trucks*, Figure 10.3(b), are used to move palletized loads along predetermined routes. In the typical application the vehicle is backed into the loaded pallet by a human worker who steers the truck and uses its forks to elevate the load slightly. Then the worker drives the pallet truck to the guidepath, programs its destination, and the vehicle proceeds automatically to the destination for unloading. The capacity of an AGVS pallet truck ranges up to several thousand kilograms, and some trucks are capable of handling two pallets rather than one. A more recent introduction related to the pallet truck is the fork lift AGV. This vehicle can achieve significant vertical movement of its forks to reach loads on racks and shelves.

*AGV unit load carriers* are used to move unit loads from one station to another. They are often equipped for automatic loading and unloading of pallets or tote pans by means of powered rollers, moving belts, mechanized lift platforms, or other devices built into the vehicle deck. A typical unit load AGV is illustrated in Figure 10.3(c). Variations of unit load carriers include light load AGVs and assembly line AGVs. The light load AGV is a relatively small vehicle with corresponding light load capacity (typically 250 kg or less). It does not require the same large aisle width as a conventional AGV. Light load guided vehicles are designed to move small loads (single parts, small baskets or tote pans of parts, etc.) through plants of limited size engaged in light manufacturing. An assembly line AGV is designed to carry a partially completed subassembly through a sequence of assembly workstations to build the product.

Automated guided vehicle systems are used in a growing number and variety of applications. The applications tend to parallel the vehicle types previously described. We have already described *driverless train operations*, which involve the movement of large quantities of material over relatively large distances.

A second application area is in *storage and distribution*. Unit load carriers and pallet trucks are typically used in these applications, which involve movement of material in unit loads. The applications often interface the AGVS with some other automated handling or storage system, such as an automated storage/retrieval system (AS/RS, Section 11.4.1) in a distribution center. The AGVS delivers incoming unit loads contained on pallets from the receiving dock to the AS/RS, which places the items into storage, and the AS/RS retrieves individual pallet loads from storage and transfers them to vehicles for delivery to the shipping dock. Storage/distribution operations also include light manufacturing and assembly plants in which work-in-process is stored in a central storage area and distributed to individual workstations for processing. Electronics assembly is an example of these kinds of applications. Components are "kitted" at the storage area and delivered in tote pans or trays by the guided vehicles to the assembly workstations in the plant. Light load AGVs are the appropriate vehicles in these applications.

AGV systems are used in *assembly line applications*, based on a trend that began in Europe. Unit load carriers and light load guided vehicles are used in these lines. In the usual application, the production rate is relatively low (the product spending perhaps 4–10 min per station), and there are several different product models made on the line, each requiring a different processing time. Workstations are generally arranged in parallel to allow the line to deal with differences in assembly cycle time for different products. Between stations, components are kitted and placed on the vehicle for the assembly operations to be performed at the next station. The assembly tasks are usually performed with the work unit on-board the vehicle, thus avoiding the extra time required for unloading and reloading.

Another application area for AGVS technology is *flexible manufacturing systems* (FMSs, Chapter 16). In the typical operation, starting workparts are placed onto pallet fixtures by human workers in a staging area, and the AGVs deliver the parts to the individual workstations in the system. When the AGV arrives at the assigned station, the pallet is transferred from the vehicle platform to the station (such as the worktable of a machine tool) for processing. At the completion of processing a vehicle returns to pick up the work and transport it to the next assigned station. An AGVS provides a versatile material handling system to complement the flexibility of the FMS.

Other applications of automated guided vehicle systems include *office mail delivery* and *hospital material transport*. Hospital guided vehicles transport meal trays, linen, medical and laboratory supplies, and other materials between various departments in the building. These transports typically require movement of vehicles between different floors in the hospital, and hospital AGV systems have the capability to summon and use elevators for this purpose.

AGVS technology is still developing, and the industry is continually working to design new systems to respond to new application requirements. An interesting example that combines two technologies involves the use of a robotic manipulator mounted on an automated guided vehicle to provide a mobile robot for performing complex handling tasks at various locations in a plant. These robot-vehicles have potential applications in clean rooms in the semiconductor industry.

### 10.2.2 Vehicle Guidance Technology

The guidance system is the method by which AGVS pathways are defined and vehicles are controlled to follow the pathways. In this section, we discuss three technologies that are used in commercial systems for vehicle guidance: (1) imbedded guide wires, (2) paint strips, and (3) self-guided vehicles.

*Imbedded Guide Wires and Paint Strips.* In the *imbedded guide wire* method, electrical wires are placed in a small channel cut into the surface of the floor. The channel is typically 3–12 mm (1/8–1/2 in) wide and 13–26 mm (1/2–1.0 in) deep. After the guide wire is installed, the channel is filled with cement to eliminate the discontinuity in the floor surface. The guide wire is connected to a frequency generator, which emits a low-voltage, low-current signal with a frequency in the range 1–15 kHz. This induces a magnetic field along the pathway that can be followed by sensors on-board each vehicle. The operation of a typical system is illustrated in Figure 10.4. Two sensors (coils) are mounted on the vehicle on either side of the guide wire. When the vehicle is located such that the guide wire is directly between the two coils, the intensity of the magnetic field measured by each coil will be equal. If the vehicle strays to one side or the other, or if the guide wire path changes direction, the magnetic field intensity at the two sensors will be different. This difference is used to control the steering motor, which makes the required changes in vehicle direction to equalize the two sensor signals, thereby tracking the guide wire.

A typical AGVS layout contains multiple loops, branches, side tracks, and spurs, as well as pickup and drop-off stations. The most appropriate route must be selected from the alternative pathways available to a vehicle in its movement to a specified destination in the system. When a vehicle approaches a branching point where the guide path forks into two (or more) pathways, a means of deciding which path to take must be provided. The two principal methods of making this decision in commercial wire guided systems are: (1) the frequency select method and (2) the path switch select method. In the *frequency select method*, the guide wires leading into the two separate paths at the switch have different frequen-

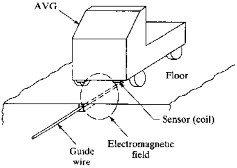



**Figure 10.4** Operation of the on-board sensor system that uses two coils to track the magnetic field in the guide wire.

cies. As the vehicle enters the switch, it reads an identification code on the floor to determine its location. Depending on its programmed destination, the vehicle selects the correct guidepath by following only one of the frequencies. This method requires a separate frequency generator for each different frequency used in the guidepath layout. The *path switch select method* operates with a single frequency throughout the guidepath layout. To control the path of a vehicle at a switch, the power is turned off in all other branches except the one that the vehicle is to travel on. To accomplish routing by the path switch select method, the guidepath layout is divided into blocks that are electrically insulated from each other. The blocks can be turned on and off either by the vehicles themselves or by a central control computer.

When *paint strips* are used to define the pathway, the vehicle uses an optical sensor system capable of tracking the paint. The strips can be taped, sprayed, or painted on the floor. One system uses a 1-in-wide paint strip containing fluorescent particles that reflect an ultraviolet (UV) light source from the vehicle. An on-board sensor detects the reflected light in the strip and controls the steering mechanism to follow it. Paint strip guidance is useful in environments where electrical noise renders the guide wire system unreliable or when the installation of guide wires in the floor surface is not practical. One problem with this guidance method is that the paint strip deteriorates with time. It must be kept clean and periodically repainted.

*Self-Guided Vehicles.* *Self-guided vehicles* (SGVs) represent the latest AGVS guidance technology. Unlike the previous two guidance methods, SGVs operate without continuously defined pathways. Instead, they use a combination of dead reckoning and beacons located throughout the plant, which can be identified by on-board sensors. *Dead reckoning* refers to the capability of a vehicle to follow a given route in the absence of a defined pathway in the floor. Movement of the vehicle along the route is accomplished by computing the required number of wheel rotations in a sequence of specified steering angles. The computations are performed by the vehicle's on-board computer. As one would expect, positioning accuracy of dead reckoning decreases with increasing distance. Accordingly, the location of the self-guided vehicle must be periodically verified by comparing the calculated position with one or more known positions. These known positions are established using beacons located strategically throughout the plant. There are various types of beacons used in commercial SGV systems. One system uses bar-coded beacons mounted along the aisles. These beacons can be sensed by a rotating laser scanner on the vehicle. Based on the positions of the beacons, the on-board navigation computer uses triangulation to update the positions calculated by dead reckoning. Another guidance system uses magnetic beacons imbedded in the plant floor along the pathway. Dead reckoning is used to move the vehicle between beacons, and the actual locations of the beacons provide data to update the computer's dead reckoning map.

It should be noted that dead reckoning can be used by AGV systems that are normally guided by in-floor guide wires or paint strips. This capability allows the vehicle to cross steel plates in the factory floor where guide wires cannot be installed or to depart from the guidepath for positioning at a load/unload station. At the completion of the dead reckoning maneuver, the vehicle is programmed to return to the guidepath to resume normal guidance control.

The advantage of self-guided vehicle technology over fixed pathways (guide wires and paint strips) is its flexibility. The SGV pathways are defined in software. The path network can be changed by entering the required data into the navigation computer. New docking points can be defined. The pathway network can be expanded by installing new beacons. These changes can be made quickly and without major alterations to the plant facility.

### 10.2.3 Vehicle Management and Safety

For the AGVS to operate efficiently, the vehicles must be well managed. Delivery tasks must be allocated to vehicles to minimize waiting times at load/unload stations. Traffic congestion in the guidepath network must be minimized. And the AGVS must be operated safely. In this section we consider these issues.

*Traffic Control.* The purpose of traffic control in an automated guided vehicle system is to minimize interference between vehicles and to prevent collisions. Two methods of traffic control used in commercial AGV systems are: (1) on-board vehicle sensing and (2) zone control. The two techniques are often used in combination. *On-board vehicle sensing*, also called *forward sensing*, involves the use of one or more sensors on each vehicle to detect the presence of other vehicles and obstacles ahead on the guide path. Sensor technologies include optical and ultrasonic devices. When the on-board sensor detects an obstacle in front of it, the vehicle stops. When the obstacle is removed, the vehicle proceeds. If the sensor system is 100% effective, collisions between vehicles are avoided. The effectiveness of forward sensing is limited by the capability of the sensor to detect obstacles that are in front of it on the guide path. These systems are most effective on straight pathways. They are less effective at turns and convergence points where forward vehicles may not be directly in front of the sensor.

In *zone control*, the AGVS layout is divided into separate zones, and the operating rule is that no vehicle is permitted to enter a zone if that zone is already occupied by another vehicle. The length of a zone is at least sufficient to hold one vehicle plus allowances for safety and other considerations. Other considerations include number of vehicles in the system, size and complexity of the layout, and the objective of minimizing the number of separate zone controls. For these reasons, the zones are normally much longer than a vehicle length. Zone control is illustrated in Figure 10.5 in its simplest form. When one vehicle occupies a given zone, any trailing vehicle is not allowed to enter that zone. The leading vehicle must proceed into the next zone before the trailing vehicle can occupy the current zone. By controlling the forward movement of vehicles in the separate zones, collisions are prevented, and traffic in the overall system is controlled.

One means of implementing zone control is to use separate control units mounted along the guide path. When a vehicle enters a given zone, it activates the block in that zone to prevent any trailing vehicle from moving forward and colliding with the present vehicle. As the present vehicle moves into the next (downstream) zone, it activates the block

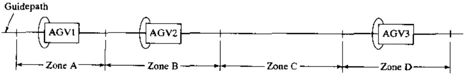



**Figure 10.5** Zone control to implement blocking system. Zones A, B, and D are blocked. Zone C is free. Vehicle 2 is blocked from entering Zone A by Vehicle 1. Vehicle 3 is free to enter Zone C.

in that zone and deactivates the block in the previous zone. In effect, zones are turned on and off to control vehicle movement by the blocking system. Another method to implement zone control is to use a central computer, which monitors the location of each vehicle and attempts to optimize the movement of all vehicles in the system.

*Vehicle Dispatching.* For an AGVS to serve its function, vehicles must be dispatched in a timely and efficient manner to the points in the system where they are needed. Several methods are used in AGV systems to dispatch vehicles: (1) on-board control panel, (2) remote call stations, and (3) central computer control. These dispatching methods are generally used in combination to maximize responsiveness and efficiency.

Each guided vehicle is equipped with some form of *on-board control panel* for the purpose of manual vehicle control, vehicle programming, and other functions. Most commercial vehicles can be dispatched by means of this control panel to a given station in the AGVS layout. Dispatching with an on-board control panel represents the lowest level of sophistication among the possible methods. It provides the AGVS with flexibility and timeliness in coping with changes and variations in delivery requirements.

*Remote call stations* represent another method for an AGVS to satisfy delivery requirements. The simplest call station is a press button mounted at the load/unload station. This transmits a hailing signal for any available vehicle in the neighborhood to dock at the station and either pick up or drop off a load. The on-board control panel might then be used to dispatch the vehicle to the desired destination point. More sophisticated remote call stations permit the vehicle's destination to be programmed at the same time the vehicle is called. This is a more-automated dispatching method that is useful in AGV systems capable of automatic loading and unloading operations.

In a large factory or warehouse involving a high degree of automation, the AGVS servicing the facility must also be highly automated to achieve efficient operation of the entire production-storage-handling system. *Central computer control* is used to accomplish automatic dispatching of vehicles according to a preplanned schedule of pickups and deliveries in the layout and/or in response to calls from the various load/unload stations. In this dispatching method, the central computer issues commands to the vehicles in the system concerning their destinations and the operations they must perform. To accomplish the dispatching function, the central computer must possess current information on the location of each vehicle in the system so that it can make appropriate decisions about which vehicles to dispatch to what locations. Hence, the vehicles must continually communicate their whereabouts to the central controller. Radio frequency (RF) is commonly used to achieve the required communication links.

A useful tool in systems management is a performance report for each shift (or other appropriate time period) of AGVS operation. Periodic reporting of system performance provides summary information about uptime and downtime, number of deliveries made during a shift, and other data about each station and each vehicle in the system. Reports containing this type of information permit managers to compare operations from shift to shift and month to month to identify differences and trends and to maintain a high level of system performance.

*Safety.* The safety of humans located along the pathway is an important objective in AGVS design. An inherent safety feature of an AGV is that its traveling speed is slower than the normal walking pace of a human. This minimizes the danger of overtaking a human walking along the guide path in front of the vehicle.

In addition, AGVs are usually provided with several other features specifically for safety reasons. A safety feature included in most guidance systems is automatic stopping of the vehicle if it strays more than a short distance, typically 50–150 mm (2–6 in), from the guide path. The distance is referred to as the vehicle's *acquisition distance*. This automatic stopping feature prevents a vehicle from running wild in the building. Alternatively, in the event that the vehicle is off the guidepath (e.g., for loading), its sensor system is capable of locking onto the guide path when the vehicle is moved to within the acquisition distance.

Another safety device is an obstacle detection sensor located on each vehicle. This is the same on-board sensor used for traffic control. The sensor can detect obstacles along the forward path, including humans. The vehicles are programmed either to stop when an obstacle is sensed ahead or to slow down. The reason for slowing down is that the sensed object may be located off to the side of the vehicle path or directly ahead but beyond a turn in the guide path, or the obstacle may be a person who will move out of the way as the AGV approaches. In any of these cases, the vehicle is permitted to proceed at a slower (safer) speed until it has passed the obstacle. The disadvantage of programming a vehicle to stop when it encounters an obstacle is that this delays the delivery and degrades system performance.

A safety device included on virtually all commercial AGVs is an emergency bumper. This bumper is prominent in several of our figures. The bumper surrounds the front of the vehicle and protrudes ahead of it by a distance of 300 mm (12 in) or more. When the bumper makes contact with an object, the vehicle is programmed to brake immediately. Depending on the speed of the vehicle, its load, and other conditions, the braking distance will vary from several inches to several feet. Most vehicles are programmed to require manual restarting after an obstacle has been encountered by the emergency bumper. Other safety devices on a typical vehicle include warning lights (blinking or rotating lights) and/or warning bells, which alert humans that the vehicle is present.

## 10.3 MONORAILS AND OTHER RAIL GUIDED VEHICLES

The third category of material transport equipment consists of motorized vehicles that are guided by a fixed rail system. The rail system consists of either one rail (called a *monorail*) or two parallel rails. Monorails in factories and warehouses are typically suspended overhead from the ceiling. In rail guided vehicle systems using parallel fixed rails, the tracks generally protrude up from the floor. In either case, the presence of a fixed rail pathway distinguishes these systems from automated guided vehicle systems. As with AGVs, the vehicles operate asynchronously and are driven by an on-board electric motor. But unlike AGVs, which are powered by their own on-board batteries, rail guided vehicles pick up electrical power from an electrified rail (similar to an urban rapid transit rail system). This relieves the vehicle from periodic recharging of its battery; however, the electrified rail system introduces a safety hazard not present in an AGVS.

Routing variations are possible in rail guided vehicle systems through the use of switches, turntables, and other specialized track sections. This permits different loads to travel different routes, similar to an AGVS. Rail guided systems are generally considered to be more versatile than conveyor systems but less versatile than automated guided vehicle systems. One of the original applications of nonpowered monorails was in the meat processing industry before 1900. For dressing and cleaning, the slaughtered animals were hung from meat hooks attached to overhead monorail trolleys. The trolleys were moved through the different departments of the plant manually by the workers. It is likely that Henry Ford got the idea for the assembly line from observing these meat packing operations. Today, the automotive industry makes considerable use of electrified overhead monorails to move large components and subassemblies in its manufacturing operations.

## 10.4 CONVEYOR SYSTEMS

Conveyors are used when material must be moved in relatively large quantities between specific locations over a fixed path. The fixed path is implemented by a track system, which may be in-the-floor, above-the-floor, or overhead. Conveyors divide into two basic categories: (1) powered and (2) non-powered. In *powered conveyors*, the power mechanism is contained in the fixed path, using chains, belts, rotating rolls, or other devices to propel loads along the path. Powered conveyors are commonly used in automated material transport systems in manufacturing plants, warehouses, and distribution centers. In *non-powered conveyors*, materials are moved either manually by human workers who push the loads along the fixed path or by gravity from one elevation to a lower elevation.

### 10.4.1 Types of Conveyors

A variety of conveyor equipment is commercially available. In the following paragraphs, we describe the major types of powered conveyors, organized according to the type of mechanical power provided in the fixed path.

*Roller and Skate Wheel Conveyors.* These conveyors have rolls or wheels on which the loads ride. Loads must possess a flat bottom surface of sufficient area to span several adjacent rollers. Pallets, tote pans, or cartons serve this purpose well. The two main entries in this category are roller conveyors and skate wheel conveyors, pictured in Figure 10.6.

In *roller conveyors*, the pathway consists of a series of tubes (rollers) that are perpendicular to the direction of travel, as in Figure 10.6(a). The rollers are contained in a fixed frame that elevates the pathway above floor level from several inches to several feet. Flat pallets or tote pans carrying unit loads are moved forward as the rollers rotate. Roller conveyors can either be powered or non-powered. Powered roller conveyors are driven

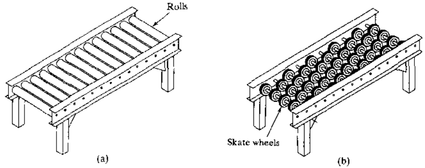



**Figure 10.6** (a) Roller conveyor and (b) skate wheel conveyor.

by belts or chains. Non-powered roller conveyors are often driven by gravity so that the pathway has a downward slope sufficient to overcome rolling friction. Roller conveyors are used in a wide variety of applications, including manufacturing, assembly, packaging, sortation, and distribution.

*Skate-wheel conveyors* are similar in operation to roller conveyors. Instead of rollers, they use skate wheels rotating on shafts connected to a frame to roll pallets or tote pans or other containers along the pathway, as in Figure 10.6(b). This provides the skate wheel conveyor with a lighter weight construction than the roller conveyor. Applications of skate-wheel conveyors are similar to those of roller conveyors, except that the loads must generally be lighter since the contacts between the loads and the conveyor are much more concentrated. Because of their light weight, skate wheel conveyors are sometimes built as portable equipment that can be used for loading and unloading truck trailers at shipping and receiving docks at factories and warehouses.

***Belt Conveyors.*** *Belt conveyors* consist of a continuous loop: Half its length is used for delivering materials, and the other half is the return run, as in Figure 10.7. The belt is made of reinforced elastomer (rubber), so that it possesses high flexibility but low extensibility. At one end of the conveyor is a drive roll that powers the belt. The flexible belt is supported by a frame that has rollers or support sliders along its forward loop. Belt conveyors are available in two common forms: (1) flat belts for pallets, individual parts, or even certain types of bulk materials; and (2) troughed belts for bulk materials. Materials placed on the belt surface travel along the moving pathway. In the case of troughed belt conveyors, the rollers and supports give the flexible belt a V-shape on the forward (delivery) loop to contain bulk materials such as coal, gravel, grain, or similar particulate materials.

***Conveyors Driven by Chains and Cables.*** The conveyors in this group are driven by a powered chain or cable that forms an endless loop. In some cases, the loop forms a straight line, with a pulley at each end. This is usually in an over-and-under configuration. In other conveyors, the loop has a more-complex path, with more than two pulleys needed to define the shape of the path. We discuss the following conveyors in this category: (1) chain, (2) slat, (3) in-floor towline, (4) overhead trolley, and (5) power-and-free overhead trolley.

*Chain conveyors* consist of chain loops in an over-and-under configuration around powered sprockets at the ends of the pathway. One or more chains operating in parallel may

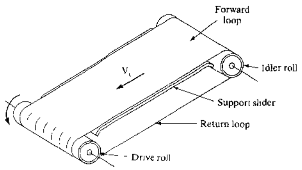



**Figure 10.7** Belt (flat) conveyor (support frame not shown).

be used to form the conveyor. The chains travel along channels in the floor that provide support for the flexible chain sections. Either the chains slide along the channel or they ride on rollers in the channel. The loads are generally dragged along the pathway using bars that project up from the moving chain.

The *slat conveyor* uses individual platforms, called slats, connected to a continuously moving chain. Although the drive mechanism is a powered chain, it operates much like a belt conveyor. Loads are placed on the slats and are transported along with them. Straight line flows are common in slat conveyor systems. However, because of the chain drive and the capability to alter the chain direction using sprockets, the conveyor pathway can have turns in its continuous loop.

Another variation of the chain conveyor is the *in-floor towline conveyor*. These conveyors make use of four-wheel carts powered by moving chains or cables located in trenches in the floor, as in Figure 10.8. The chain or cable is called a towline: hence, the name of the conveyor. Pathways for the conveyor system are defined by the trench and cable, and the cable is driven as a powered pulley system. Switching between powered pathways is possible in a towline system to achieve flexibility in routing. The carts use steel pins that project below floor level into the trench to engage the chain for towing. (Gripper devices are substituted for pins when cable is used as the pulley system, similar to the San Francisco trolley.) The pin can be pulled out of the chain (or the gripper releases the cable) to disengage the cart for loading, unloading, switching, accumulation of parts, and manually pushing a cart off the main pathway. Towline conveyor systems are used in manufacturing plants and warehouses.

All of the preceding chain and cable drive conveyors operate at floor level or slightly above. Chain-driven conveyors can also be designed to operate overhead, suspended from the ceiling of the facility so as not to consume floorspace. The most common types are overhead trolley conveyors. These are available either as constant speed (synchronous) or as power-and-free (asynchronous) systems.

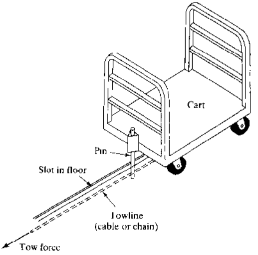



**Figure 10.8** In-floor towline conveyor.

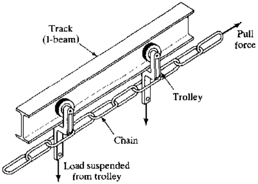



**Figure 10.9** Overhead trolley conveyor.

A *trolley* in material handling is a wheeled carriage running on an overhead rail from which loads can be suspended. An *overhead trolley conveyor*, Figure 10.9, consists of multiple trolleys, usually equally spaced along a fixed track. The trolleys are connected together and moved along the track by means of a chain or cable that forms a complete loop. Suspended from the trolleys are hooks, baskets, or other receptacles to carry loads. The chain (or cable) is attached to a drive wheel that supplies power to move the chain at a constant velocity. The conveyor path is determined by the configuration of the track system, which has turns and possible changes in elevation. Overhead trolley conveyors are often used in factories to move parts and assemblies between major production departments. They can be used for both delivery and storage.

A *power-and-free overhead trolley conveyor* is similar to the overhead trolley conveyor, except that the trolleys are capable of being disconnected from the drive chain, providing this conveyor with an asynchronous capability. This is usually accomplished by using two tracks, one just above the other. The upper track contains the continuously moving endless chain, and the trolleys that carry loads ride on the lower track. Each trolley includes a mechanism by which it can be connected to the drive chain and disconnected from it. When connected, the trolley is pulled along its track by the moving chain in the upper track. When disconnected, the trolley is idle.

*Other Conveyor Types.* Other powered conveyors include cart-on-track, screw, vibration-based systems, and vertical lift conveyors. *Cart-on-track conveyors* consist of individual carts riding on a track a few feet above floor level. The carts are driven by means of a rotating shaft, as illustrated in Figure 10.10. A drive wheel, attached to the bottom of the cart and set at an angle to the rotating tube, rests against it and drives the cart forward. The cart speed is controlled by regulating the angle of contact between the drive wheel and the spinning tube. When the axis of the drive wheel is 45°, the cart is propelled forward. When the axis of the drive wheel is parallel to the tube, the cart does not move. Thus, control of the drive wheel angle on the cart allows power-and-free operation of the conveyor. One of the advantages of cart-on-track systems relative to many other conveyors is that the carts can be positioned with high accuracy. This permits their use for positioning work during production. Applications of cart-on-track systems include robotic spot welding lines in automobile body plants and mechanical assembly systems.

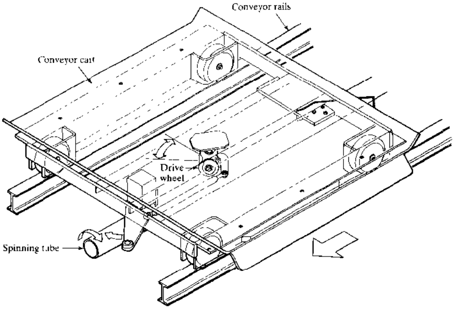



**Figure 10.10** Cart-on-track conveyor. (Diagram courtesy of SI Handling Systems.)

*Screw conveyors* are based on the Archimedes screw, the water-raising device devised in ancient times (circa 236 B.C.), consisting of a large screw inside a cylinder, turned by hand to pump water up-hill for irrigation purposes. *Vibration-based conveyors* use a flat track connected to an electromagnet that imparts an angular vibratory motion to the track to propel items in the desired direction. This same principle is used in vibratory bowl feeders to deliver components in automated assembly systems (Section 19.1.2). *Vertical lift conveyors* include a variety of mechanical elevators designed to provide vertical motion, such as between floors or to link floor-based conveyors with overhead conveyors. Other conveyor types include nonpowered *chutes*, *ramps*, and *tubes*, which are driven by gravity.

### 10.4.2 Conveyor Operations and Features

As indicated by our preceding discussion, conveyor equipment covers a wide variety of operations and features. Let us restrict our discussion here to powered conveyors, excluding nonpowered types. Conveyor systems divide into two basic types in terms of the characteristic motion of the materials moved by the system: (1) continuous and (2) asynchronous. *Continuous motion conveyors* move at a constant velocity $v_c$ along the path. They include belt, roller, skate-wheel, overhead trolley, and slat conveyors.

*Asynchronous conveyors* operate with a stop-and-go motion in which loads, usually contained in carriers (e.g., hooks, baskets, carts), move between stations and then stop and remain at the station until released. Asynchronous handling allows independent movement of each carrier in the system. Examples of this type include overhead power-and-free trolley, in-floor towline, and cart-on-track conveyors. Some roller and skate-wheel conveyors can also be operated asynchronously. Reasons for using asynchronous conveyors include: (1) to accumulate loads, (2) temporary storage, (3) to allow for differences in production rates between adjacent processing areas, (4) to smooth production when cycle times vary at stations along the conveyor, and (5) to accommodate different conveyor speeds along the pathway.

Conveyors can also be classified as: (1) single direction, (2) continuous loop, and (3) recirculating. In the following paragraphs, we describe the operating features of these categories. In Section 10.6.3, we present equations and techniques with which to analyze these conveyor systems. *Single direction conveyors* are used to transport loads one way from origination point to destination point, as depicted in Figure 10.11(a). These systems are appropriate when there is no need to move loads in both directions or to return containers or carriers from the unloading stations back to the loading stations. Single direction powered conveyors include roller, skate wheel, belt, and chain-in-floor types. In addition, all gravity conveyors operate in one direction.

*Continuous loop conveyors* form a complete circuit, as in Figure 10.11(b). An overhead trolley conveyor is an example of this conveyor type. However, any conveyor type can be configured as a loop, even those previously defined as single direction conveyors, simply by connecting several single direction conveyor sections into a closed loop. A continuous loop system allows materials to be moved between any two stations along the pathway. Continuous loop conveyors are used when loads are moved in carriers (e.g., hooks, baskets) between load and unload stations and the carriers are affixed to the conveyor loop. In this design, the empty carriers are automatically returned from the unload station back to the load station.

The preceding description of a continuous loop conveyor assumes that items loaded at the load station are unloaded at the unload station. There are no loads in the return loop; the purpose of the return loop is simply to send the empty carriers back for reloading. This method of operation overlooks an important opportunity offered by a closed-loop conveyor: to store as well as deliver parts. Conveyor systems that allow parts to remain on the return loop for one or more revolutions are called *recirculating conveyors*. In providing a storage function, the conveyor system can be used to accumulate parts to smooth out effects of loading and unloading variations at stations in the conveyor. There are two

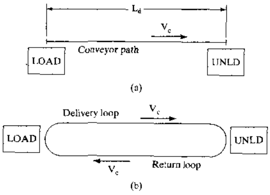



**Figure 10.11** (a) Single direction conveyor and (b) continuous loop conveyor.

problems that can plague the operation of a recirculating conveyor system. One is that there may be times during the operation of the conveyor that no empty carriers are immediately available at the loading station when needed. The other problem is that no loaded carriers are immediately available at the unloading station when needed.

It is possible to construct branching and merging points into a conveyor track to permit different routings for different loads moving in the system. In nearly all conveyor systems, it is possible to build switches, shuttles, or other mechanisms to achieve these alternate routings. In some systems, a push-pull mechanism or lift-and-carry device is required to actively move the load from the current pathway onto the new pathway.

## 10.5 CRANES AND HOISTS

The fifth category of transport equipment in material handling consists of cranes and hoists. Cranes are used for horizontal movement of materials in a facility, and hoists are used for vertical lifting. A crane invariably includes a hoist; thus, the hoist component of the crane lifts the load, and the crane transports the load horizontally to the desired destination. This class of material handling equipment includes cranes capable of lifting and moving very heavy loads, in some cases over 100 tons.

A *hoist* is a mechanical device that can be used to raise and lower loads. As seen in Figure 10.12, a hoist consists of one or more fixed pulleys, one or more moving pulleys, and a rope, cable, or chain strung between the pulleys. A hook or other means for attaching the load is connected to the moving pulley(s). The number of pulleys in the hoist determines its mechanical advantage, which is the ratio of the load weight to the driving force required to lift the weight. The mechanical advantage of the hoist in our illustration is 4.0. The driving force to operate the hoist is applied either manually or by electric or pneumatic motor.

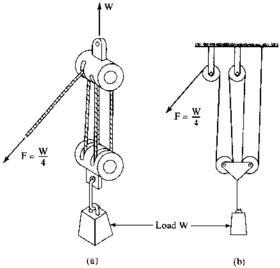



**Figure 10.12** A hoist with a mechanical advantage of 4.0: (a) sketch of the hoist and (b) diagram to illustrate mechanical advantage.

*Cranes* include a variety of material handling equipment designed for lifting and moving heavy loads using one or more overhead beams for support. Principal types of cranes found in factories include: (a) bridge cranes, (b) gantry cranes, and (c) jib cranes. In all three types, at least one hoist is mounted to a trolley that rides on the overhead beam of the crane. A *bridge crane* consists of one or two horizontal girders or beams suspended between fixed rails on either end which are connected to the structure of the building, as shown in Figure 10.13(a). The hoist trolley can be moved along the length of the bridge, and the bridge can be moved the length of the rails in the building. These two drive capabilities provide motion in the $x$- and $y$-axes of the building, and the hoist provides motion in the $z$-axis direction. Thus the bridge crane achieves vertical lifting due to its hoist and achieves horizontal movement of the material due to its orthogonal rail system. Large bridge cranes have girders that span up to 36.5 m (120 ft) and are capable of carrying loads up to 90,000 kg (100 tons). Large bridge cranes are controlled by operators riding in cabs on the bridge. Applications include heavy machinery fabrication, steel and other metal mills, and power-generating stations.

A *gantry crane* is distinguished from a bridge crane by the presence of one or two vertical legs that support the horizontal bridge. As with the bridge crane, a gantry crane includes one or more hoists that accomplish vertical lifting. Gantries are available in a variety of sizes and capacities, the largest possessing spans of about 46 m (150 ft) and load capacities of 136,000 kg (150 tons). A *double gantry crane* has two legs. Other types include half gantries and cantilever gantries. A *half gantry crane*, Figure 10.13(b), has a single leg on one end of the bridge, and the other end is supported by a rail mounted on the wall or other structural member of a building. A *cantilever gantry crane* is identified by the fact that its bridge extends beyond the span created by the support legs.

A *jib crane* consists of a hoist supported on a horizontal beam that is cantilevered from a vertical column or wall support, as illustrated in Figure 9.2(e). The horizontal beam is pivoted about the vertical axis formed by the column or wall to provide a horizontal sweep

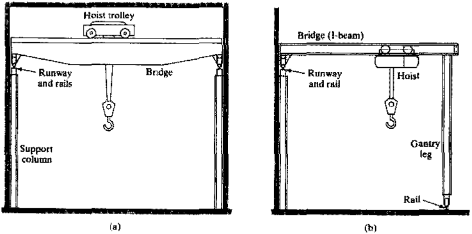



**Figure 10.13** Two types of cranes: (a) bridge crane and (b) gantry crane (shown is a half gantry crane).

for the crane. The beam also serves as the track for the hoist trolley to provide radial travel along the length of the beam. Thus, the horizontal area included by a jib crane is circular or semicircular. As with other cranes, the hoist provides vertical lift and lower motions. Standard capacities of jib cranes range up to about 5000 kg. Wall-mounted jib cranes can achieve a swing of about 180°, while floor-mounted jib cranes using a column or post as its vertical support can sweep a full 360°.

## 10.6 ANALYSIS OF MATERIAL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

Charting techniques are helpful for visualizing the movement of materials, and quantitative models are useful for analyzing material flow rates, delivery cycle times, and other aspects of performance. Research on these analysis methods is encouraged and supported by the College Industry Council on Material Handling Education (CICMHE) and the Material Handling Institute (MHI)[1], which hold a semiannual Research Colloquium whose *Proceedings* [11] are available through MHI. In this section, we discuss the following: (1) charting techniques in material handling, (2) analysis of vehicle-based systems, and (3) conveyor analysis.

### 10.6.1 Charting Techniques in Material Handling

A useful charting technique for displaying information about material flow is the *From-To Chart*, illustrated in Table 10.2. In this table, the left-hand vertical column lists origination points (loading stations) from which trips are made, and the horizontal row at the top of the chart lists destination points (unload stations). The chart is organized for possible material flows in both directions between the load/unload stations in the layout. From-To Charts can be used to represent various parameters of the material flow problem, including number of deliveries or flow rates between locations in the layout and travel distances between from-to locations. Table 10.2 represents one possible format to display both flow rates and corresponding distances for a given material handling problem.

**TABLE 10.2** From-To Chart Showing Flow Rates, loads/hr (Value Before the Slash Mark) and Travel Distances, *m* (Value After the Slash Mark) Between Stations in a Layout

| | *To* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| From | 1 | 0 | 9/50 | 5/120 | 6/205 | 0 |
| | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9/80 |
| | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2/85 | 3/170 |
| | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8/85 |
| | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

[1]The Material Handling Institute, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, is the research and education agency of the Material Handling Industry of America, the trade association representing companies that sell material handling products and services in the United States. The College Industry Council on Material Handling Education consists of academic and industry representatives and reports to the Material Handling Institute.

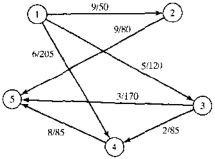



**Figure 10.14** Flow diagram showing material deliveries between load/unload stations. Arrows indicate flow rates and distances (same data as in Table 10.2), and nodes represent load/unload stations.

Muther and Haganas [19] suggest several graphical techniques for visualizing transports, including mathematical plots and flow diagrams of different types. The flow diagram in Figure 10.14 indicates movement of materials and corresponding origination and destination points of the moves. In this diagram, origination and destination points are represented by nodes, and material flows are depicted by arrows between the points. The nodes might represent production departments between which parts are moved or load and unload stations in a facility. Our flow diagram portrays the same information as in the From-To Chart of Table 10.2.

### 10.6.2 Analysis of Vehicle-Based Systems

Mathematical equations can be developed to describe the operation of vehicle-based material transport systems. Equipment used in such systems include industrial trucks (both hand trucks and powered trucks), automated guided vehicles, monorails and other rail guided vehicles, certain types of conveyor systems (e.g., in-floor towline conveyors), and certain crane operations. We assume that the vehicle operates at a constant velocity throughout its operation and ignore effects of acceleration, deceleration, and other speed differences that might depend on whether the vehicle is traveling loaded or empty or other reasons. The time for a typical delivery cycle in the operation of a vehicle-based transport system consists of: (1) loading at the pickup station, (2) travel time to the drop-off station, (3) unloading at the drop-off station, and (4) empty travel time of the vehicle between deliveries. The total cycle time per delivery per vehicle is given by

$$T_c = T_L + \frac{L_d}{v_c} + T_U + \frac{L_e}{v_c} \tag{10.1}$$

where $T_c$ = delivery cycle time (min/del), $T_L$ = time to load at load station (min), $L_d$ = distance the vehicle travels between load and unload station (m, ft), $v_c$ = carrier velocity (m/min, ft/min), $T_U$ = time to unload at unload station (min), and $L_e$ = *distance the* vehicle travels empty until the start of the next delivery cycle (m, ft).

$T_c$ calculated by Eq. (10.1) must be considered an ideal value, because it ignores any time losses due to reliability problems, traffic congestion, and other factors that may slow down a delivery. In addition, not all delivery cycles are the same. Originations and destinations may be different from one delivery to the next, which will affect the $L_d$ and $L_e$ terms in the preceding equation. Accordingly, these terms are considered to be average values for the population of loaded and empty distances traveled by the vehicle during the course of a shift or other period of analysis.

The delivery cycle time can be used to determine certain parameters of interest in the vehicle-based transport system. Let us make use of $T_c$ to determine two parameters: (1) rate of deliveries per vehicle and (2) number of vehicles required to satisfy a specified total delivery requirement. We will base our analysis on hourly rates and requirements; however, the equations can readily be adapted for other periods.

The hourly rate of deliveries per vehicle is 60 min divided by the delivery cycle time $T_c$, adjusting for any time losses during the hour. The possible time losses include: (1) availability, (2) traffic congestion, and (3) efficiency of manual drivers in the case of manually operated trucks. *Availability* (symbolized $A$) is a reliability factor (Section 2.4.3) defined as the proportion of total shift time that the vehicle is operational and not broken down or being repaired.

To deal with the time losses due to *traffic congestion*, let us define the *traffic factor* $T_f$ as a parameter for estimating the effect of these losses on system performance. Sources of inefficiency accounted for by the traffic factor include waiting at intersections, blocking of vehicles (as in an AGVS), and waiting in a queue at load/unload stations. If there is no blocking of vehicles, then $F_t = 1.0$. As blocking increases, the value of $F_t$ decreases. Blocking, waiting at intersections, and vehicles waiting in line at load/unload stations are affected by the number of vehicles in the system relative to the size of the layout. If there is only one vehicle in the system, little or no blocking should occur, and the traffic factor will be very close to 1.0. For systems with many vehicles, there will be more instances of blocking and congestion, and the traffic factor will take a lower value. Typical values of traffic factor for an AGVS range between 0.85 and 1.0 [4].

For systems based on industrial trucks, including both hand trucks and powered trucks that are operated by human workers, traffic congestion is probably not the main cause of the low operating performance sometimes observed in these systems. Their performance is very dependent on the work efficiency of the operators who drive the trucks. Let us define *efficiency* here as the actual work rate of the human operator relative to work rate expected under standard or normal performance. Let $E$ symbolize the worker efficiency.

With these factors defined, we can now express the available time per hour per vehicle as 60 min adjusted by $A$, $T_f$, and $E$. That is,

$$AT = 60\,A\,T_f E \tag{10.2}$$

where $AT$ = available time (min/hr per vehicle), $A$ = availability, $T_f$ = traffic factor, and $E$ = worker efficiency. The parameters $A$, $T_f$, and $E$ do not take into account poor vehicle routing, poor guidepath layout, or poor management of the vehicles in the system. These factors should be minimized, but if present they are accounted for in the values of $L_d$ and $L_e$.

We can now write equations for the two performance parameters of interest. The rate of deliveries per vehicle is given by:

$$R_{dv} = \frac{AT}{T_c} \tag{10.3}$$

where $R_{dv}$ = hourly delivery rate per vehicle (del./hr per vehicle), $T_c$ = delivery cycle time computed by Eq. (10.1) (min/del), and $AT$ = the available time in 1 hr with adjustments for time losses (min/hr).

The total number of vehicles (trucks, AGVs, trolleys, carts, etc.) needed to satisfy a specified total delivery schedule $R_f$ in the system can be estimated by first calculating the total workload required and then dividing by the available time per vehicle. Workload is defined as the total amount of work, expressed in terms of time, that must be accomplished by the material transport system in 1 hr. This can be expressed as follows:

$$WL = R_f T_c \tag{10.4}$$

where $WL$ = workload (min/hr), $R_f$ = specified flow rate of total deliveries per hour for the system (del/hr), and $T_c$ = delivery cycle time (min/del). Now the number of vehicles required to accomplish this workload can be written as

$$n_c = \frac{WL}{AT} \tag{10.5}$$

where $n_c$ = number of carriers required, $WL$ = workload (min/hr), and $AT$ = available time per vehicle (min/hr per vehicle). It can be shown that Eq. (10.5) reduces to the following:

$$n_c = \frac{R_f}{R_{dv}} \tag{10.6}$$

where $n_c$ = number of carriers required, $R_f$ = total delivery requirements in the system (del/hr), and $R_{dv}$ = delivery rate per vehicle (del/hr per vehicle). Although the traffic factor accounts for delays experienced by the vehicles, it does not include delays encountered by a load/unload station that must wait for the arrival of a vehicle. Because of the random nature of the load/unload demands, workstations are likely to experience waiting time while vehicles are busy with other deliveries. The preceding equations do not consider this idle time or its impact on operating cost. If station idle time is to be minimized, then more vehicles may be needed than the number indicated by Eqs. (10.5) or (10.6). Mathematical models based on queueing theory are appropriate to analyze this more-complex stochastic situation.

**EXAMPLE 10.1 Determining Number of Vehicles in an AGVS**

Given the AGVS layout shown in Figure 10.15. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around the loop to deliver loads from the load station to the unload station. Loading time at the load station = 0.75 min, and unloading time at the unload station = 0.50 min. It is desired to determine how many vehicles are required to satisfy demand for this layout if a total of 40 del/hr must be completed by the AGVS. The following performance parameters are given: vehicle velocity = 50 m/min, availability = 0.95, traffic factor = 0.90, and operator efficiency does not apply, so E = 1.0. Determine: (a) travel distances loaded and empty, (b) ideal delivery cycle time, and (c) number of vehicles required to satisfy the delivery demand.

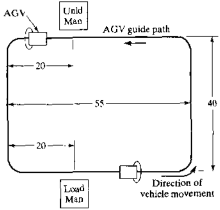



**Figure 10.15** AGVS loop layout for Example 10.1. Key: Unld = unload, Man = manual operation, dimensions in meters (m).

***Solution:*** (a) Ignoring effects of slightly shorter distances around the curves at corners of the loop, the values of $L_d$ and $L_e$ are readily determined from the layout to be 110 m and 80 m, respectively.

(b) Ideal cycle time per delivery per vehicle is given by Eq. (10.1).

$$T_c = 0.75 + \frac{110}{50} + 0.50 + \frac{80}{50} = 5.05 \text{ min}$$

(c) To determine the number of vehicles required to make 40 del/hr, we compute the workload of the AGVS and the available time per hour per vehicle.

$$WL = 40(5.05) = 202 \text{ min/hr}$$

$$AT = 60(0.95)(0.90)(1.0) = 51.3 \text{ min/hr per vehicle}$$

Therefore, the number of vehicles required is

$$n_c = \frac{202}{51.3} = 3.94 \text{ vehicles}$$

This value should be rounded up to $n_c = 4$ vehicles, since the number of vehicles must be an integer.

---

Determining the average travel distances, $L_d$ and $L_e$, requires analysis of the particular AGVS layout. For a simple loop layout such as in Figure 10.15, determining these values is straightforward. For a complex AGVS layout, the problem is more difficult. The following example illustrates this issue.

**EXAMPLE 10.2 Determining $L_d$ for a More-Complex AGVS Layout**

The layout for this example is shown in Figure 10.16, and the From-To Chart is presented in Table 10.2. The AGVS includes load station 1 where raw parts

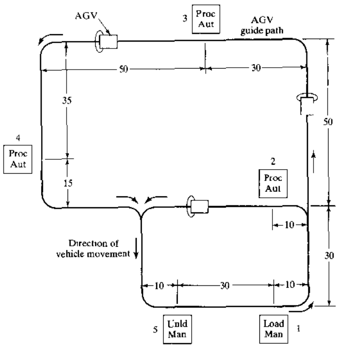



**Figure 10.16** AGVS layout for production system of Example 10.2. Key: Proc = processing operation, Aut = automated, Unld = unload, Man = manual operation, dimensions in meters (m).

enter the system for delivery to any of three production stations 2, 3, and 4. Unload station 5 receives finished parts from the production stations. Load and unload times at stations 1 and 5 are each 0.5 min. Production rates for each workstation are indicated by the delivery requirements in Table 10.2. A complicating factor is that some parts must be transshipped between stations 2 and 3. Vehicles move in the direction indicated by the arrows in the figure. Determine the average delivery distance, $L_d$.

***Solution.*** Table 10.2 shows the number of deliveries and corresponding distances between the stations. The distance values are taken from the layout drawing in Figure 10.16. To determine the value of $L_d$, a weighted average must be calculated based on the number of trips and corresponding distances shown in the From-To Chart for the problem.

$$L_d = \frac{9(50) + 5(120) + 6(205) + 9(80) + 2(85) + 3(170) + 8(85)}{9 + 5 + 6 + 9 + 2 + 3 + 8} = \frac{4360}{42} = 103.8 \text{ m}$$

Determining $L_e$, the average distance a vehicle travels empty during a delivery cycle, is more complicated. It depends on the dispatching and scheduling methods used to decide how a vehicle should proceed from its last drop-off to its next pickup. In Figure 10.16, if each vehicle must travel back to station 1 after each drop-off at stations 2, 3, and 4, then the empty distance between pick-ups would be very large indeed. $L_e$ would be greater than $L_d$. On the other hand, if a vehicle could exchange a raw workpart for a finished part while stopped at a given workstation, then empty travel time for the vehicle would be minimized. However, this would require a two-position platform at each station to enable the exchange. So this issue must be considered in the initial design of the AGVS. Ideally, $L_e$ should be reduced to zero. It is highly desirable to minimize the average distance a vehicle travels empty through good AGVS design and good scheduling of the vehicles. Our mathematical model of AGVS operation indicates that the delivery cycle time will be reduced if $L_e$ is minimized, and this will have a beneficial effect on the vehicle delivery rate and the number of vehicles required to operate the AGVS. Two of our exercise problems at the end of the chapter ask the reader to determine $L_e$ under different operating scenarios.

### 10.6.3 Conveyor Analysis

Conveyor operations have been analyzed in the research literature, some of which is identified in our list of references [8], [9], [14]–[17]. In our discussion here, we consider the three basic types of conveyor operations discussed in Section 10.4.2: (1) single direction conveyors, (2) continuous loop conveyors, and (3) recirculating conveyors.

*Single Direction Conveyors.* Consider the case of a single direction powered conveyor with one load station at the upstream end and one unload station at the downstream end, as in Figure 10.11(a). Materials are loaded at one end and unloaded at the other. The materials may be parts, cartons, pallet loads, or other unit loads. Assuming the conveyor operates at a constant speed, the time required to move materials from load station to unload station is given by:

$$T_d = \frac{L_d}{v_c} \tag{10.7}$$

where $T_d$ = delivery time (min), $L_d$ = length of conveyor between load and unload stations (m, ft), and $v_c$ = conveyor velocity (m/min, ft/min).

The flow rate of materials on the conveyor is determined by the rate of loading at the load station. The loading rate is limited by the reciprocal of the time required to load the materials. Given the conveyor speed, the loading rate establishes the spacing of materials on the conveyor. Summarizing these relationships,

$$R_f = R_L = \frac{v_c}{s_c} \leq \frac{1}{T_L} \tag{10.8}$$

where $R_f$ = material flow rate (parts/min), $R_L$ = loading rate (parts/min), $s_c$ = center-to-center spacing of materials on the conveyor (m/part, ft/part), and $T_L$ = loading time (min/part). One might be tempted to think that the loading rate $R_L$ is the reciprocal of the loading time $T_L$. However, $R_L$ is set by the flow rate requirement $R_f$, while $T_L$ is determined by ergonomic factors. The worker who loads the conveyor may be capable of performing the loading task at a rate that is faster than the required flow rate. On the other hand, the flow rate requirement cannot be set faster than it is humanly possible to perform the loading task.

An additional requirement for loading and unloading is that the time required to unload the conveyor must be equal to or less than the loading time. That is,

$$T_U \leq T_L \tag{10.9}$$

where $T_U$ = unloading time (min/part). If unloading requires more time than loading, then unremoved loads may accumulate or be dumped onto the floor at the downstream end of the conveyor.

We are using parts as the material in Eqs. (10.8) and (10.9), but the relationships apply to other unit loads as well. The advantage of the unit load principle (Table 9.3, Principle 5) can be demonstrated by transporting $n_p$ parts in a carrier rather than a single part. Recasting Eq. (10.8) to reflect this advantage, we have

$$R_f = \frac{n_p v_c}{s_c} \leq \frac{1}{T_L} \tag{10.10}$$

where $R_f$ = flow rate (parts/min), $n_p$ = number of parts per carrier, $s_c$ = center-to-center spacing of carriers on the conveyor (m/carrier, ft/carrier), and $T_L$ = loading time per carrier (min/carrier). The flow rate of parts transported by the conveyor is potentially much greater in this case. However, loading time is still a limitation, and $T_L$ may consist of not only the time to load the carrier onto the conveyor but also the time to load parts into the carrier. The preceding equations must be interpreted and perhaps adjusted for the given application.

**EXAMPLE 10.3 Single Direction Conveyor**

A roller conveyor follows a pathway 35 m long between a parts production department and an assembly department. Velocity of the conveyor is 40 m/min. Parts are loaded into large tote pans, which are placed onto the conveyor at the load station in the production department. Two operators work the loading station. The first worker loads parts into tote pans, which takes 25 sec. Each tote pan holds 20 parts. Parts enter the loading station from production at a rate that is in balance with this 25-sec cycle. The second worker loads tote pans onto the conveyor, which takes only 10 sec. Determine: (a) spacing between tote pans along the conveyor, (b) maximum possible flow rate in parts/min, and (c) the minimum time required to unload the tote pan in the assembly department.

***Solution:*** (a) Spacing between tote pans on the conveyor is determined by the loading time. It takes only 10 sec to load a tote pan onto the conveyor, but 25 sec are required to load parts into the tote pan. Therefore, the loading cycle is limited by this 25 sec. At a conveyor speed of 40 m/min, the spacing will be

$$s_c = (25/60 \text{ min})(40 \text{ m/min}) = 16.67 \text{ m}$$

(b) Flow rate is given by Eq. (10.10):

$$R_f = \frac{20(40)}{16.67} = 48 \text{ parts/min}$$

This is consistent with the parts loading rate of 20 parts in 25 sec, which is 0.8 parts/sec or 48 parts/min.

(c) The minimum allowable time to unload a tote pan must be consistent with the flow rate of tote pans on the conveyor. This flow rate is one tote pan every 25 sec, so

$$T_U \leq 25 \text{ sec}$$

---

*Continuous Loop Conveyors.* Consider a continuous loop conveyor such as an overhead trolley in which the pathway is formed by an endless chain moving in a track loop, and carriers are suspended from the track and pulled by the chain. The conveyor moves parts in the carriers between a load station and an unload station. The complete loop is divided into two sections: a delivery (forward) loop in which the carriers are loaded and a return loop in which the carriers travel empty, as shown in Figure 10.11(b). The length of the delivery loop is $L_d$, and the length of the return loop is $L_e$. Total length of the conveyor is therefore $L = L_d - L_e$. The total time required to travel the complete loop is

$$T_c = \frac{L}{v_c} \tag{10.11}$$

where $T_c$ = total cycle time (min), and $v_c$ = speed of the conveyor chain (m/min, ft/min). The time a load spends in the forward loop is

$$T_d = \frac{L_d}{v_c} \tag{10.12}$$

where $T_d$ = delivery time on the forward loop (min).

Carriers are equally spaced along the chain at a distance $s_c$ apart. Thus, the total number of carriers in the loop is given by:

$$n_c = \frac{L}{s_c} \tag{10.13}$$

where $n_c$ = number of carriers, $L$ = total length of the conveyor loop (m, ft), and $s_c$ = center-to-center distance between carriers (m/carrier, ft/carrier). The value of $n_c$ must be an integer, and so $L$ and $s_c$ must be consistent with that requirement.

Each carrier is capable of holding $n_p$ parts on the delivery loop, and it holds no parts on the return trip. Since only those carriers on the forward loop contain parts, the maximum number of parts in the system at any one time is given by:

$$\text{Total parts in system} = \frac{n_p n_c L_d}{L} \tag{10.14}$$

As in the single direction conveyor, the maximum flow rate between load and unload stations is

$$R_f = \frac{n_p v_c}{s_c}$$

where $R_f$ = parts per minute. Again, this rate must be consistent with limitations on the time it takes to load and unload the conveyor, as defined in Eqs. (10.8)–(10.10).

*Recirculating Conveyors: Kwo Analysis.* Recall (Section 10.4.2) and the two problems complicating the operation of a recirculating conveyor system: (1) the possibility that no empty carriers are immediately available at the loading station when needed and (2) the possibility that no loaded carriers are immediately available at the unloading station when needed. In the Kwo analysis [8], [9], the case of a recirculating conveyor with one load station and one unload station is considered. According to Kwo, there are three basic principles that must be obeyed in designing such a conveyor system:

(1) *Speed Rule.* This principle states that the operating speed of the conveyor must be within a certain range. The lower limit of the range is determined by the required loading and unloading rates at the respective stations. These rates are dictated by the external systems served by the conveyor. Let $R_L$ and $R_U$ represent the required loading and unloading rates at the two stations, respectively. Then the conveyor speed must satisfy the following relationship:

$$\frac{n_p v_c}{s_c} \geq \mathrm{Max}\{R_L, R_U\} \tag{10.15}$$

where $R_L$ = required loading rate (parts/min), and $R_U$ = the corresponding unloading rate. The upper speed limit is determined by the physical capabilities of the material handlers to perform the loading and unloading tasks. Their capabilities are defined by the time required to load and unload the carriers, so that

$$\frac{v_c}{s_c} \leq \mathrm{Min}\left\{\frac{1}{T_L}, \frac{1}{T_U}\right\} \tag{10.16}$$

where $T_L$ = time required to load a carrier (min/carrier), and $T_U$ = time required to unload a carrier. In addition to Eqs. (10.15) and (10.16), another limitation is of course that the speed must not exceed the technological limits of the mechanical conveyor itself.

(2) *Capacity Constraint.* The flow rate capacity of the conveyor system must be at least equal to the flow rate requirement to accommodate reserve stock and allow for the time elapsed between loading and unloading due to delivery distance. This can be expressed as follows:

$$\frac{n_p v_c}{s_c} \geq R_f \tag{10.17}$$

In this case, $R_f$ must be interpreted as a system specification required of the recirculating conveyor.

(3) *Uniformity Principle.* This principle states that parts (loads) should be uniformly distributed throughout the length of the conveyor, so that there will be no sections of the conveyor in which every carrier is full while other sections are virtually empty. The

reason for the uniformity principle is to avoid unusually long waiting times at the load or unload stations for empty or full carriers (respectively) to arrive.

**EXAMPLE 10.4 Recirculating Conveyor Analysis: Kwo**

A recirculating conveyor has a total length of 300 m. Its speed is 60 m/min, and the spacing of part carriers along its length is 12 m. Each carrier can hold two parts. The task time required to load two parts into each carrier is 0.20 min and the unload time is the same. The required loading and unloading rates are both defined by the specified flow rate, which is 4 parts/min. Evaluate the conveyor system design with respect to Kwo's three principles.

***Solution:*** *Speed Rule:* The lower limit on speed is set by the required loading and unloading rates, which is 4 parts/min. Checking this against Eq. (10.15),

$$\frac{n_p v_c}{s_c} \geq \text{Max}\{R_L, R_U\}$$

$$\frac{(2 \text{ parts/carrier})(60 \text{ m/min})}{12 \text{ m/carrier}} = 10 \text{ parts/min} > 4 \text{ parts/min}$$

Checking the lower limit:

$$\frac{60 \text{ m/min}}{12 \text{ m/carrier}} = 5 \text{ carriers/min} \leq \text{Min}\left\{\frac{1}{0.2}, \frac{1}{0.2}\right\} = \text{Min}\{5, 5\} = 5$$

The Speed Rule is satisfied.

*Capacity Constraint:* The conveyor flow rate capacity = 10 parts/min as computed above. Since this is substantially greater than the required delivery rate of 4 part/min, the capacity constraint is satisfied. Kwo provides guidelines for determining the flow rate requirement that should be compared to the conveyor capacity [8], [9].

*Uniformity Principle:* The conveyor is assumed to be uniformly loaded throughout its length, since the loading and unloading rates are equal and the flow rate capacity is substantially greater than the load/unload rate. Conditions for checking the uniformity principle are available, and the reader is referred to the original papers by Kwo [8], [9].

## REFERENCES


[1] BOSE, P. P., "Basics of AGV Systems," Special Report 784, *American Machinist and Automated Manufacturing*, March 1986, pp. 105-122.

[2] CASTELBERRY, G., *The AGV Handbook*, AGV Decisions, Inc., published by Braun-Brumfield, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1991.

[3] EASTMAN, R. M., *Materials Handling*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1987.

[4] FITZGERALD, K. R., "How to Estimate the Number of AGVs You Need," *Modern Materials Handling*, October 1985, p. 79.

[5] HAMMOND, G., *AGVS at Work*, IFS (Publications) Ltd, UK and Springer-Verlag, Berlin, Germany, 1986.

[6] KULWIEC, R. A., Editor, *Materials Handling Handbook*, 2nd Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1985.

[7] KULWIEC, R., "Cranes for Overhead Handling," *Modern Materials Handling*, July 1998, pp. 43-47.

[8] KWO, T. T., "A Theory of Conveyors," *Management Science*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1958, pp. 51-71.

[9] KWO, T. T., "A Method for Designing Irreversible Overhead Loop Conveyors," *Journal of Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 11, No. 6, 1960, pp. 459-466.

[10] Maloney, D., "Conveyors in Manufacturing: Modular Designs Carry the Future," *Modern Materials Handling*, September 1999, pp. 43-45.

[11] Material Handling Institute, *Proceedings*, International Research Colloquium, (separate volumes for) 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998.

[12] MAXWELL, W. L., and J. A. MUCKSTADT, "Design of Automated Guided Vehicle Systems," *IIE Transactions*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1982, pp. 114-124.

[13] MULCAHY, D. E., *Materials Handling Handbook*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1999.

[14] MUTH, E. J., "Analysis of Closed-Loop Conveyor Systems," *AIIE Transactions*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1972, pp. 134-143.

[15] MUTH, E. J., "Analysis of Closed-Loop Conveyor Systems: the Discrete Flow Case," *AIIE Transactions*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1974, pp. 73-83.

[16] MUTH, E. J., "Modelling and Analysis of Multistation Closed-Loop Conveyors," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 13, No. 6, 1975, pp. 559-566.

[17] MUTH, E. J., and J. A. WHITE, "Conveyor Theory: A Survey," *AIIE Transactions*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 1979, pp. 270-277.

[18] MILLER, R. K., *Automated Guided Vehicle Systems*, Co-published by SEAI Institute, Madison, Georgia and Technical Insights, Fort Lee, New Jersey, 1983.

[19] MUTHER, R., and K. HAGANAS, *Systematic Handling Analysis*, Management and Industrial Research Publications, Kansas City, Missouri, 1969.

[20] TOMPKINS, J. A., J. A. WHITE, Y. A. BOZER, E. H. FRAZELLE, J. M. TANCHOCO, and J. TREVINO, *Facilities Planning*, Second Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1996.

[21] ZOLLINGER, H. A., "Methodology to Concept Horizontal Transportation Problem Solutions," *Proceedings*, MHI 1994 International Research Colloquium, Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 1994.


## PROBLEMS

### Charting Techniques

**10.1** A flexible manufacturing system is being planned. It has a ladder layout as pictured in Figure P10.1 and uses a rail guided vehicle system to move parts between stations in the layout. All workparts are loaded into the system at station 1, moved to one of three processing stations (2, 3, or 4), and then brought back to station 1 for unloading. Once loaded onto its RGV, each workpart stays onboard the vehicle throughout its time in the FMS. Load and unload times at station 1 are each 1.0 min. Processing times at other stations are: 5.0 min at station 2, 7.0 min at station 3, and 9.0 min at station 4. Hourly production of parts through the system is: 7 parts through station 2, 6 parts through station 3, and 5 parts through station 4. (a) Develop the From-To Chart for trips and distances using the same format as Table 10.2. (b) Develop the flow diagram for this data similar to Figure 10.14. The From-To Chart developed here is used in Problem 10.4.

**10.2** In Example 10.2 in the text, suppose that the vehicles operate according to the following scheduling rules: (1) vehicles delivering raw workparts from station 1 to stations 2, 3, and 4 must return empty to station 5; and (2) vehicles picking up finished parts at stations 2, 3, and

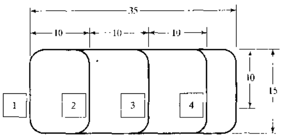



**Figure P10.1** FMS layout for Problem 10.1.

4 for delivery to station 5 must travel empty from station 1. Determine the empty travel distances associated with each delivery and develop a From-To Chart in the format of Table 10.2 in the text. The From-To Chart developed here is used in Problem 10.5.

**10.3** In Example 10.2 in the text, suppose that the vehicles operate according to the following scheduling rule to minimize the distances the vehicles travel empty: Vehicles delivering raw workparts from station 1 to stations 2, 3, and 4 must pick up finished parts at these respective stations for delivery to station 5. Determine the empty travel distances associated with each delivery and develop a From-To Chart in the format of Table 10.2 in the text. The From-To Chart developed here is used in Problem 10.6.

## Analysis of Vehicle-Based Systems

**10.4** This is a continuation of Problem 10.1. Determine the number of rail guided vehicles that are needed to meet the requirements of the flexible manufacturing system, if vehicle speed = 60 m/min and the anticipated traffic factor = 0.85. Assume availability $A$ = 100% and efficiency $E$ = 1.0.

**10.5** This problem is a continuation of Problem 10.2, which extends Example 10.2 in the text. Suppose the AGVs travel at a speed of 40 m/min, and the traffic factor = 0.90. As determined in Example 10.2, the delivery distance = 103.8 m. (a) Determine the value of $L_e$ for the layout based on your table. (b) How many automated guided vehicles will be required to operate the system? Assume availability $A$ = 100% and efficiency $E$ = 1.0.

**10.6** This problem is a continuation of Problem 10.3, which extends Example 10.2 in the text. Suppose the AGVs travel at a speed of 40 m/min, and the traffic factor = 0.90. As determined in Example 10.2, the delivery distance = 103.8 m. (a) Determine the value of $L_e$ for the layout based on your table. (b) How many automated guided vehicles will be required to operate the system? Assume availability $A$ = 100% and efficiency $E$ = 1.0.

**10.7** A planned fleet of forklift trucks has an average travel distance per delivery = 500 ft loaded and an average empty travel distance = 350 ft. The fleet must make a total of 60 del/hr. Load and unload times are each 0.5 min and the speed of the vehicles = 300 ft/min. The traffic factor for the system = 0.85. Availability is expected to be 0.95 and worker efficiency is assumed to be 0.90. Determine: (a) ideal cycle time per delivery, (b) the resulting average number of deliveries per hour that a forklift truck can make, and (c) how many trucks are required to accomplish the 60 del/hr.

**10.8** An automated guided vehicle system has an average travel distance per delivery = 200 m and an average empty travel distance = 150 m. Load and unload times are each 24 s and the speed of the AGV = 1 m/s. Traffic factor = 0.9. How many vehicles are needed to satisfy a delivery requirement of 30 del/hr? Assume $A$ = 0.95.

**10.9** Four forklift trucks are used to deliver pallet loads of parts between work cells in a factory. Average travel distance loaded is 350 ft, and the travel distance empty is estimated to be the same. The trucks are driven at an average speed of 3 mi/hr when loaded and 4 mi/hr when empty. Terminal time per delivery averages 1.0 min (load = 0.5 min and unload = 0.5 min). If the traffic factor is assumed to be 0.90, availability = 1.0 and work efficiency = 0.95, what is the maximum hourly delivery rate of the four trucks?

**10.10** An AGVS has an average loaded travel distance per delivery = 400 ft. The average empty travel distance is not known. Required number of deliveries per hour = 60. Load and unload times are each 0.6 min and the AGV speed = 125 ft/min. Anticipated traffic factor = 0.80. Availability = 0.95. Develop an equation that relates the number of vehicles required to operate the system as a function of the average empty travel distance $L_e$.

**10.11** A rail guided vehicle system is being planned as part of an assembly cell. The system consists of two parallel lines, as in Figure P10.11. In operation, a base part is loaded at station 1 and delivered to either station 2 or 4, where components are added to the base part. The RGV then goes to either station 3 or 5, respectively, where further assembly of components is accomplished. From stations 3 or 5, the product moves to station 6 for removal from the system. Vehicles remain with the products as they move through the station sequence; thus, there is no loading and unloading of parts at stations 2, 3, 4, and 5. After unloading parts at station 6, the vehicles then travel empty back to station 1 for reloading. The hourly moves (parts/hr) and distances (ft) are listed in the table below. RGV speed = 100 ft/min. Assembly cycle times at stations 2 and 3 = 4.0 min each and at stations 4 and 5 = 6.0 min each. Load and unload times at stations 1 and 6, respectively, are each 0.75 min. Traffic factor = 1.0. How many vehicles are required to operate the system? Assume $A$ = 1.0.

| | *To:* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| From: | 1 | 0/0 | 14L/200 | 0/NA | 9L/150 | 0/NA | 0/NA |
| | 2 | 0/NA | 0/0 | 14L/50 | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/NA |
| | 3 | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/0 | 0/NA | 0/NA | 14L/50 |
| | 4 | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/0 | 9L/50 | 0/NA |
| | 5 | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/0 | 9L/100 |
| | 6 | 23E/400 | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/0 |

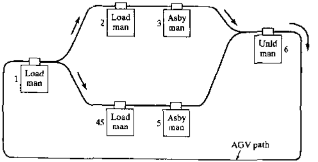



**Figure P10.11** Layout for Problem 10.11.

**10.12** An AGVS will be used to satisfy material flows indicated in the From-To Chart in the following table, which shows deliveries per hour between stations (above the slash) and distances in meters between stations (below the slash). Moves indicated by "L" are trips in which the vehicle is loaded, while "E" indicates moves in which the vehicle is empty. A traffic factor = 0.85 is assumed. Assume availability $A$ = 0.90. Speed of an AGV = 0.9 m/s. If load handling time per delivery = 1.0 min, determine the number of vehicles needed to satisfy the indicated deliveries per hour?

| | To: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| From: | 1 | 0/0 | 9L/90 | 7L/120 | 5L/75 |
| | 2 | 5E/90 | 0/0 | 0/NA | 4L/80 |
| | 3 | 7E/120 | 0/NA | 0/0 | 0/NA |
| | 4 | 9E/75 | 0/NA | 0/NA | 0/0 |

**10.13** An automated guided vehicle system is being proposed to deliver parts between 40 workstations in a factory. Loads must be moved from each station about once every hour; thus, the delivery rate = 40 loads/hr. Average travel distance loaded is estimated to be 250 ft and travel distance empty is estimated to be 300 ft. Vehicles move at a speed = 200 ft/min. Total handling time per delivery = 1.5 min (load = 0.75 min and unload = 0.75 min). Traffic factor $F_t$ becomes increasingly significant as the number of vehicles $n_c$ increases; this can be modeled as:

$$F_t = 1.0 - 0.05(n_c - 1) \qquad \text{for } n_c = \text{Integer} > 0$$

Determine the minimum number of vehicles needed in the factory to meet the flow rate requirement. Assume $A = 1.0$.

**10.14** An automated guided vehicle system is being planned for a warehouse complex. The AGVS will be a driverless train system, and each train will consist of the towing vehicle plus four pulled carts. The speed of the trains will be 160 ft/min. Only the pulled carts carry loads. The average loaded travel distance per delivery cycle is 2000 ft and empty travel distance is the same. Anticipated travel factor = 0.95. The load handling time per train per delivery is expected to be 10 min. If the requirements on the AGVS are 25 cart loads/hr, determine the number of trains required. Assume $A = 1.0$.

**10.15** The From-To Chart in the table below indicates the number of loads moved per 8-hr day (above the slash) and the distances in feet (below the slash) between departments in a particular factory. Fork lift trucks are used to transport materials between departments. They move at an average speed = 275 ft/min (loaded) and 350 ft/min (empty). Load handling time per delivery is 1.5 min, and anticipated traffic factor = 0.9. Assume $A = 0.95$ and worker efficiency = 110%. Determine the number of trucks required under each of the following assumptions: (a) The trucks never travel empty, and (b) the trucks travel empty a distance equal to their loaded distance.

| | To Dept. | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| From Dept. | A | — | 62/500 | 51/450 | 45/350 | 0 |
| | B | 0 | — | 0 | 22/400 | 0 |
| | C | 0 | 0 | — | 0 | 76/200 |
| | D | 0 | 0 | 0 | — | 65/150 |
| | E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |

**10.16** Major appliances are assembled on a production line at the rate of 55 per hour. The products are moved along the line on work pallets (one product per pallet). At the final workstation the finished products are removed from the pallets. The pallets are then removed from the line and delivered back to the front of the line for reuse. Automated guided vehicles are used to transport the pallets to the front of the line, a distance of 600 ft. Return trip distance (empty) to the end of the line is also 600 ft. Each AGV carries four pallets and travels at a speed of 150 ft/min (either loaded or empty). The pallets form queues at each end of the line, so that neither the production line nor the AGVs are ever starved for pallets. Time required to load each pallet onto an AGV = 15 sec; time to release a loaded AGV and move an empty AGV into position for loading at the end of the line = 12 sec. The same times apply for pallet handling and release/positioning at the unload station located at the front of the production line. Assume the traffic factor is 1.0 since the route is a simple loop. Also, assume $A = 1.0$. How many vehicles are needed to operate the AGV system?

**10.17** For the production line in Problem 10.16, assume that a single AGV train consisting of a tractor and multiple trailers is used to make deliveries rather than separate vehicles. Time required to load a pallet onto a trailer = 15 sec, and the time to release a loaded train and move an empty train into position for loading at the end of the production line = 30 sec. The same times apply for pallet handling and release/positioning at the unload station located at the front of the production line. If each trailer is capable of carrying four pallets, how many trailers should be included in the train?

## Analysis of Conveyor Systems

**10.18** An overhead trolley conveyor is configured as a continuous closed loop. The delivery loop has a length of 120 m and the return loop = 80 m. All parts loaded at the load station are unloaded at the unload station. Each hook on the conveyor can hold one part, and the hooks are separated by 4 m. Conveyor speed = 1.25 m/s. Determine: (a) maximum number of parts in the conveyor system, (b) parts flow rate, and (c) maximum loading and unloading times that are compatible with the operation of the conveyor system.

**10.19** A 300-ft long roller conveyor, which operates at a velocity = 80 ft/min, is used to move pallets between load and unload stations. Each pallet carries 12 parts. Cycle time to load a pallet is 15 sec, and one worker at the load station is able to load pallets at the rate of 4 per minute. It takes 12 sec to unload at the unload station. Determine: (a) center-to-center distance between pallets, (b) the number of pallets on the conveyor at one time, and (c) hourly flow rate of parts. (d) By how much must conveyor speed be increased to increase flow rate to 3000 parts/hr?

**10.20** A roller conveyor moves tote pans in one direction at 150 ft/min between a load station and an unload station, a distance of 200 ft. The time to load parts into a tote pan at the load station is 3 sec per part. Each tote pan holds 8 parts. In addition, it takes 9 sec to load a tote pan onto the conveyor. Determine: (a) spacing between tote pan centers flowing in the conveyor system and (b) flow rate of parts on the conveyor system. (c) Consider the effect of the unit load principle. Suppose the tote pans were smaller and could hold only one part rather than eight. Determine the flow rate in this case if it takes 7 sec to load a tote pan onto the conveyor (instead of 9 sec for the larger tote pan), and it takes the same 3 sec to load the part into the tote pan.

**10.21** A closed loop overhead conveyor must be designed to deliver parts from one load station to one unload station. The specified flow rate of parts that must be delivered between the two stations is 300 parts/hr. The conveyor has carriers spaced at a center-to-center distance that is to be determined. Each carrier holds one part. Forward and return loops will each be 90 m long. Conveyor speed = 0.5 m/s. Times to load and unload parts at the respective stations are each = 12 s. Is the system feasible, and if so, what is the appropriate number of carriers and spacing between carriers that will achieve the specified flow rate?

**10.22** Consider Problem 10.21, only that the carriers are larger and capable of holding up to four parts ($n_p = 1, 2, 3$, or $4$). The loading time $T_L = 9 + 3n_p$, where $T_L$ is in seconds. With other parameters defined as in the previous problem, determine which of the four values of $n_p$ are feasible. For those values that are feasible, specify the appropriate design parameters for (a) spacing between carriers and (b) number of carriers that will achieve this flow rate.

**10.23** A recirculating conveyor has a total length of 700 ft and a speed of 90 ft/min. Spacing of part carriers = 14 ft. Each carrier can hold one part. Automatic machines load and unload the conveyor at the load and unload stations. Time to load a part is 0 10 min, and unload time is the same. To satisfy production requirements, the loading and unloading rates are each 2.0 parts/min. Evaluate the conveyor system design with respect to the three principles developed by Kwo.

**10.24** A recirculating conveyor has a total length of 200 m and a speed of 50 m/min. Spacing of part carriers = 5 m. Each carrier holds two parts. Time needed to load a part carrier = 0.15 min. Unloading time is the same. The required loading and unloading rates are 6 parts/min. Evaluate the conveyor system design with respect to the three Kwo principles.

**10.25** There is a plan to install a continuous loop conveyor system with a total length of 1000 ft and a speed of 50 ft/min. The conveyor will have carriers that are separated by 25 ft. Each carrier will be capable of holding one part. A load station and an unload station are to be located 500 ft apart along the conveyor loop. Each day, the conveyor system is planned to operate as follows, starting empty at the beginning of the day. The load station will load parts at the rate of one part every 30 sec, continuing this loading operation for 10 min, then resting for 10 min, during which no loading occurs. It will repeat this 20-min cycle throughout the 8-hr shift. The unload station will wait until loaded carriers begin to arrive, then will unload parts at the rate of 1 part/min during the 8 hr, continuing until all carriers are empty. (a) If the length of each station is 10 ft, and so loading and unloading must be accomplished on a moving conveyor within that space, what is the maximum time available to perform the loading and unloading operations? (b) Will the planned conveyor system work? Present calculations and arguments to justify your answer.

# chapter 11

# Storage Systems

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



The function of a material storage system is to store materials for a period of time and to permit access to those materials when required. Materials stored by manufacturing firms include a variety of types, as indicated in Table 11.1. Categories (1)–(5) relate directly to the product, (6)–(8) relate to the process, and (9) and (10) relate to overall support of factory operations. The different categories of materials require different storage methods and controls. Many production plants use manual methods for storing and retrieving items. The storage function is often accomplished inefficiently, in terms of human resources, factory floor space, and material control. Automated methods are available to improve the efficiency of the storage function.

In this chapter, we begin by defining the most important measures of storage system performance. We also discuss the different strategies that can be used to decide appropriate locations for items in the storage system. We then describe the types of storage equipment and methods, dividing these into conventional and automated types. The final section

**TABLE 11.1** Types of Materials Typically Stored in a Factory

| *Type* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| 1. Raw materials | Raw stock to be processed (e.g., bar stock, sheet metal, plastic molding compound) |
| 2. Purchased parts | Parts from vendors to be processed or assembled (e.g., castings, purchased components) |
| 3. Work-in-process | Partially completed parts between processing operations or parts awaiting assembly |
| 4. Finished product | Completed product ready for shipment |
| 5. Rework and scrap | Parts that are out of specification, either to be reworked or scrapped |
| 6. Refuse | Chips, swarf, oils, other waste products left over after processing; these materials must be disposed of, sometimes using special precautions |
| 7. Tooling | Cutting tools, jigs, fixtures, molds, dies, welding wire, and other tooling used in manufacturing and assembly; supplies such as helmets, gloves, etc., are usually included |
| 8. Spare parts | Parts needed for maintenance and repair of factory equipment |
| 9. Office supplies | Paper, paper forms, writing instruments, and other items used in support of plant office |
| 10. Plant records | Records on product, equipment, and personnel |

presents a quantitative analysis of automated storage systems, whose performance is generally measured in terms of capacity and throughput.

## 11.1 STORAGE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

The performance of a storage system in accomplishing its function must be sufficient to justify its investment and operating expense. Various measures used to assess the performance of a storage system include: (1) storage capacity, (2) density, (3) accessibility, and (4) throughput. In addition, standard measures used for mechanized and automated systems include (5) utilization and (6) reliability.

*Storage capacity* can be measured in two ways: (1) as the total volumetric space available or (2) as the total number of storage compartments in the system available for items or loads. In many storage systems, materials are stored in unit loads that are held in standard size containers (pallets, tote pans, or other containers). The standard container can readily be handled, transported, and stored by the storage system and by the material handling system that may be connected to it. Hence, storage capacity is conveniently measured as the number of unit loads that can be stored in the system. The physical capacity of the storage system should be greater than the maximum number of loads anticipated to be stored, to provide available empty spaces for materials being entered into the system and to allow for variations in maximum storage requirements.

Storage *density* is defined as the volumetric space available for actual storage relative to the total volumetric space in the storage facility. In many warehouses, aisle space and wasted overhead space account for more volume than the volume available for actual storage of materials. Floor area is sometimes used to assess storage density, because it is convenient to measure this on a floor plan of the facility. However, volumetric density is usually a more-appropriate measure than area density.

For efficient use of space, the storage system should be designed to achieve a high density. However, as storage density is increased, accessibility, another important measure of storage performance, is adversely affected. *Accessibility* refers to the capability to access any desired item or load stored in the system. In the design of a given storage system, trade-offs must be made between storage density and accessibility.

*System throughput* is defined as the hourly rate at which the storage system (1) receives and puts loads into storage and/or (2) retrieves and delivers loads to the output station. In many factory and warehouse operations, there are certain periods of the day when the required rate of storage and/or retrieval transactions is greater than at other times. The storage system must be designed for the maximum throughput that will be required during the day.

System throughput is limited by the time to perform a storage or retrieval (S/R) transaction. A typical storage transaction consists of the following elements: (1) pick up load at input station, (2) travel to storage location, (3) place load into storage location, and (4) travel back to input station. A retrieval transaction consists of: (1) travel to storage location, (2) pick item from storage, (3) travel to output station, and (4) unload at output station. Each element takes time. The sum of the element times is the transaction time that determines throughput of the storage system. Throughput can sometimes be increased by combining storage and retrieval transactions in one cycle, thus reducing travel time; this is called a *dual command cycle*. When either a storage or a retrieval transaction alone is performed in the cycle, it is called a *single command cycle*.

There are variations in the way a storage/retrieval cycle is performed, depending on the type of storage system. In manually operated systems, time is often lost looking up the storage location of the item being stored or retrieved. Also, element times are subject to the variations and motivations of human workers, and there is a lack of control over the operations. The ability to perform dual command cycles rather than single command cycles depends on demand and scheduling issues. If, during a certain portion of the day, there is demand for only storage transactions and no retrievals, then it is not possible to include both types of transactions in the same cycle. If both transaction types are required, then greater throughput will be achieved by scheduling dual command cycles. This scheduling is more readily done by a computerized (automated) storage system.

Throughput is also limited by the capability of the material handling system that is interfaced to the storage system. If the maximum rate at which loads can be delivered to the storage system or removed from it by the handling system is less than the S/R cycle rate of the storage system, then throughput will be adversely affected.

Two additional performance measures applicable to mechanized and automated storage systems are utilization and availability. *Utilization* is defined as the proportion of time that the system is actually being used for performing storage and retrieval operations compared with the time it is available. Utilization varies throughout the day, as requirements change from hour to hour. It is desirable to design an automated storage system for relatively high utilization, in the range 80–90%. If utilization is too low, then the system is probably overdesigned. If utilization is too high, then there is no allowance for rush periods or system breakdowns.

*Availability* is a measure of system reliability, defined as the proportion of time that the system is capable of operating (not broken down) compared with the normally scheduled shift hours. Malfunctions and failures of the equipment cause downtime. Reasons for downtime include computer failures, mechanical breakdowns, load jams, improper maintenance, and incorrect procedures by personnel using the system. The reliability of an existing system can be improved by good preventive maintenance procedures and by having repair parts on hand for critical components. Backup procedures should be devised to mitigate the effects of system downtime.

## 11.2 STORAGE LOCATION STRATEGIES

There are several strategies that can be used to organize stock in a storage system. These storage location strategies affect several of the performance measures discussed above. The two basic strategies are (1) randomized storage and (2) dedicated storage. Let us explain these strategies as they are commonly applied in warehousing operations. Each item type stored in a warehouse is known as a *stock-keeping-unit* (SKU). The SKU uniquely identifies that item type. The inventory records of the storage facility maintain a count of the quantities of each SKU that are in storage. In *randomized storage*, items are stored in any available location in the storage system. In the usual implementation of randomized storage, incoming items are placed into storage in the nearest available open location. When an order is received for a given SKU, the stock is retrieved from storage according to a first-in-first-out policy so that the items held in storage the longest are used to make up the order.

In *dedicated storage*, SKUs are assigned to specific locations in the storage facility. This means that locations are reserved for all SKUs stored in the system, and so the number of storage locations for each SKU must be sufficient to accommodate its maximum inventory level. The basis for specifying the storage locations is usually one of the following: (1) Items are stored in part number or product number sequence; (2) items are stored according to activity level, the more active SKUs being located closer to the input/output station; or (3) items are stored according to their activity-to-space ratios, the higher ratios being located closer to the input/output station.

When comparing the benefits of the two strategies, it is generally found that less total space is required in a storage system that uses randomized storage, but higher throughput rates can usually be achieved when a dedicated storage strategy is implemented based on activity level. Example 11.1 illustrates the advantage of randomized storage in terms of its better storage density.

**EXAMPLE 11.1 Comparison of Storage Strategies**

Suppose that a total of 50 SKUs must be stored in a storage system. For each SKU, average order quantity = 100 cartons, average depletion rate = 2 cartons/day, and safety stock level = 10 cartons. Each carton requires one storage location in the system. Based on this data, each SKU has an inventory cycle that lasts 50 days. Since there are 50 SKUs in all, management has scheduled incoming orders so that a different SKU arrives each day. Determine the number of storage locations required in the system under two alternative strategies: (a) randomized storage and (b) dedicated storage.

***Solution:*** Our estimates of space requirements are based on average order quantities and other values in the problem statement. Let us first calculate the maximum inventory level and average inventory level for each SKU. The inventory for each SKU varies over time as shown in Figure 11.1. The maximum inventory level, which occurs just after an order has been received, is the sum of the order quantity and safety stock level.

$$\text{Maximum inventory level} = 100 + 10 = 110 \text{ cartons}$$

The average inventory is the average of the maximum and minimum inventory levels under the assumption of uniform depletion rate. The minimum value

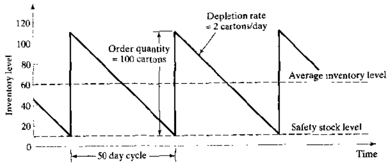



**Figure 11.1** Inventory level as a function of time for each SKU in Example 11.1.

occurs just before an order is received when the inventory is depleted to the safety stock level.

$$\text{Minimum inventory level} = 10 \text{ cartons}$$

$$\text{Average inventory level} = (110 + 10)/2 = 60 \text{ cartons}$$

(a) Under a randomized storage strategy, the number of locations required for each SKU is equal to the average inventory level of the item, since incoming orders are scheduled each day throughout the 50-day cycle. This means that when the inventory level of one SKU near the beginning of its cycle is high, the level for another SKU near the end of its cycle is low. Thus, the number of storage locations required in the system is:

$$\text{Number of storage locations} = (50 \text{ SKUs})(60 \text{ cartons}) = 3000 \text{ locations}$$

(b) Under a dedicated storage strategy, the number of locations required for each SKU must equal its maximum inventory level. Thus, the number of storage locations required in the system is:

$$\text{Number of storage locations} = (50 \text{ SKUs})(110 \text{ cartons}) = 5500 \text{ locations}$$

Some of the advantages of both storage strategies can be obtained in a *class-based dedicated storage* allocation, in which the storage system is divided into several classes according to activity level, and a randomized storage strategy is used within each class. The classes containing more-active SKUs are located closer to the input/output point of the storage system for increased throughput, and the randomized locations within the classes reduce the total number of storage compartments required. We examine the effect of class-based dedicated storage on throughput in Example 11.4 and several of our end-of-chapter problems.

## 11.3 CONVENTIONAL STORAGE METHODS AND EQUIPMENT

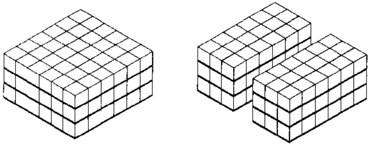
A variety of storage methods and equipment are available to store the various materials listed in Table 11.1. The choice of method and equipment depends largely on the material to be stored, the operating philosophy of the personnel managing the storage facility, and

**TABLE 11.2** Application Characteristics of the Types of Storage Equipment and Methods

| *Storage Equipment* | *Advantages and Disadvantages* | *Typical Applications* |
|---|---|---|
| Bulk storage | Highest density is possible<br>Low accessibility<br>Lowest possible cost per sq ft | Storage of low turnover, large stock or large unit loads |
| Rack systems | Low cost<br>Good storage density<br>Good accessibility | Palletized loads in warehouses |
| Shelves and bins | Some stock items not clearly visible | Storage of individual items on shelves<br>Storage of commodity items in bins |
| Drawer storage | Contents of drawer easily visible<br>Good accessibility<br>Relatively high cost | Small tools<br>Small stock items<br>Repair parts |
| Automated storage systems | High throughput rates<br>Facilitates use of computerized inventory control system<br>Highest cost equipment<br>Facilitates interface to automated material handling systems | Work-in-process storage<br>Final product warehousing and distribution center<br>Order picking<br>Kitting of parts for electronic assembly |

budgetary limitations. In this section, we discuss the traditional (nonautomated) methods and equipment types. Automated storage systems are discussed in the following section. Application characteristics for the different equipment types are summarized in Table 11.2.

*Bulk Storage.* *Bulk storage* refers to the storage of stock in an open floor area. The stock is generally contained in unit loads on pallets or similar containers, and unit loads are stacked on top of each other to increase storage density. The highest density is achieved when unit loads are placed next to each other in both floor directions, as in Figure 11.2(a). However, this provides very poor access to internal loads. To increase



(a) (b)

**Figure 11.2** Various bulk storage arrangements: (a) high-density bulk storage provides low accessibility; (b) bulk storage with loads arranged to form rows and blocks for improved accessibility.

accessibility, bulk storage loads can be organized into rows and blocks, so that natural aisles are created between pallet loads, as in Figure 11.2(b). The block widths can be designed to provide an appropriate balance between density and accessibility. Depending on the shape and physical support provided by the items stored, there may be a restriction on how high the unit loads can be stacked. In some cases, loads cannot be stacked on top of each other, either because of the physical shape or limited compressive strength of the individual loads. The inability to stack loads in bulk storage reduces storage density, removing one of its principal benefits.

Although bulk storage is characterized by the absence of specific storage equipment, material handling equipment must be used to put materials into storage and to retrieve them. Industrial trucks such as pallet trucks and powered forklifts (Section 10.1) are typically used for this purpose.

*Rack Systems.* Rack systems provide a method of stacking unit loads vertically without the need for the loads themselves to provide support. One of the most common rack systems is the *pallet rack*, consisting of a frame that includes horizontal load-supporting beams, as illustrated in Figure 11.3. Pallet loads are stored on these horizontal beams. Alternative storage rack systems include:

- *Cantilever racks*, which serve a similar function as pallet racks except the supporting horizontal beams are cantilevered from the vertical central frame. Elimination of the vertical beams at the front of the frame provides unobstructed spans, which facilitates storage of long materials such as rods, bars, and pipes.
- *Portable racks*, which consist of portable box-frames that hold a single pallet load and can be stacked on top of each other, thus preventing load crushing that might occur in bulk vertical storage.
- *Drive-through racks.* These consist of aisles, open at each end, having two vertical columns with supporting rails for pallet loads on either side but no obstructing beams spanning the aisle. The rails are designed to support pallets of specific widths (Table 9.4). Forklift trucks are driven into the aisle to place the pallets onto the supporting rails. A related rack system is the *drive-in rack*, which is open at one end, permitting forklifts to access loads from one direction only.
- *Flow-through racks.* In place of the horizontal load-supporting beams in a conventional rack system, the flow-through rack uses long conveyor tracks capable of supporting a row of unit loads. The unit loads are loaded from one side of the rack and unloaded from the other side, thus providing first-in-first-out stock rotation. The conveyor tracks are often inclined at a slight angle to allow gravity to move the loads toward the output side of the rack system.

*Shelving and Bins.* Shelves represent one of the most common storage equipment types. A *shelf* is a horizontal platform, supported by a wall or frame, on which materials are stored. Steel shelving sections are manufactured in standard sizes, typically ranging from about 0.9 to 1.2 m (3 to 4 ft) long (in the aisle direction), from 0.3 to 0.6 m (12 to 24 in) wide, and up to 3.0 m (10 ft) tall. Shelving often includes *bins*, which are containers or boxes that hold loose items.

*Drawer Storage.* Finding items in shelving can sometimes be difficult, especially if the shelf is either far above or below eye level for the storage attendant. Storage draw-

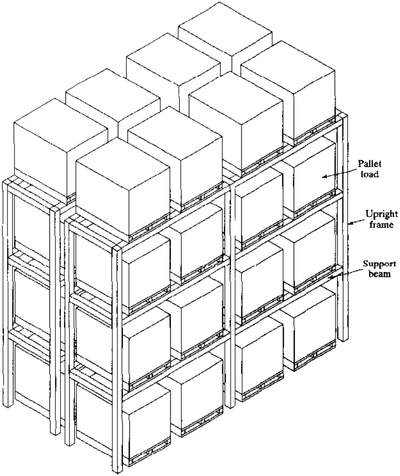



**Figure 11.3** Pallet rack system for storage of unit loads on pallets.

ers, Figure 11.4, can alleviate this problem because each drawer pulls out to allow its entire contents to be readily seen. Modular drawer storage cabinets are available with a variety of drawer depths for different item sizes and are widely used for storage of tools and maintenance items.

## 11.4 AUTOMATED STORAGE SYSTEMS

The storage equipment described in the preceding section requires a human worker to access the items in storage. The storage system itself is static. Mechanized and automated storage systems are available that reduce or eliminate the amount of human intervention

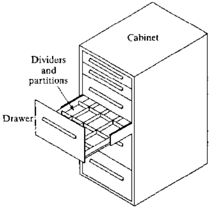



**Figure 11.4** Drawer storage.

required to operate the system. The level of automation varies. In less-automated systems, a human operator is required in each storage/retrieval transaction. In highly automated systems, loads are entered or retrieved under computer control, with no human participation except to input data to the computer. Table 11.2 lists the advantages and disadvantages as well as typical applications of automated storage systems.

An automated storage system represents a significant investment, and it often requires a new and different way of doing business. Companies have different reasons for automating the storage function. Table 11.3 provides a list of possible objectives that a company may want to achieve by automating its storage operations. Automated storage systems divide into two general types: (1) automated storage/retrieval systems and (2) carousel storage systems. These two types are discussed in the following sections.

### 11.4.1 Automated Storage/Retrieval Systems

An *automated storage/retrieval system* (AS/RS) can be defined as a storage system that performs storage and retrieval operations with speed and accuracy under a defined degree of automation. A wide range of automation is found in commercially available AS/R

**TABLE 11.3** Possible Objectives for Automating a Company's Storage Operations

- To increase storage capacity
- To increase storage density
- To recover factory floor space presently used for storing work-in-process
- To improve security and reduce pilferage
- To reduce labor cost and/or increase labor productivity in storage operations
- To improve safety in the storage function
- To improve control over inventories
- To improve stock rotation
- To improve customer service
- To increase throughput

systems. At the most sophisticated level, the operations are totally automated, computer controlled, and fully integrated with factory and/or warehouse operations; at the other extreme, human workers control the equipment and perform the storage/retrieval transactions. Automated storage/retrieval systems are custom designed for each application, although the designs are based on standard modular components available from each respective AS/RS supplier.

Our definition can be interpreted to include carousel storage systems. However, in the material handling industry, the carousel-based systems are distinguished from AS/RSs. The biggest difference is in the construction of the equipment. The basic AS/RS consists of a rack structure for storing loads and a storage/retrieval mechanism whose motions are linear ($x$-$y$-$z$ motions). By contrast, a basic carousel system uses storage baskets suspended from an overhead conveyor that revolves around an oval track loop to deliver the baskets to a load/unload station. The differences between an AS/RS and a carousel storage system are summarized in Table 11.4.

An AS/RS consists of one or more storage aisles that are each serviced by a storage/retrieval (S/R) machine. (The S/R machines are sometimes referred to as cranes.) The aisles have storage racks for holding the stored materials. The S/R machines are used to deliver materials to the storage racks and to retrieve materials from the racks. Each AS/RS aisle has one or more input/output stations where materials are delivered into the storage system or moved out of the system. The input/output stations are called *pickup-and-deposit* (P&D) stations in AS/RS terminology. P&D stations can be manually operated or interfaced to some form of automated handling system such as a conveyor or an AGVS.

*AS/RS Types and Applications.* Several important categories of automated storage/retrieval system can be distinguished. The following are the principal types:

- *Unit load AS/RS.* The unit load AS/RS is typically a large automated system designed to handle unit loads stored on pallets or in other standard containers. The system is computer controlled, and the S/R machines are automated and designed to handle the unit load containers. A unit load AS/RS is pictured in Figure 11.5. The unit load system is the generic AS/RS. Other systems described below represent variations of the unit load AS/RS.

**TABLE 11.4** Differences Between an AS/RS and a Carousel Storage System

| *Feature* | *Basic AS/RS* | *Basic Carousel Storage System* |
|---|---|---|
| Storage structure | Rack system to support pallets or shelf system to support tote bins | Baskets suspended from overhead conveyor trolleys |
| Motions | Linear motions of S/R machine | Revolution of overhead conveyor trolleys around oval track |
| Storage/retrieval operation | S/R machine travels to compartments in rack structure | Conveyor revolves to bring baskets to load/unload station |
| Replication of storage capacity | Multiple aisles, each consisting of rack structure and S/R machine | Multiple carousels, each consisting of oval track and suspended bins |

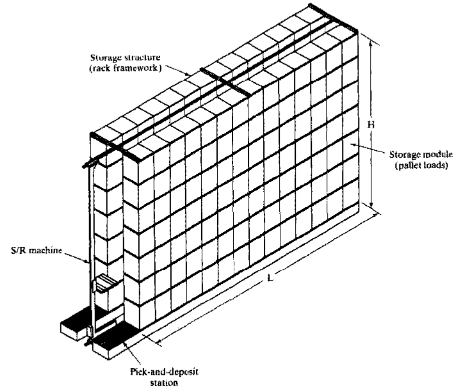



**Figure 11.5** A unit load automated storage/retrieval system.

- *Deep-lane AS/RS.* The deep-lane AS/RS is a high-density unit load storage system that is appropriate when large quantities of stock are stored, but the number of separate stock types (SKUs) is relatively small. Instead of storing each unit load so that it can be accessed directly from the aisle (as in a conventional unit load system), the deep-lane system stores ten or more loads in a single rack, one load behind the next. Each rack is designed for "flow-through," with input on one side and output on the other side. Loads are picked from one side of the rack by an S/R-type machine designed for retrieval, and another machine is used on the entry side of the rack for load input.
- *Miniload AS/RS.* This storage system is used to handle small loads (individual parts or supplies) that are contained in bins or drawers in the storage system. The S/R machine is designed to retrieve the bin and deliver it to a P&D station at the end of the aisle so that individual items can be withdrawn from the bins. The P&D station is usually operated by a human worker. The bin or drawer must then be returned to its location in the system. A miniload AS/R system is generally smaller than a unit load AS/RS and is often enclosed for security of the items stored.
- *Man-on-board AS/RS.* A man-on-board (also called man-aboard) storage/retrieval system represents an alternative approach to the problem of retrieving individual items from storage. In this system, a human operator rides on the carriage of the S/R

machine. Whereas the miniload system delivers an entire bin to the end-of-aisle pick station and must return it subsequently to its proper storage compartment, the man-on-board system permits individual items to be picked directly at their storage locations. This offers an opportunity to increase system throughput.

- *Automated item retrieval system.* These storage systems are also designed for retrieval of individual items or small product cartons; however, the items are stored in lanes rather than bins or drawers. When an item is retrieved, it is pushed from its lane and drops onto a conveyor for delivery to the pickup station. The operation is somewhat similar to a candy vending machine, except that an item retrieval system has more storage lanes and a conveyor to transport items to a central location. The supply of items in each lane is periodically replenished, usually from the rear of the system so that there is flow-through of items, thus permitting first-in/first-out inventory rotation.
- *Vertical lift storage modules* (VLSM) [10]. These are also called vertical lift automat ed storage/retrieval systems (VL-AS/RS) [7]. All of the preceding AS/RS types are designed around a horizontal aisle. The same principle of using a center aisle to access loads is used except that the aisle is vertical. Vertical lift storage modules, some with heights of 10 m (30 ft) or more, are capable of holding large inventories while saving valuable floor space in the factory.

Most applications of AS/RS technology have been associated with warehousing and distribution operations. An AS/RS can also be used to store raw materials and work-in-process in manufacturing. Three application areas can be distinguished for automated storage/retrieval systems: (1) unit load storage and handling, (2) order picking, and (3) work-in-process storage systems. Unit load storage and retrieval applications are represented by the unit load AS/RS and deep-lane storage systems. These kinds of applications are commonly found in warehousing for finished goods in a distribution center, rarely in manufacturing. Deep-lane systems are used in the food industry. As described above, order picking involves retrieving materials in less than full unit load quantities. Miniload, man-on-board, and item retrieval systems are used for this second application area.

Work-in-process (WIP) storage is a more recent application of automated storage technology. While it is desirable to minimize the amount of work-in-process, it is also important to effectively manage WIP that unavoidably does exist in a factory. Automated storage systems, either automated storage/retrieval systems or carousel systems, represent an efficient way of storing materials between processing steps, particularly in batch and job shop production. In high production, work-in-process is often carried between operations by conveyor systems, which thus serves both storage and transport functions.

The merits of an automated WIP storage system for batch and job shop production can best be seen be comparing it with the traditional way of dealing with work-in-process. The typical factory contains multiple work cells, each performing its own processing operations on different parts. At each cell, orders consisting of one or more parts are waiting on the plant floor to be processed, while other completed orders are waiting to be moved to the next cell in the sequence. It is not unusual for a plant engaged in batch production to have hundreds of orders in progress simultaneously, all of which represent work-in-process. The disadvantages of keeping all of this inventory in the plant include: (1) time spent searching for orders, (2) parts or even entire orders becoming temporarily or permanently lost, sometimes resulting in repeat orders to reproduce the lost parts, (3) orders not being processed according to their relative priorities at each cell, and (4) orders spending too much time in the factory, causing customer deliveries to be late. These problems indicate poor control of work-in-process.

Automated storage/retrieval systems are also used in high-production operations. Examples are found in the automobile industry, where some final assembly plants use large capacity AS/R systems to temporarily store car and small truck bodies between major assembly steps. The AS/RS can be used for staging and sequencing the work units according to the most efficient production schedule [1].

Automated storage systems help to regain control over WIP. Reasons that justify the installation of automated storage systems for work-in-process include:

- *Buffer storage in production.* A storage system can be used as a buffer storage zone between two processes whose production rates are significantly different. A simple example is a two-process sequence in which the first processing operation feeds a second process, which operates at a slower production rate. The first operation requires only one shift to meet production requirements, while the second step requires two shifts to produce the same number of units. An in-process buffer is needed between these operations to temporarily store the output of the first process.
- *Support of just-in-time delivery.* Just-in-time (JIT) is a manufacturing strategy in which parts required in production and/or assembly are received immediately before they are needed in the plant (Section 26.7). This results in a significant dependency of the factory on its suppliers to deliver the parts on time for use in production. To reduce the chance of stock-outs due to late supplier deliveries, some plants have installed automated storage systems as storage buffers for incoming materials. Although this approach subverts the objectives of JIT, it also reduces some of its risks.
- *Kitting of parts for assembly.* The storage system is used to store components for assembly of products or subassemblies. When an order is received, the required components are retrieved, collected into kits (tote pans), and delivered to the production floor for assembly.
- *Compatible with automatic identification systems.* Automated storage systems can be readily interfaced with automatic identification devices such as bar code readers. This allows loads to be stored and retrieved without human operators to identify the loads.
- *Computer control and tracking of materials.* Combined with automatic identification, an automated WIP storage system permits the location and status of work-in-process to be known.
- *Support of factory-wide automation.* Given the need for some storage of work-in-process in batch production, an appropriately sized automated storage system becomes an important subsystem in a fully automated factory.

***Components and Operating Features of an AS/RS.*** Virtually all of the automated storage/retrieval systems described above consist of the following components, shown in Figure 11.5: (1) storage structure, (2) S/R machine, (3) storage modules (e.g., pallets for unit loads), and (4) one or more pickup-and-deposit stations. In addition, a control system is required to operate the AS/RS.

The *storage structure* is the rack framework, made of fabricated steel, which supports the loads contained in the AS/RS. The rack structure must possess sufficient strength and rigidity that it does not deflect significantly due to the loads in storage or other forces on the framework. The individual storage compartments in the structure must be designed to accept and hold the storage modules used to contain the stored materials. The rack structure may also be used to support the roof and siding of the building in which the AS/RS resides. Another function of the storage structure is to support the aisle hardware required to align the S/R machines with respect to the storage compartments of the AS/RS. This hardware includes guide rails at the top and bottom of the structure as well as end stops and other features required to provide safe operation.

The *S/R machine* is used to accomplish storage transactions, delivering loads from the input station into storage, and retrieving loads from storage and delivering them to the output station. To perform these transactions, the storage/retrieval machine must be capable of horizontal and vertical travel to align its carriage (which carries the load) with the storage compartment in the rack structure. The S/R machine consists of a rigid mast on which is mounted a rail system for vertical motion of the carriage. Wheels are attached at the base of the mast to permit horizontal travel along a rail system that runs the length of the aisle. A parallel rail at the top of the storage structure is used to maintain alignment of the mast and carriage with respect to the rack structure.

The carriage includes a shuttle mechanism to move loads into and from their storage compartments. The design of the shuttle system must also permit loads to be transferred from the S/R machine to the P&D station or other material-handling interface with the AS/RS. The carriage and shuttle are positioned and actuated automatically in the usual AS/RS. Man-on-board S/R machines are equipped for a human operator to ride on the carriage.

To accomplish the desired motions of the S/R machine, three drive systems are required: horizontal movement of the mast, vertical movement of the carriage, and shuttle transfer between the carriage and a storage compartment. Modern S/R machines are available with horizontal speeds up to 200 m/min (600 ft/min) along the aisle and vertical or lift speeds up to around 50 m/min(150 ft/min). These speeds determine the time required for the carriage to travel from the P&D station to a particular location in the storage aisle. Acceleration and deceleration have a more-significant effect on travel time over short distances. The shuttle transfer is accomplished by any of several mechanisms, including forks (for pallet loads) and friction devices for flat bottom tote pans.

The *storage modules* are the unit load containers of the stored material. These include pallets, steel wire baskets and containers, plastic tote pans, and special drawers (used in miniload systems). These modules are generally made to a standard base size that can be handled automatically by the carriage shuttle of the S/R machine. The standard size is also designed to fit in the storage compartments of the rack structure.

The *pick-and-deposit station* is where loads are transferred into and out of the AS/RS. They are generally located at the end of the aisles for access by the external handling system that brings loads to the AS/RS and takes loads away. Pickup stations and deposit stations may be located at opposite ends of the storage aisle or combined at the same location. This depends on the origination point of incoming loads and the destination of output loads. A P&D station must be designed to compatible with both the S/R machine shuttle and the external handling system. Common methods to handle loads at the P&D station include manual load/unload, fork lift truck, conveyor (e.g., roller), and AGVS.

The principal *AS/RS controls* problem is positioning the S/R machine within an acceptable tolerance at a storage compartment in the rack structure to deposit or retrieve a load. The locations of materials stored in the system must be determined to direct the S/R machine to a particular storage compartment. Within a given aisle in the AS/RS, each compartment is identified by its horizontal and vertical positions and whether it is on the right side or left side of the aisle. A scheme based on alphanumeric codes can be used for this purpose. Using this location identification scheme, each unit of material stored in the system can be referenced to a particular location in the aisle. The record of these locations is called the "item location file." Each time a storage transaction is completed, the transaction must be recorded into the item location file.

Given a specified storage compartment to go to, the S/R machine must be controlled to move to that location and position the shuttle for load transfer. One positioning method uses a counting procedure in which the number of bays and levels are counted in the direction of travel (horizontally and vertically) to determine position. An alternative method is a numerical identification procedure in which each compartment is provided with a reflective target with binary-coded location identifications on its face. Optical scanners are used to read the target and position the shuttle for depositing or retrieving a load.

Computer controls and programmable logic controllers are used to determine the required location and guide the S/R machine to its destination. Computer control permits the physical operation of the AS/RS to be integrated with the supporting information and record-keeping system. Storage transactions can be entered in real-time, inventory records can be accurately maintained, system performance can be monitored, and communications can be facilitated with other factory computer systems. These automatic controls can be superseded or supplemented by manual controls when required under emergency conditions or for man-on-board operation of the machine.

### 11.4.2 Carousel Storage Systems

A carousel storage system consists of a series of bins or baskets suspended from an overhead chain conveyor that revolves around a long oval rail system, as depicted in Figure 11.6. The purpose of the chain conveyor is to position bins at a load/unload station at the end of the oval. The operation is similar to the powered overhead rack system used by dry cleaners to deliver finished garments to the front of the store. Most carousels are operated by a human worker located at the load/unload station. The worker activates the powered carousel to deliver a desired bin to the station. One or more parts are removed from or added to the bin, and then the cycle is repeated. Some carousels are automated by using transfer mechanisms at the load/unload station to move loads into and from the carousel.

*Carousel Technology.* Carousels can be classified as horizontal or vertical. The more common horizontal configuration, as in Figure 11.6, comes in a variety of sizes, ranging between 3 m (10 ft) and 30 m (100 ft) in length. Carousels at the upper end of the range have higher storage density, but the average access cycle time is greater. Accordingly, most carousels are 10–16 m (30–50 ft) long to achieve a proper balance between these competing factors.

The structure of a horizontal carousel storage system consists of welded steel framework that supports the oval rail system. The carousel can be either an overhead system (called a top-driven unit) or a floor-mounted system (called a bottom-driven unit). In the top-driven unit, a motorized pulley system is mounted at the top of the framework and drives an overhead trolley system. The bins are suspended from the trolleys. In the bottom-driven unit, the pulley drive system is mounted at the base of the frame, and the trolley system rides on a rail in the base. This provides more load-carrying capacity for the carousel storage system. It also eliminates the problem of dirt and oil dripping from the overhead trolley system in top-driven systems.

The design of the individual bins and baskets of the carousel must be consistent with the loads to be stored. Bin widths range from about 50 to 75 cm (20 to 30 in), and depths

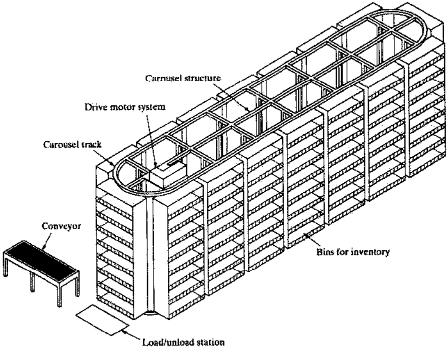



**Figure 11.6** A horizontal storage carousel.

are up to about 55 cm (22 in). Heights of horizontal carousels are typically 1.8–2.4 m (6–8 ft). Standard bins are made of steel wire to increase operator visibility.

Vertical carousels are constructed to operate around a vertical conveyor loop. They occupy much less floor space than the horizontal configuration, but require sufficient overhead space. The ceiling of the building limits the height of vertical carousels, and therefore their storage capacity is typically lower than for the average horizontal carousel.

Controls for carousel storage systems range from manual call controls to computer control. Manual controls include foot pedals, hand switches, and specialized keyboards. Foot pedal control allows the operator at the pick station to rotate the carousel in either direction to the desired bin position. Hand control involves use of a hand-operated switch that is mounted on an arm projecting from the carousel frame within easy reach of the operator. Again, bidirectional control is the usual mode of operation. Keyboard control permits a greater variety of control features than the previous control types. The operator can enter the desired bin position, and the carousel is programmed to determine the shortest route to deliver the bin to the pick station.

Computer control increases opportunities for automation of the mechanical carousel and for management of the inventory records. On the mechanical side, automatic loading and unloading is available on modern carousel storage systems. This allows the carousel to be interfaced with automated handling systems without the need for human participation in the load/unload operations. Data management features provided by computer control include the capability to maintain data on bin locations, items in each bin, and other inventory control records.

*Carousel Applications.* Carousel storage systems provide a relatively high throughput and are often an attractive alternative to a miniload AS/RS in manufacturing operations where its relatively low cost, versatility, and high reliability are recognized. Typical applications of carousel storage systems include: (1) storage and retrieval operations, (2) transport and accumulation, (3) work-in-process, and (4) unique applications.

*Storage and retrieval operations* can be efficiently accomplished using carousels when individual items must be selected from groups of items in storage. Sometimes called "pick and load" operations, this kind of procedure is common in order-picking of tools in a toolroom, raw materials in a stockroom, service parts or other items in a wholesale firm, and work-in-process in a factory. In small electronics assembly, carousels are used for kitting of parts to be transported to assembly workstations.

In *transport and accumulation* applications, the carousel is used to transport and/or sort materials as they are stored. One example of this is in progressive assembly operations where the workstations are located around the periphery of a continuously moving carousel, and the workers have access to the individual storage bins of the carousel. They remove work from the bins to complete their own respective assembly tasks, then place their work into another bin for the next operation at some other workstation. Another example of transport and accumulation applications is sorting and consolidation of items. Each bin is defined for collecting the items of a particular type or customer. When the bin is full, the collected load is removed for shipment or other disposition.

Carousel storage systems often compete with automated storage and retrieval systems for applications where work-in-process is to be temporarily stored. Applications of carousel systems in the electronics industry are common. *Unique applications* involve specialized uses of carousel systems. Examples include: electrical testing of components, where the carousel is used to store the item during testing for a specified period of time; and drawer or cabinet storage, in which standard drawer-type cabinets are mounted on the carousel.

## 11.5 ENGINEERING ANALYSIS OF STORAGE SYSTEMS

Several aspects of the design and operation of a storage system are susceptible to quantitative engineering analysis. In this section, we examine capacity sizing and throughput performance for the two types of automated storage systems.

### 11.5.1 Automated Storage/Retrieval Systems

While the methods developed here are specifically for an automated storage/retrieval system, similar approaches can be used for analyzing traditional storage facilities, such as warehouses consisting of pallet racks and bulk storage.

*Sizing the AS/RS Rack Structure.* The total storage capacity of one storage aisle depends on how many storage compartments are arranged horizontally and vertically in the aisle, as indicated in our diagram in Figure 11.7. This can be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Capacity per aisle} = 2\, n_y n_z \tag{11.1}$$

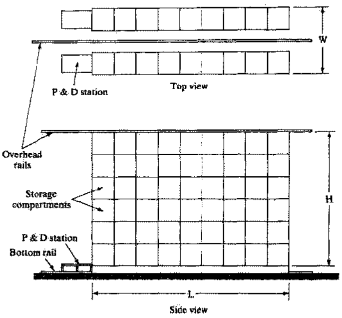



**Figure 11.7** Top and side views of a unit load AS/RS, with nine storage compartments horizontally ($n_y = 9$) and six compartments vertically ($n_z = 6$).

where $n_y$ = number of load compartments along the length of the aisle, and $n_z$ = number of load compartments that make up the height of the aisle. The constant, 2, accounts for the fact that loads are contained on both sides of the aisle.

If we assume a standard size compartment (to accept a standard size unit load), then the compartment dimensions facing the aisle must be larger than the unit load dimensions. Let $x$ and $y$ = the depth and width dimensions of a unit load (e.g., a standard pallet size as given in Table 9.4), and $z$ = the height of the unit load. The width, length, and height of the rack structure of the AS/RS aisle are related to the unit load dimensions and number of compartments as follows [6]:

$$W = 3(x + a) \tag{11.2a}$$

$$L = n_y(y + b) \tag{11.2b}$$

$$H = n_z(z + c) \tag{11.2c}$$

where $W$, $L$, and $H$ are the width, length, and height of one aisle of the AS/RS rack structure (mm, in); $x$, $y$, and $z$ are the dimensions of the unit load (mm, in); and $a$, $b$, and $c$ are allowances designed into each storage compartment to provide clearance for the unit load and to account for the size of the supporting beams in the rack structure (mm, in). For the case of unit loads contained on standard pallets, recommended values for the allowances [6] are: $a$ = 150 mm (6 in), $b$ = 200 mm (8 in), and $c$ = 250 mm (10 in). For an AS/RS with multiple aisles, $W$ is simply multiplied by the number of aisles to obtain the overall width of the storage system. The rack structure is built above floor level by 300–600 mm (12–24 in), and the length of the AS/RS extends beyond the rack structure to provide space for the P&D station.

**EXAMPLE 11.2 Sizing an AS/RS System**

Each aisle of a four-aisle AS/RS is to contain 60 storage compartments in the length direction and 12 compartments vertically. All storage compartments will be the same size to accommodate standard size pallets of dimensions: $x = 42$ in and $y = 48$ in. The height of a unit load $z = 36$ in. Using the allowances, $a = 6$ in, $b = 8$ in, and $c = 10$ in, determine: (a) how many unit loads can be stored in the AS/RS, and (b) the width, length, and height of the AS/RS.

***Solution:*** (a) The storage capacity is given by Eq. (11.1):
Capacity per aisle = 2(60)(12) = 1440 unit loads.
With four aisles, the total capacity is:

$$\text{AS/RS capacity} = 4(1440) = 5760 \text{ unit loads}$$

(b) From Eqs. (11.2), we can compute the dimensions of the storage rack structure:

$$W = 3(42 + 6) = 144 \text{ in} = 12 \text{ ft/aisle}$$

$$\text{Overall width of the AS/RS} = 4(12) = 48 \text{ ft}$$

$$L = 60(48 + 8) = 3360 \text{ in} = 280 \text{ ft}$$

$$H = 12(36 + 10) = 552 \text{ in} = 46 \text{ ft}$$

*AS/RS Throughput.* System throughput is defined as the hourly rate of S/R transactions that the automated storage system can perform (Section 11.1). A transaction involves depositing a load into storage or retrieving a load from storage. Either one of these transactions alone is accomplished in a single command cycle. A dual command cycle accomplishes both transaction types in one cycle; since this reduces travel time per transaction, throughput is increased by using dual command cycles.

Several methods are available to compute AS/RS cycle times to estimate throughput performance. The method we present is recommended by the Material Handling Institute [2]. It assumes: (1) randomized storage of loads in the AS/RS (i.e., any compartment in the storage aisle is equally likely to be selected for a transaction), (2) storage compartments are of equal size, (3) the P&D station is located at the base and end of the aisle, (4) constant horizontal and vertical speeds of the S/R machine, and (5) simultaneous horizontal and vertical travel. For a single command cycle, the load to be entered or retrieved is assumed to be located at the center of the rack structure, as in Figure 11.8(a). Thus, the S/R machine must travel half the length and half the height of the AS/RS, and it must return the same distance. The single command cycle time can therefore be expressed by:

$$T_{cs} = 2\,\text{Max}\left\{\frac{0.5L}{v_y}, \frac{0.5H}{v_z}\right\} + 2T_{pd} = \text{Max}\left\{\frac{L}{v_y}, \frac{H}{v_z}\right\} + 2T_{pd} \tag{11.3a}$$

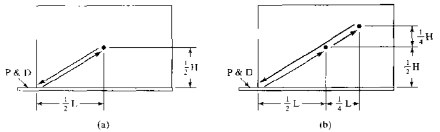



**Figure 11.8** Assumed travel trajectory of the S/R machine for (a) single command cycle and (b) dual command cycle.

where $T_{cs}$ = cycle time of a single command cycle (min/cycle), $L$ = length of the AS/RS rack structure (m, ft), $v_y$ = velocity of the S/R machine along the length of the AS/RS (m/min, ft/min), $H$ = height of the rack structure (m, ft), $v_z$ = velocity of the S/R machine in the vertical direction of the AS/RS (m/min, ft/min), and $T_{pd}$ = pickup-and-deposit time (min). Two P&D times are required per cycle, representing load transfers to and from the S/R machine.

For a dual command cycle, the S/R machine is assumed to travel to the center of the rack structure to deposit a load, and then it travels to 3/4 the length and height of the AS/RS to retrieve a load, as in Figure 11.8(b). Thus, the total distance traveled by the S/R machine is 3/4 the length and 3/4 the height of the rack structure, and back. In this case, cycle time is given by:

$$T_{cd} = 2\,\mathrm{Max}\left\{\frac{0.75L}{v_y}, \frac{0.75H}{v_z}\right\} + 4T_{pd} = \mathrm{Max}\left\{\frac{1.5L}{v_y}, \frac{1.5H}{v_z}\right\} + 4T_{pd} \qquad (11.3b)$$

where $T_{cd}$ = cycle time for a dual command cycle (min/cycle), and the other terms are defined above.

System throughput depends on the relative numbers of single and dual command cycles performed by the system. Let $R_{cs}$ = number of single command cycles performed per hour, and $R_{cd}$ = number of dual command cycles per hour at a specified or assumed utilization level. We can formulate an equation for the amounts of time spent in performing single command and dual command cycles each hour:

$$R_{cs}T_{cs} + R_{cd}T_{cd} = 60\,U \qquad (11.4)$$

where $U$ = system utilization during the hour. The right-hand side of the equation gives the total number of minutes of operation per hour. To solve Eq. (11.4), the relative proportions of $R_{cs}$ and $R_{cd}$ must be determined, or assumptions about these proportions must be made. Then the total hourly cycle rate is given by

$$R_c = R_{cs} + R_{cd} \qquad (11.5)$$

where $R_c$ = total S/R cycle rate (cycles/hr). Note that the total number of storage and retrieval transactions per hour will be greater than this value unless $R_{cd} = 0$, since there are two transactions accomplished in each dual command cycle. Let $R_t$ = the total number of transactions performed per hour: then

$$R_t = R_{cs} + 2R_{cd} \tag{11.6}$$

**EXAMPLE 11.3 AS/RS Throughput Analysis**

Consider the AS/RS from previous Example 11.2, in which an S/R machine is used for each aisle. The length of the storage aisle = 280 ft and its height = 46 ft. Suppose horizontal and vertical speeds of the S/R machine are 200 ft/min and 75 ft/min, respectively. The S/R machine requires 20 sec to accomplish a P&D operation. Find: (a) the single command and dual command cycle times per aisle, and (b) throughput per aisle under the assumptions that storage system utilization = 90% and the number of single command and dual command cycles are equal.

***Solution:*** (a) We first compute the single and dual command cycle times by Eqs. (11.3):

$$T_{cs} = \text{Max}\{280/200, 46/75\} + 2(20/60) = 2.066 \text{ min/cycle}$$

$$T_{cd} = \text{Max}\{1.5 \times 280/200, 1.5 \times 46/75\} + 4(20/60) = 3.432 \text{ min/cycle}$$

(b) From Eq. (11.4), we can establish the single command and dual command activity levels each hour as follows:

$$2.066\, R_{cs} + 3.432\, R_{cd} = 60(0.90) = 54.0 \text{ min}$$

According to the problem statement, the number of single command cycles is equal to the number of dual command cycles. Thus, $R_{cs} = R_{cd}$.

Substituting this relation into the above equation, we have

$$2.066\, R_{cs} + 3.432\, R_{cs} = 54$$

$$5.498\, R_{cs} = 54$$

$$R_{cs} = 9.822 \text{ single command cycles/hr}$$

$$R_{cd} = R_{cs} = 9.822 \text{ dual command cycles/hr}$$

System throughput = the total number of S/R transactions per hour from Eq. (11.6):

$$R_t = R_{cs} + 2R_{cd} = 29.46 \text{ transactions/hr}$$

With four aisle, $R_t$ for the AS/RS = 117.84 transactions/hr

**EXAMPLE 11.4 AS/RS Throughput Using a Class-Based Dedicated Storage Strategy**

The aisles in the AS/RS of the previous example will be organized following a class-based dedicated storage strategy. There will be two classes, according to activity level. The more-active stock is stored in the half of the rack system that is located closest to the input/output station, and the less-active stock is stored in the other half of the rack system farther away from the input/output station. Within each half of the rack system, random storage is used. The more-active stock accounts for 75% of the transactions, and the less-active stock accounts for the remaining 25%. As before, assume that system utilization = 90%, and the number of single command cycles = the number of dual command cycles. Determine the throughput of the AS/RS, basing the computation of cycle times on the same kinds of assumptions used in the MHI method.

***Solution:*** With a total length of 280 ft, each half of the rack system will be 140 ft long and 46 ft high. Let us identify the stock nearest the input/output station (accounting for 75% of the transactions) as Class A, and the other half of the stock (accounting for 25% of the transactions) as Class B. The cycle times are computed as follows:

For Class A stock:

$$T_{scA} = \text{Max}\left\{\frac{140}{200}, \frac{46}{75}\right\} + 2(0.333) = 1.366 \text{ min}$$

$$T_{dcA} = \text{Max}\left\{\frac{1.5 \times 140}{200}, \frac{1.5 \times 46}{75}\right\} + 4(0.333) = 2.382 \text{ min}$$

For Class B stock:

$$T_{scB} = 2\,\text{Max}\left\{\frac{140 + 0.5(140)}{200}, \frac{0.5(46)}{75}\right\} + 2(0.333) = 2.766 \text{ min}$$

$$T_{dcB} = 2\,\text{Max}\left\{\frac{140 + 0.75(140)}{200}, \frac{0.75(46)}{75}\right\} + 4(0.333) = 3.782 \text{ min}$$

Consistent with the previous problem, let us conclude that

$$R_{csA} = R_{cdA} \text{ and } R_{csB} = R_{cdB} \tag{a}$$

We are also given that 75% of the transactions are Class 1 and 25% are Class 2. Accordingly,

$$R_{csA} = 3R_{csB} \text{ and } R_{cdA} = 3R_{cdB} \tag{b}$$

We can establish the following equation for how each aisle spends its time during 1 hr:

$$R_{csA}T_{csA} + R_{cdA}T_{cdA} + R_{csB}T_{csB} + R_{cdB}T_{cdB} = 60(.90)$$

Based on Eqs. (a),

$$R_{csA}T_{csA} + R_{csA}T_{cdA} + R_{csB}T_{csB} + R_{csB}T_{cdB} = 60(.90)$$

Based on Eqs. (b),

$$3R_{csB}T_{csA} + 3R_{csB}T_{cdA} + R_{csB}T_{csB} + R_{csB}T_{cdB} = 60(.90)$$

$$3(1.366)\,R_{csB} + 3(2.382)\,R_{csB} + 2.766\,R_{csB} + 3.782\,R_{csB} = 54$$

$$17.792\,R_{csB} = 54$$

$$R_{csB} = 3.035$$

$$R_{csA} = 3\,R_{csB} = 9.105$$

$$R_{cdB} = R_{csB} = 3.035$$

$$R_{cdA} = 3\,R_{cdB} = 9.105$$

For one aisle,

$$R_t = R_{csA} + R_{csB} + 2(R_{cdA} + R_{cdB})$$
$$= 9.105 + 3.035 + 2(9.105 + 3.035) = 36.42 \text{ transactions/hr}$$

For four aisles, $R_t$ = 145.68 transactions/hr

This represents almost a 24% improvement over the randomized storage strategy in Example 11.3.

### 11.5.2 Carousel Storage Systems

Let us develop the corresponding capacity and throughput relationships for a carousel storage system. Because of its construction, carousel systems do not possess nearly the volumetric capacity of an AS/RS. However, according to our calculations, a typical carousel system is likely to have higher throughput rates than an AS/RS.

*Storage Capacity.* The size and capacity of a carousel can be determined with reference to Figure 11.9. Individual bins or baskets are suspended from carriers that revolve around the carousel oval rail. The circumference of the rail is given by

$$C = 2(L - W) + \pi W \tag{11.7}$$

where $C$ = circumference of oval conveyor track (m, ft), and $L$ and $W$ are the length and width of the track oval (m, ft).

The capacity of the carousel system depends on the number and size of the bins (or baskets) in the system. Assuming standard size bins each of a certain volumetric capacity, then the number of bins can be used as our measure of capacity. As illustrated in Figure 11.9, the number of bins hanging vertically from each carrier is $n_b$, and $n_c$ = the number of carriers around the periphery of the rail. Thus,

$$\text{Total number of bins} = n_c n_b \tag{11.8}$$

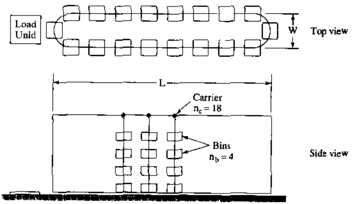



**Figure 11.9** Top and side views of horizontal storage carousel with 18 carriers ($n_c$ = 18) and 4 bins/carrier ($n_b$ = 4).

The carriers are separated by a certain distance to maximize storage density yet avoid the suspended bins interfering with each other while traveling around the ends of the carousel. Let $s_c$ = the center-to-center spacing of carriers along the oval track. Then the following relationship must be satisfied by the values of $s_c$ and $n_c$:

$$s_c n_c = C \tag{11.9}$$

where $C$ = circumference (m, ft), $s_c$ = carrier spacing (m/carrier, ft/carrier), and $n_c$ = number of carriers, which must be an integer value.

***Throughput Analysis.*** The storage/retrieval cycle time can be derived based on the following assumptions. First, only single command cycles are performed; a bin is accessed in the carousel either to put items into storage or to retrieve one or more items from storage. Second, the carousel operates with a constant speed $v_c$; acceleration and deceleration effects are ignored. Third, random storage is assumed; that is, any location around the carousel is equally likely to be selected for an S/R transaction. And fourth, the carousel can move in either direction. Under this last assumption of bidirectional travel, it can be shown that the mean travel distance between the load/unload station and a bin randomly located in the carousel is $C/4$. Thus, the S/R cycle time is given by

$$T_c = \frac{C}{4v_c} + T_{pd} \tag{11.10}$$

where $T_c$ = S/R cycle time (min), $C$ = carousel circumference as given by Eq. (11.7) (m, ft), $v_c$ = carousel velocity (m/min, ft/min), and $T_{pd}$ = the average time required to pick or deposit items each cycle by the operator at the load/unload station (min). The number of transactions accomplished per hour is the same as the number of cycles and is given by the following:

$$R_t = R_c = \frac{60}{T_c} \tag{11.11}$$

**EXAMPLE 11.5 Carousel Operation**

The oval rail of a carousel storage system has length = 12 m and width = 1 m. There are 75 carriers equally spaced around the oval. Suspended from each carrier are six bins. Each bin has volumetric capacity = 0.026 m$^3$. Carousel speed = 20 m/min. Average P&D time for a retrieval = 20 sec. Determine: (a) volumetric capacity of the storage system and (b) hourly retrieval rate of the storage system.

***Solution:*** (a) Total number of bins in the carousel is

$$n_c n_b = 75 \times 6 = 450 \text{ bins}$$

Total volumetric capacity = 450(0.026) = 11.7 m$^3$

(b) The circumference of the carousel rail is determined by Eq. (11.7):

$$C = 2(12 - 1) + 1\pi = 25.14 \text{ m}$$

Cycle time per retrieval is given by Eq. (11.10):

$$T_c = \frac{25.14}{4(20)} + 20/60 = 0.647 \text{ min}$$

Expressing throughput as an hourly rate, we have

$$R_t = 60/0.647 = 92.7 \text{ retrieval transactions/hr}$$

## REFERENCES


[1] FEARE, T., "GM Runs in Top Gear with AS/RS Sequencing," *Modern Materials Handling*, August 1998, pp. 50-52.

[2] KULWIEC, R. A., Editor, *Materials Handling Handbook*, 2nd Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1985.

[3] Material Handling Institute, *AS/RS in the Automated Factory*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1983.

[4] Material Handling Institute, *Consideration for Planning and Installing an Automated Storage/Retrieval System*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1977.

[5] MULCAHY, D. E., *Materials Handling Handbook*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1999.

[6] TOMPKINS, J. A., J. A. WHITE, Y. A. BOZER, E. H. FRAZELLE, J. M. TANCHOCO, and J. TREVINO, *Facilities Planning*, Second Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1996.

[7] TRUNK, C., "The Sky's the Limit for Vertical Lifts," *Material Handling Engineering*, August 1998, pp. 36-40.

[8] TRUNK, C., "Pick-To-Light: Choices, Choices, Choices," *Material Handling Engineering*, September 1998, pp. 44-48.

[9] TRUNK, C., "ProMat Report: New Ideas for Carousels," *Material Handling Engineering*, April, 1999, pp. 69-74.

[10] "Vertical Lift Storage Modules: Advances Drive Growth," *Modern Materials Handling*, October 1998, pp. 42-43.

[11] WEISS, D. J. "Carousel Systems Capabilities and Design Considerations," *Automated Material Handling and Storage*, (J. A. Tompkins and J. D. Smith, Editors) Auerbach Publishers, Inc., Pennsauken, New Jersey, 1983.


## PROBLEMS

### SIZING THE AS/RS RACK STRUCTURE

### Sizing the AS/RS Rack Structure

**11.1** Each aisle of a six-aisle Automated Storage/Retrieval System is to contain 50 storage compartments in the length direction and eight compartments in the vertical direction. All storage compartments will be the same size to accommodate standard size pallets of dimensions: $x = 36$ in and $y = 48$ in. The height of a unit load $z = 30$ in. Using the allowances $a = 6$ in, $b = 8$ in, and $c = 10$ in, determine: (a) how many unit loads can be stored in the AS/RS and (b) the width, length, and height of the AS/RS. The rack structure will be built 18 in above floor level.

**11.2** A unit load AS/RS is being designed to store 1000 pallet loads in a distribution center located next to the factory. Pallet dimensions are: $x = 1000$ mm, $y = 1200$ mm, and the maximum height of a unit load = 1300 mm. The following is specified: (1) The AS/RS will consist of two aisles with one S/R machine per aisle, (2) length of the structure should be approximately five times its height, and (3) the rack structure will be built 500 mm above floor level. Using the allowances $a$ = 150 mm, $b$ = 200 mm, and $c$ = 250 mm, determine the width, length, and height of the AS/RS rack structure.

**11.3** You are given the rack structure dimensions computed in Problem 11.2. Assuming that only 80% of the storage compartments are occupied on average, and that the average volume of a unit load per pallet in storage = 0.75 $m^3$, compute the ratio of the total volume of unit loads in storage relative to the total volume occupied by the storage rack structure.

**11.4** A unit load AS/RS for work-in-process storage in a factory must be designed to store 2000 pallet loads, with an allowance of no less than 20% additional storage compartments for peak periods and flexibility. The unit load pallet dimensions are: depth ($x$) = 36 in and width ($y$) = 48 in. Maximum height of a unit load = 42 in. It has been determined that the AS/RS will consist of four aisles with one S/R machine per aisle. The maximum ceiling height (interior) of the building permitted by local ordinance is 60 ft, so the AS/RS must fit within this height limitation. The rack structure will be built 2 ft above floor level, and the clearance between the rack structure and the ceiling of the building must be at least 18 in. Determine the dimensions (height, length, and width) of the rack structure.

### AS/RS Throughput Analysis

**11.5** The length of the storage aisle in an AS/RS = 240 ft and its height = 60 ft. Suppose horizontal and vertical speeds of the S/R machine are 300 ft/min and 60 ft/min, respectively. The S/R machine requires 18 sec to accomplish a pick-and-deposit operation. Find: (a) the single command and dual command cycle times per aisle and (b) throughput for the aisle under the assumptions that storage system utilization = 85% and the numbers of single command and dual command cycles are equal.

**11.6** Solve Problem 11.5 except that the ratio of single command to dual command cycles is 3:1 instead of 1:1.

**11.7** An AS/RS is used for work-in-process storage in a manufacturing facility. The AS/RS has five aisles, each aisle being 120 ft long and 40 ft high. The horizontal and vertical speeds of the S/R machine are 400 ft/min and 50 ft/min, respectively. The S/R machine requires 21 sec to accomplish a pick-and-deposit operation. The number of single command cycles equals the number of dual command cycles. If the requirement is that the AS/RS must have a throughput rate of 200 S/R transactions/hr during periods of peak activity, will the AS/RS satisfy this requirement? If so, what is the utilization of the AS/RS during peak hours?

**11.8** An automated storage/retrieval system installed in a warehouse has five aisles. The storage racks in each aisle are 30 ft high and 150 ft long. The S/R machine for each aisle travels at a horizontal speed of 350 ft/min and a vertical speed of 60 ft/min. The pick-and-deposit time = 0.35 min. Assume that the number of single command cycles per hour is equal to the number of dual command cycles per hour and that the system operates at 75% utilization. Determine the throughput rate (loads moved per hour) of the AS/RS.

**11.9** A 10-aisle automated storage/retrieval system is located in an integrated factory-warehouse facility. The storage racks in each aisle are 18 m high and 95 m long. The S/R machine for each aisle travels at a horizontal speed of 1.5 m/sec and a vertical speed of 0.5 m/sec. Pick-and-deposit time = 20 sec. Assume that the number of single command cycles per hour is one-half the number of dual command cycles per hour and that the system operates at 80% utilization. Determine the throughput rate (loads moved per hour) of the AS/RS.

**11.10** An automated storage/retrieval system for work-in-process has five aisles. The storage racks in each aisle are 10 m high and 50 m long. The S/R machine for each aisle travels at a horizontal speed of 2.0 m/sec and a vertical speed of 0.4 m/sec. Pick-and-deposit time = 15 sec.

Assume that the number of single command cycles per hour is equal to three times the number of dual command cycles per hour and that the system operates at 90% utilization. Determine the throughput rate (loads moved per hour) of the AS/RS.

**11.11** The length of one aisle in an AS/RS is 100 m and its height is 20 m. Horizontal travel speed is 2.0 m/sec. The vertical speed is specified so that the storage system is "square in time," which means that $L/v_y = H/v_z$. The pick-and-deposit time is 15 sec. Determine the expected throughput rate (transactions per hour) for the aisle if the expected ratio of the number of transactions performed under single command cycles to the number of transactions performed under dual command cycles is 2:1. The system operates continuously during the hour.

**11.12** An automated storage/retrieval system has four aisles. The storage racks in each aisle are 40 ft high and 200 ft long. The S/R machine for each aisle travels at a horizontal speed of 400 ft/min and a vertical speed of 60 ft/min. If the pick-and-deposit time = 0.3 min, determine the throughput rate (loads moved per hour) of the AS/RS, under the assumption that time spent each hour performing single command cycles is twice the time spent performing dual command cycles and that the AS/RS operates at 90% utilization.

**11.13** An AS/RS with one aisle is 300 ft long and 60 ft high. The S/R machine has a maximum speed of 300 ft/min in the horizontal direction. It accelerates from 0 to 300 ft/min in a distance of 15 ft. On approaching its target position (where the S/R machine will transfer a load onto or off of its platform), it decelerates from 300 ft/min to a full stop in 15 ft. The maximum vertical speed is 60 ft/min, and the acceleration and deceleration distances are each 3 ft. Assume simultaneous horizontal and vertical movement and that the rates of acceleration and deceleration are constant in both directions. The pick-and-deposit time = 0.3 min. Using the general approach of the MHI method for computing cycle time but adding considerations of acceleration and deceleration, determine the single command and dual command cycle times.

**11.14** An AS/RS with four aisles is 80 m long and 18 m high. The S/R machine has a maximum speed of 1.6 m/sec in the horizontal direction. It accelerates from 0 to 1.6 m/sec in a distance of 2.0 m. On approaching its target position (where the S/R machine will transfer a load onto or off of its platform), it decelerates from 1.6 m/sec to a full stop in 2.0 m. The maximum vertical speed is 0.5 m/sec, and the acceleration and deceleration distances are each 0.3 m. Rates of acceleration and deceleration are constant in both directions. Pick-and-deposit time = 12 sec. Utilization of the AS/RS is assumed to be 90%, and the number of dual command cycles equals the number of single command cycles. (a) Calculate the single command and dual command cycle times, including considerations for acceleration and deceleration. (b) Determine the throughput rate for the system.

**11.15** Your company is seeking proposals for an automated storage/retrieval system that will have a throughput rate of 300 storage/retrieval transactions/hr during the one 8-hr shift/day. The request for proposals indicates that the number of single command cycles is expected to be four times the number of dual command cycles. The first proposal received is from a vendor who specifies the following: ten aisles, each aisle 150 ft long and 50 ft high; horizontal and vertical speeds of the S/R machine = 200 ft/min and 66.67 ft/min, respectively; and pick-and-deposit time = 0.3 min. As the responsible engineer for the project, you must analyze the proposal and make recommendations accordingly. One of the difficulties you see in the proposed AS/RS is the large number of S/R machines that would be required—one for each of the ten aisles. This makes the proposed system very expensive. Your recommendation is to reduce the number of aisles from ten to six and to select an S/R machine with horizontal and vertical speeds of 300 ft/min and 100 ft/min, respectively. Although each high-speed S/R machine is slightly more expensive than the slower model, reducing the number of machines from ten to six will significantly reduce total cost. Also, fewer aisles will reduce the cost of the rack structure, even though each aisle will be somewhat larger, since total storage capacity must remain the same. The problem is that throughput rate will be adversely affected. (a) Determine the throughput rate of the proposed ten-aisle AS/RS and calculate its utilization relative to the specified 300 transactions/hr. (b) Determine the length and height of a six-aisle AS/RS whose storage capacity would be the same as the proposed ten-aisle system. (c) Determine the throughput rate of the six-aisle AS/RS and calculate its utilization relative to the specified 300 transactions/hr. (d) Given the dilemma now confronting you, what other alternatives would you analyze, and what recommendations would you make to improve the design of the system?

**11.16** A unit load automated storage/retrieval system has five aisles. The storage racks are 60 ft high and 280 ft long. The S/R machine travels at a horizontal speed of 200 ft/min and a vertical speed of 80 ft/min. The pick-and-deposit time = 0.30 min. Assume that the number of single command cycles per hour is four times the number of dual command cycles per hour and that the system operates at 80% utilization. A dedicated storage scheme is used for organizing the stock, in which unit loads are separated into two classes, according to activity level. The more-active stock is stored in the half of the rack system located closest to the input/output station, and the less-active stock is stored in the other half of the rack system (farther away from the input/output station). Within each half of the rack system, random storage is used. The more-active stock accounts for 75% of the transactions, and the less-active stock accounts for the remaining 25% of the transactions. Determine the throughput rate (loads moved per hour into and out of storage) of the AS/RS, basing your computation of cycle times on the same types of assumptions used in the MHI method. Assume that when dual command cycles are performed, the 2 transactions/cycle are both in the same class.

**11.17** The AS/RS aisle of Problem 11.5 will be organized following a class-based dedicated storage strategy. There will be two classes, according to activity level. The more-active stock is stored in the half of the rack system that is located closest to the input/output station, and the less-active stock is stored in the other half of the rack system, farther away from the input/output station. Within each half of the rack system, random storage is used. The more-active stock accounts for 80% of the transactions, and the less-active stock accounts for the remaining 20%. Assume that system utilization is 85% and the number of single command cycles equals the number of dual command cycles in each half of the AS/RS. (a) Determine the throughput of the AS/RS, basing the computation of cycle times on the same kinds of assumptions used in the MHI method. (b) A class-based dedicated storage strategy is supposed to increase throughput. Why is throughput less here than in Problem 11.5?

### Carousel Storage Systems

**11.18** A single carousel storage system is located in a factory making small assemblies. It is 20 m long and 1.0 m wide. The pick-and-deposit time is 0.25 min. The speed at which the carousel operates is 0.5 m/sec. The storage system has a 90% utilization. Determine the hourly throughput rate.

**11.19** A storage system serving an electronics assembly plant has three storage carousels, each with its own manually operated pick-and-deposit station. The pick-and-deposit time is 0.30 min. Each carousel is 60 ft long and 2.5 ft wide. The speed at which the system revolves is 85 ft/min. Determine the throughput rate of the storage system.

**11.20** A single carousel storage system has an oval rail loop that is 30 ft long and 3 ft wide. Sixty carriers are equally spaced around the oval. Suspended from each carrier are five bins. Each bin has a volumetric capacity = 0.75 $ft^3$. Carousel speed = 100 ft/min. Average pick-and-deposit time for a retrieval = 20 sec. Determine: (a) volumetric capacity of the storage system and (b) hourly retrieval rate of the storage system.

**11.21** A carousel storage system is to be designed to serve a mechanical assembly plant. The specifications on the system are that it must have a total of 400 storage bins and a throughput of at least 125 S/R transactions/hr. Two alternative configurations are being considered: (1) a one-carousel system and (2) a two-carousel system. In both cases, the width of the carousel is to be 4.0 ft and the spacing between carriers = 2.5 ft. One picker-operator will be required for the one-carousel system and two picker-operators will be required for the two-carousel system. In either system $v_c$ = 75 ft/min. For the convenience of the picker-operator, the height of the carousel will be limited to five bins. The standard time for a pick-and-deposit operation at the load/unload station = 0.4 min if one part is picked or stored per bin and 0.6 min if more than one part is picked or stored. Assume that 50% of the transactions will involve more than one component. Determine: (a) the required length and (b) corresponding throughput rate of the one-carousel system and (c) the required length and (d) corresponding throughput rate of the two-carousel system. (e) Which system better satisfies the design specifications?

**11.22** Given your answers to Problem 11.21, the costs of both carousel systems are to be compared. The one-carousel system has an installed cost of $50,000, and the comparable cost of the two-carousel system is $75,000. Labor cost for a picker-operator is $20/hr, including fringe benefits and applicable overhead. The storage systems will be operated 250 day/yr for 7 hrs/day, although the operators will be paid for 8 hr. Using a 3-yr period in your analysis and a 25% rate of return, determine: (a) the equivalent annual cost for the two design alternatives. assuming no salvage value at the end of 3 yr; and (b) the average cost per storage/retrieval transaction.

# chapter 12

# Automatic Data Capture

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



The term *automatic data capture* (ADC), also known as *automatic identification and data capture* (AIDC), refers to the technologies that provide direct entry of data into a computer or other microprocessor controlled system without using a keyboard. Many of these technologies require no human involvement in the data capture and entry process. Automatic identification systems are being used increasingly to collect data in material handling and manufacturing applications. In material handling, the applications include shipping and receiving, storage, sortation, order picking, and kitting of parts for assembly. In manufacturing, the applications include monitoring the status of order processing, work-in-process, machine utilization, worker attendance, and other measures of factory operations and performance. Of course, ADC has many important applications outside the factory, including retail sales and inventory control, warehousing and distribution center operations, mail and parcel handling, patient identification in hospitals, check processing in banks, and security systems. Our interest in this chapter emphasizes material handling and manufacturing applications.

The alternative to automatic data capture is manual collection and entry of data. This typically involves recording the data on paper and later entering them into the computer by means of a keyboard. There are several drawbacks to this method:

1. *Errors* occur in both data collection and keyboard entry of the data when accomplished manually. The average error rate of manual keyboard entry is one error per 300 characters.
2. *Time factor.* When manual methods are used, there is a time delay between when the activities and events occur and when the data on status are entered into the computer. In addition, manual methods are themselves inherently more time consuming than automated methods.
3. *Labor cost.* The full-time attention of human workers is required in manual data collection and entry, with the associated labor cost.

These drawbacks are virtually eliminated when automatic identification and data capture are used. With ADC, the data on activities, events, and conditions are acquired at the location and time of their occurrence and entered into the computer immediately or shortly thereafter.

Automatic data capture is often associated with the material handling industry. The ADC industry trade association, the Automatic Identification Manufacturers Association (AIM), started as an affiliate of the Material Handling Institute, Inc. Many of the applications of this technology relate to material handling. But automatic identification and data capture has also become a technology of growing importance in shop floor control in manufacturing plants (Chapter 26). In the present chapter, we examine the important ADC technologies as related to manufacturing.

## 12.1 OVERVIEW OF AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION METHODS

Nearly all of the automatic identification technologies consist of three principal components, which also comprise the sequential steps in ADC [7]:

1. *Encoded data.* A *code* is a set of symbols or signals (usually) representing alphanumeric characters. When data are encoded, the characters are translated into a machine-readable code. (For most ADC techniques, the encoded data are not readable by humans.) A label or tag containing the encoded data is attached to the item that is to be later identified.
2. *Machine reader* or *scanner.* This device reads the encoded data, converting them to alternative form, usually an electrical analog signal.
3. *Decoder.* This component transforms the electrical signal into digital data and finally back into the original alphanumeric characters.

Many different technologies are used to implement automated identification and data collection. Within the category of bar codes alone (bar codes are the leading ADC technology), more than 250 different bar code schemes have been devised. ADC technologies can be divided into the following six categories [19]:

1. *Optical.* Most of these technologies use high-contrast graphical symbols that can be interpreted by an optical scanner. They include linear (one-dimensional) and two-dimensional bar codes, optical character recognition, and machine vision.
2. *Magnetic*, which encode data magnetically, similar to recording tape. The two important techniques in this category are (a) magnetic stripe, widely used in plastic credit cards and bank access cards, and (b) magnetic ink character recognition, widely used in the banking industry for check processing.
3. *Electromagnetic.* The important ADC technology in this group is radio frequency identification (RFID).
4. *Smart card.* This term refers to small plastic cards (the size of a credit card) imbedded with microchips capable of containing large amounts of information. Other terms used for this technology include *chip card* and *integrated circuit card.*
5. *Touch techniques*, such as touch screens and button memory.
6. *Biometric.* These technologies are utilized to identify humans or to interpret vocal commands of humans. They include voice recognition, fingerprint analysis, and retinal eye scans.

Not all of these techniques are used in factory operations. According to a survey of industry users conducted by *Modern Material Handling* magazine and the industry trade association AIM USA, the most widely used ADC methods in the factory (in approximate descending order of application frequency at time of writing) are [2]: (1) bar codes, by far the most widely used, (2) radio frequency methods, (3) magnetic stripe, (4) optical character recognition, and (5) machine vision. Bar codes include two basic forms: one-dimensional or linear bar codes and two-dimensional. At time of writing, the linear codes are much more widely used, although two-dimensional codes are being adopted by certain industries that require high data density in a relatively small area. We discuss both types of bar code technologies in Section 12.2 and the other methods in Section 12.3. The features of these techniques are compared in Table 12.1.

According to the same industry survey [2], the most common applications of ADC technologies (in approximate descending order of application frequency) are: (1) receiving, (2) shipping, (3) order picking, (4) finished goods storage, (5) manufacturing processing, (6) work-in-process storage, (7) assembly, and (8) sortation.

Some of the automated identification applications require workers to be involved in the data collection procedure, usually to operate the identification equipment in the application. These techniques are therefore semiautomated rather than automated methods. Other applications accomplish the identification with no human participation. The same basic sensor technologies may be used in both cases. For example, certain types of bar code readers are operated by humans, whereas other types operate automatically.

As indicated in our chapter introduction, there are good reasons for using automatic identification and data collection techniques: (1) data accuracy, (2) timeliness, and (3) labor reduction. First and foremost, the accuracy of the data collected is improved with ADC, in many cases by a significant margin. The error rate in bar code technology is approximately 10,000 times lower than in manual keyboard data entry. The error rates of most of the other technologies are not as good as for bar codes but are still better than manual-based methods. The second reason for using automatic identification techniques

**TABLE 12.1** *Comparison of ADC Techniques and Manual Keyboard Data Entry*

| *Technique* | *Time to Enter** | *Error Rate*** | *Equipment Cost* | *Advantages/(Disadvantages)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manual entry | Slow | High | Low | Low initial cost<br>Requires human operator<br>(Slow speed)<br>(High error rate) |
| Bar codes: 1-D | Medium | Low | Low | High speed<br>Good flexibility<br>(Low data density) |
| Bar codes: 2-D | Medium | Low | High | High speed<br>High data density<br>(High equipment cost) |
| Radio frequency | Fast | Low | High | Label need not be visible<br>(Expensive labeling) |
| Magnetic stripe | Medium | Low | Medium | Much data can be encoded<br>Data can be changed<br>(Vulnerable to magnetic fields)<br>(Contact required for reading) |
| OCR | Medium | Medium | Medium | Can be read by humans<br>(Low data density)<br>(High error rate) |
| Machine vision applications | Fast | *** | Very high | Equipment expensive<br>(Not suited to general) ADC |

*Source*: Based on data from [13].

* Time to enter data is based on a 20-character field. All techniques except machine vision use a human to either enter the data (manua entry) or to operate the ADC equipment (bar codes, RFID, magnetic stripe, OCR). Key: Slow = 5–10 sec, Medium = 2–5 sec, Fast = < 2 sec.

** Substitution error rate (SER); see definition (Section 12.1).

*** Application dependent.

is to reduce the time required by human workers to make the data entry. The speed of data entry for handwritten documents is approximately 5–7 characters/sec and it is 10–15 characters/sec (at best) for keyboard entry [15]. Automatic identification methods are capable of reading hundreds of characters per second. This comparison is certainly not the whole story in a data collection transaction, but the time savings in using automatic identification techniques can mean substantial labor cost benefits for large plants with many workers.

Although the error rate in automatic identification and data collection technologies is much lower than for manual data collection and entry, errors do occur in ADC. The industry has adopted two parameters to measure the errors:

1. *First Read Rate* (FRR). This is the probability of a successful (correct) reading by the scanner in its initial attempt.
2. *Substitution Error Rate* (SER). This is the probability or frequency with which the scanner incorrectly reads the encoded character as some other character. In a given set of encoded data containing $n$ characters, the expected number of errors = SER multiplied by $n$.

Obviously, it is desirable for the ADC system to possess a high first read rate and a low substitution error rate. A subjective comparison of substitution error rates for several ADC technologies is presented in Table 12.1.

## 12.2 BAR CODE TECHNOLOGY

As indicated earlier, bar codes divide into two basic types: (1) linear, in which the encoded data are read using a linear sweep of the scanner, and (2) two-dimensional, in which the encoded data must be read in both directions. These two important optical technologies are discussed in this section.

### 12.2.1 Linear (One-Dimensional) Bar Codes

As mentioned previously, linear bar codes are currently the most widely used automatic identification and data collection technique. There are actually two forms of linear bar code symbologies, illustrated in Figure 12.1: (a) *width-modulated*, in which the symbol consists of bars and spaces of varying width; and (b) *height-modulated*, in which the symbol consists of evenly spaced bars of varying height. The only significant application of the height-modulated bar code symbologies is in the U.S. Postal Service for ZIP Code identification, so our discussion will focus on the width-modulated bar codes, which are used widely in retailing and manufacturing.

In linear width-modulated bar code technology, the symbol consists of a sequence of wide and narrow colored bars separated by wide and narrow spaces (the colored bars are usually black and the spaces are white for high contrast). The pattern of bars and spaces is coded to represent numeric or alphanumeric characters. Palmer [13] uses the interesting analogy that bar codes might be thought of as a printed version of the Morse code, where narrow bands represent dots and wide bands represent dashes. Using this scheme, the bar code for the familiar SOS distress signal would be as shown in Figure 12.2. The difficulties with a "Morse" bar code symbology are that: (1) only the dark bars are used, thus increasing the length of the symbol, and (2) the number of bars making up the alphanumeric characters differs, thus making decoding more difficult [13].

Bar code readers interpret the code by scanning and decoding the sequence of bars. The reader consists of the scanner and decoder. The scanner emits a beam of light that is swept past the bar code (either manually or automatically) and senses light reflections to

(a) (b)

**Figure 12.1** Two forms of linear bar codes: (a) width-modulated, exemplified here by the Universal Product Code; and (b) height-modulated, exemplified here by Postnet, used by the U.S. Postal Service.

**Figure 12.2** The SOS distress signal in "Morse" bar codes.

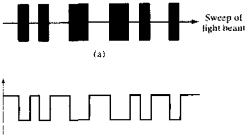



**Figure 12.3** Conversion of bar code into a pulse train of electrical signals: (a) bar code and (b) corresponding electrical signal.

distinguish between the bars and spaces. The light reflections are sensed by a photodetector, which converts the spaces into an electrical signal and the bars into absence of an electrical signal. The width of the bars and spaces is indicated by the duration of the corresponding signals. The procedure is depicted in Figure 12.3. The decoder analyzes the pulse train to validate and interpret the corresponding data.

Certainly a major reason for the acceptance of bar codes is their widespread use in grocery markets and other retail stores. In 1973, the grocery industry adopted the Universal Product Code (UPC) as its standard for item identification (Historical Note 12.1). This is a 12-digit bar code that uses six digits to identify the manufacturer and five digits to identify the product. The final digit is a check character. The U.S. Department of Defense provided another major endorsement in 1982 by adopting a bar code standard (Code 39) that must be applied by vendors on product cartons supplied to the various agencies of DOD. The UPC is a numerical code (0–9), while Code 39 provides the full set of alphanumeric characters plus other symbols (44 characters in all). These two linear bar codes and several others are compared in Table 12.2.

**TABLE 12.2** Some Widely Used Linear Bar Codes

| *Bar Code* | *Date* | *Description* | *Applications* |
|---|---|---|---|
| UPC* | 1973 | Numeric only, length = 12 digits | Widely used in U.S. and Canada grocery and other retail stores |
| Codabar | 1972 | Only 16 characters: 0–9, $, :, /, ., +, − | Used in libraries, blood banks, and some parcel freight applications |
| Code 39 | 1974 | Alphanumeric. See text for description | Adopted by Dept. of Defense, automotive, and other manufacturing industries |
| Code 93 | 1982 | Similar to Code 39 but higher density | Same applications as Code 39 |
| Code 128 | 1981 | Alphanumeric, but higher density | Substitutes in some Code 39 applications |
| Postnet | 1980 | Numeric only** | U.S. Postal Service code for ZIP code numbers |

*Sources*: Nelson [12], Palmer [13].

*UPC = Universal Product Code, adopted by the grocery industry in 1973 and based on a symbol developed by IBM Corp. in early grocery tests. A similar standard bar code system was developed for Europe, called the European Article Numbering system (EAN), in 1978.

**This is the only height-modulated bar code in the table. All others are width-modulated.

### Historical Note 12.1 Bar codes [12], [13].

The first patent relating to a bar code was issued to J.T. Kermode in 1934 (U.S. Patent 1,985,035). It used four bars to sort billing areas for the Cleveland Gas & Electric Co. The bar code industry began in the 1960s as small working groups in large companies. Some of the early companies involved with the technology included IBM, Magnavox, RCA, Sylvania, Bendix, and General Electric. What we believe was the first bar code scanning system was at a Scott Paper Company plant in Wisconsin installed in 1960 by the General Atronics Division of Magnavox Corp. The system was used to identify and divert cartons moving along a conveyor. No laser scanners were available at that time, and the Atronics system used photocells responding to light reflected from two rows of bars on the cartons. Although the crude system worked well, top executives at Magnavox did not believe that bar code technology had much of a future, and so in 1971 they sold the division to Al Wurz, who changed the name to Accu-Sort.

By the early 1970s, the major companies in the bar code scanning business were Accu-Sort, Computer Identics, Identicon, and Bendix Recognition Systems. It is of interest to note how each of these companies developed. We have already mentioned that Accu-Sort was purchased from Magnavox. Computer Identics and Identicon were started by former employees of Sylvania. And Bendix later decided to exit the business, based on the same kinds of perceptions that influenced Magnavox to sell out: There was no profitable future in bar codes.

In 1972, the companies involved in bar code technology formed the Automatic Identification Manufacturers Association (AIM) as a product section in the Material Handling Institute (the trade association for material handling companies at that time). In 1983, AIM separated from MHI to become an independent trade association. The starting membership of AIM in 1972 consisted of ten companies: Accu-Sort, Bendix Recognition, Computer Identics, Control Logic, Electronics Corp. of America (Photoswitch Div.), General Electric, Gould (Data Systems Div.), Identicon, Mekontrol, and 3M Company. (At time of writing, there are more than 150 members of AIM.)

In 1973, the Uniform Product Code (UPC) was adopted by the grocery industry, which had been working for several years to implement bar code technology for product identification, inventory control, and automation of the check-out procedure. All producers of over-the-counter goods for the grocery industry were now required to bar code their products. Other significant events motivating the development of bar code technology included the Department of Defense requirement in 1982 that its 33,000 suppliers use bar codes. And about one year later, the Automotive Industry Action Group established the requirement that the industry's 16,000 suppliers must bar code all of their deliveries. By now, the importance of bar code technology had become clearer to business leaders.

In 1987, Code 49, the first two-dimensional code, was developed by D. Allais and introduced by Intermec to reduce the area of the conventional bar code label and to increase the density of the data contained in the symbol.

*The Bar Code Symbol.* The bar code standard adopted by the automotive industry, the Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and many other manufacturing industries is Code 39, also known as AIM USD–2 (Automatic Identification Manufacturers Uniform Symbol Description-2), although this is actually a subset of Code 39. We describe this format as an example of linear bar code symbols [3], [4], [13]. Code 39 uses a series of wide and narrow elements (bars and spaces) to represent alphanumeric and other characters. The wide elements are equivalent to a binary value of one and the narrow elements are equal to zero. The width of the wide bars and spaces is between two and three times the width of the narrow bars and spaces. Whatever the wide-to-narrow ratio, the width must be uniform throughout the code for the reader to be able to consistently interpret the resulting pulse train. Figure 12.4 presents the character structure for USD–2, and Figure 12.5 illustrates how the character set might be developed in a typical bar code.

| Char. | Bar pattern | 9 bits | Char. | Bar pattern | 9 bits |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | 100100001 | K | | 100000011 |
| 2 | | 001100001 | L | | 001000011 |
| 3 | | 101100000 | M | | 101000010 |
| 4 | | 000110001 | N | | 000010011 |
| 5 | | 100110000 | O | | 100010010 |
| 6 | | 001110000 | P | | 001010010 |
| 7 | | 000100101 | Q | | 000000111 |
| 8 | | 100100100 | R | | 100000110 |
| 9 | | 001100100 | S | | 001000110 |
| 0 | | 000110100 | T | | 000010110 |
| A | | 100001001 | U | | 110000001 |
| B | | 001001001 | V | | 011000001 |
| C | | 101001000 | W | | 111000000 |
| D | | 000011001 | X | | 010010001 |
| E | | 100011000 | Y | | 110010000 |
| F | | 001011000 | Z | | 011010000 |
| G | | 000001101 | - | | 010000101 |
| H | | 100001100 | . | | 110000100 |
| I | | 001001100 | space | | 011000100 |
| J | | 000011100 | * | | 010010100 |

* denotes a start/stop code that must be placed at the beginning and end of every bar code message.

**Figure 12.4** Character set in USD-2 bar code, a subset of Code 39 [4].

The reason for the name Code 39 is that nine elements (bars and spaces) are used in each character and three of the elements are wide. The placement of the wide spaces and bars in the code is what uniquely designates the character. Each code begins and ends with either a wide or narrow bar. The code is sometimes referred to as code three-of-nine. In addition to the character set in the bar code, there must also be a so-called "quiet zone" both preceding and following the bar code, in which there is no printing that might confuse the decoder. This quiet zone is shown in Figure 12.5.

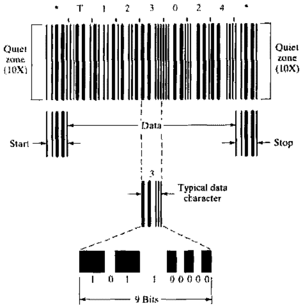



**Figure 12.5** A typical grouping of characters to form a bar code in Code 39. (Reprinted from [4] by permission of Automatic Identification Manufacturers, Inc.)

***Bar Code Readers.*** Bar code readers come in a variety of configurations; some require a human to operate them and others are stand-alone automatic units. They are usually classified as contact or noncontact readers. *Contact bar code readers* are hand-held wands or light pens operated by moving the tip of the wand quickly past the bar code on the object or document. The wand tip must be in contact with the bar code surface or in very close proximity during the reading procedure. In a factory data collection application, they are usually part of a keyboard entry terminal. The terminal is sometimes referred to as a stationary terminal in the sense that it is placed in a fixed location in the shop. When a transaction is entered in the factory, the data are usually communicated to the computer system immediately. In addition to their use in factory data collection systems, stationary contact bar code readers are widely used in retail stores to enter the item identification in a sales transaction.

Contact bar code readers are also available as portable units that can be carried around the factory or warehouse by a worker. They are battery-powered and include a solid-state memory device capable of storing data acquired during operation. The data can subsequently be transferred to the computer system. Portable bar code readers often include a keypad that can be used by the operator to input data that cannot be entered via bar code. These portable units are used for order picking in a warehouse and similar applications that require a worker to move large distances in a building.

*Noncontact bar code readers* focus a light beam on the bar code, and a photodetector reads the reflected signal to interpret the code. The reader probe is located a certain distance from the bar code (several inches to several feet) during the read procedure. Noncontact readers are classified as fixed beam and moving beam scanners. *Fixed beam readers* are stationary units that use a fixed beam of light. They are usually mounted beside a conveyor and depend on the movement of the bar code past the light beam for their operation. Applications of fixed beam bar code readers are typically in warehousing and material handling operations where large quantities of materials must be identified as they flow past the scanner on conveyors. Fixed beam scanners in these kinds of operations represent some of the first applications of bar codes in industry.

*Moving beam scanners* use a highly focused beam of light, actuated by a rotating mirror to traverse an angular sweep in search of the bar code on the object. Lasers are often used to achieve the highly focused light beam. A scan is defined as a single sweep of the light beam through the angular path. The high rotational speed of the mirror allows for very high scan rates—up to 1440 scans/sec [1]. This means that many scans of a single bar code can be made during a typical reading procedure, thus permitting verification of the reading. Moving beam scanners can be either stationary or portable units. *Stationary scanners* are located in a fixed position to read bar codes on objects as they move past on a conveyor or other material handling equipment. They are used in warehouses and distribution centers to automate the product identification and sortation operations. A typical setup using a stationary scanner is illustrated in Figure 12.6. *Portable scanners* are hand-held devices that the user points at the bar code like a pistol. The vast majority of bar code scanners used in factories and warehouses are of this type [21].

*Bar Code Printers.* In many bar code applications, the labels are printed in medium-to-large quantities for product packages and the cartons used to ship the packaged products. These preprinted bar codes are usually produced off-site by companies specializing in these operations. The labels are printed in either identical or sequenced symbols. Printing technologies include traditional techniques such as letterpress, offset lithography, and flexographic printing.

Bar codes can also be printed on-site by methods in which the process is controlled by microprocessor to achieve individualized printing of the bar coded document or item label. These applications tend to require multiple printers distributed at locations where they are needed. The printing technologies used in these applications include [8], [13]:

- *Dot matrix*. In this technique, the bars are printed by overlapping dots to form wide or narrow bands. Dot matrix is a low-cost technique, but the quality of the printed bars

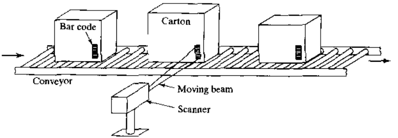



**Figure 12.6** Stationary moving beam bar code scanner located along a moving conveyor.

depends on the degree of overlap; accordingly, there is a lower limit on the size of the bar code.

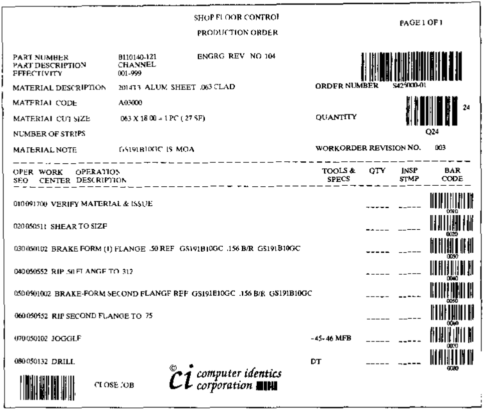
- *Ink-jet.* Like dot matrix, the ink-jet bars are formed by overlapping dots, but the dots are made by ink droplets. Recent advances in ink-jet technology, motivated by the personal computer market, have improved the resolution of ink-jet printing, and so bar codes of higher density than dot matrix bars are possible at relatively low cost.
- *Direct thermal.* In this technique, light-colored paper labels are coated with a heat-sensitive chemical that darkens when heated. The printing head of the thermal printer consists of a linear array of small heating elements that heat localized areas of the label as it moves past the head, causing the desired bar code image to be formed. Bar codes by direct thermal printing are of good quality, and the cost is low. Care must be taken with the printed label to avoid prolonged exposure to elevated temperatures and ultraviolet light.
- *Thermal transfer.* This technology is similar to direct thermal printing, except that the thermal printing head is in contact with a special ink ribbon that transfers its ink to the moving label in localized areas when heated. Unlike direct thermal printing, plain (uncoated) paper can be used, and so the concerns about ambient temperature and ultraviolet light do not apply. The disadvantage is that the thermally activated ink ribbon is consumed in the printing process and must be periodically replaced.
- *Laser printing.* Laser printing is the technology that is widely used in printers for personal computers. In laser printing, the bar code image is written onto a photosensitive surface (usually a rotating drum) by a controllable light source (the laser), forming an electrostatic image on the surface. The surface is then brought into contact with toner particles that are attracted to selected regions of the image. The toner image is then transferred to plain paper (the label) and cured by heat and pressure. High-quality bar codes can be printed by this technique.

In addition, a *laser etching* process can be used to mark bar codes onto metal parts. The process provides a permanent identification mark on the item that is not susceptible to damage in the harsh environments that are encountered in many manufacturing processes. Other processes are also used to form permanent 3-D bar codes on parts, including molding, casting, engraving, and embossing [5]. Special 3-D scanners are required to read these codes.

Examples of applications of these individualized bar code printing methods include: keyboard entry of data for inclusion in the bar code for each item that is labeled, automated weighing scales and other inspection procedures in which unique grading and labeling of product is required, unique identification of production lots for pharmaceutical products, and preparation of route sheets and other documents included in a shop packet traveling with a production order, as in Figure 12.7. Production workers use bar code readers to indicate order number and completion of each step in the operation sequence.

### 12.2.2 Two-Dimensional Bar Codes

The first two-dimensional (2-D) bar code was introduced in 1987. Since then, more than a dozen 2-D symbol schemes have been developed, and the number is expected to increase. The advantage of 2-D codes is their capacity to store much greater amounts of data at higher area densities. Their disadvantage is that special scanning equipment is required to read the codes, and the equipment is more expensive than scanners used for conventional



SHOP FLOOR CONTROL
PRODUCTION ORDER

PAGE 1 OF 1

PART NUMBER B110140-121 ENGRG REV NO 104
PART DESCRIPTION CHANNEL
EFFECTIVITY 001-999
MATERIAL DESCRIPTION 201433 ALUM SHEET .063 CLAD
ORDER NUMBER S425000-01
MATERIAL CODE A03000
MATERIAL CUT SIZE 063 X 18 00 = 1 PC ( 27 SF)
QUANTITY 24
Q24
NUMBER OF STRIPS
MATERIAL NOTE GS191B10GC IS MOA
WORKORDER REVISION NO. 003

| OPER SEQ | WORK CENTER | OPERATION DESCRIPTION | TOOLS & SPECS | QTY | INSP STMP | BAR CODE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 010 | 091700 | VERIFY MATERIAL & ISSUE | | ----- | ----- | 0010 |
| 020 | 050511 | SHEAR TO SIZE | | ----- | ----- | 0020 |
| 030 | 050102 | BRAKE FORM (1) FLANGE .50 REF GS191B10GC .156 B/R GS191B10GC | | ----- | ----- | 0030 |
| 040 | 050552 | RIP .50 FLANGE TO 312 | | ----- | ----- | 0040 |
| 050 | 0501002 | BRAKE-FORM SECOND FLANGE REF GS191B10GC .156 B/R GS191B10GC | | ----- | ----- | 0050 |
| 060 | 050552 | RIP SECOND FLANGE TO 75 | | ----- | ----- | 0060 |
| 070 | 050102 | JOGGLE | -45-46 MFB | ----- | ----- | 0070 |
| 080 | 050132 | DRILL | DT | ----- | ----- | 0080 |

CLOSE JOB

© ci computer identics corporation

**Figure 12.7** Bar-coded production order and route sheet. (Courtesy of Computer Identics Corp.).

bar codes. Two-dimensional symbologies divide into two basic types: (1) stacked bar codes and (2) matrix symbologies.

*Stacked Bar Codes.* The first 2-D bar code to be introduced was a stacked symbology. It was developed in an effort to reduce the area required for a conventional bar code. But its real advantage is that it can contain significantly greater amounts of data. A *stacked bar code* consists of multiple rows of conventional linear bar codes stacked on top of each other. Several stacking schemes have been devised over the years, nearly all of which allow for multiple rows and variations in the numbers of encoded characters possible. Several of the stacked bar code systems are listed and compared in Table 12.3. An example of a 2-D stacked bar code is illustrated in Figure 12.8.

The encoded data in a stacked bar code are decoded using laser-type scanners that read the lines sequentially. The technical problems encountered in reading a stacked bar code include: (1) keeping track of the different rows during scanning, (2) dealing with scanning swaths that cross between rows, and (3) detecting and correcting localized errors [13]. As in linear bar codes, printing defects in the 2-D bar codes are also a problem.

**TABLE 12.3** 2-D Bar Codes

| *Symbology* | *Type* | *Date (Company or Inventor)* | *Relative Data Density** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Code 49 | Stacked | 1987 (Intermec) | 5.8 |
| Code 16K | Stacked | 1988 (T. Williams) | 5.8 |
| PDF417 | Stacked | 1990 (Symbol Technology) | 7.2 |
| Code One | Matrix | 1992 (T. Williams) | 30 |
| DataMatrix | Matrix | 1989 (Priddy & Cymbalski) | 21 |
| MaxiCode | Matrix | 1992 (UPS) | 1.5 |

*Source:* Palmer [13].

*Comparison is to Code 39 based on 20 alphanumeric characters. Relative data density of Code 39 is 1.0. Higher density means more data per unit square area.

**Figure 12.8** A 2-D stacked bar code. Shown is an example of a PDF417 symbol.

***Matrix Symbologies.*** A *matrix symbology* consists of 2-D patterns of data cells that are usually square and are colored dark (usually black) or white. The 2-D matrix symbologies were introduced around 1990, and several of the more common symbologies are listed in Table 12.3. Their advantage over stacked bar codes is their capability to contain more data. They also have the potential for higher data densities, although that potential is not always exploited, as shown in Table 12.3 for the case of MaxiCode.[1] Their disadvantage compared to stacked bar codes is that they are more complicated, which requires more-sophisticated printing and reading equipment. The symbols must be produced (during printing) and interpreted (during reading) both horizontally and vertically; therefore they are sometimes referred to as area symbologies. An example of a 2-D matrix code is illustrated in Figure 12.9.

Applications of the matrix symbologies are currently found in part and product identification during manufacturing and assembly. These kinds of applications are expected to grow as computer-integrated manufacturing becomes more pervasive throughout industry.

[1] MaxiCode was developed by United Parcel Service for automated sortation applications. Small symbol size was not a major factor in its development.

**Figure 12.9** A 2-D matrix bar code. Shown is an example of the Data Matrix symbol.

The semiconductor industry has adopted Data Matrix ECC200 (a variation of the Data Matrix code listed in Table 12.3 and shown in Figure 12.9) as its standard for marking and identifying wafers and other electronic components [11].

## 12.3 OTHER ADC TECHNOLOGIES

The other automated identification and data collection techniques are either used in special applications in factory operations, or they are widely applied outside the factory. Brief descriptions of them are provided in the following.

### 12.3.1 Radio Frequency Identification

Of the alternative ADC technologies, *radio frequency identification* (RFID) represents the biggest challenge to the predominance of bar codes. In addition, radio frequency (RF) technology is widely used to augment bar code identification (and other ADC techniques) by providing the communication link between remote bar code readers and some central terminal. This latter application is called *radio frequency data communication* (RFDC), as distinguished from RFID. In radio frequency identification, an "identification tag" containing electronically coded data is attached to the subject item and communicates these data by RF to a reader as the item passes. The reader decodes and validates the RF signal prior to transmitting the associated data to a collection computer system.

Although the type of RF signal is similar to those used in wireless television transmission, there are differences in how RF technology is used in product identification. One difference is that the communication is in two directions rather than in one direction as in commercial radio and TV. The identification tag is a *transponder*, which is a device capable of emitting a signal of its own when it receives a signal from an external source. To be activated, the reader transmits a low-level RF magnetic field that serves as the power source for the transponder when in close-enough proximity. Another difference between RFID and commercial radio and TV is that the signal power is substantially lower in identification applications (from milliwatts to several watts), and the communication distances usually range between several millimeters and several meters. The communication distance can be increased by the use of battery-powered tags, capable of transmitting the ID data over greater distances (typically 10 m and more). These battery-powered tags are called *active tags*, as opposed to the traditional *passive tags*, which have no battery.

One of the initial uses of RFID was for tracking railway cargo. In this application, the term "tag" may be misleading, because a brick-sized container was used to house the electronics for data storage and RF communications. Subsequent applications use tags available in a variety of different forms, such as credit-card-sized plastic labels for product identification and very small glass capsules injected into wild animals for tracking and research purposes.

Identification tags in RFID are usually read-only devices that contain up to 20 characters of data representing the item identification and other information that is to be communicated. Advances in the technology have provided much higher data storage capacity and the ability to change the data in the tag (read/write tags). This has opened many new opportunities for incorporating much more status and historical information into the automatic identification tag rather than using a central data base.

Advantages of RFID include: (1) Identification does not depend on physical contact or direct line of sight observation by the reader, (2) much more data can be contained in the identification tag than with most ADC technologies, and (3) data in the read/write tags can be altered for historical usage purposes or reuse of the tag. The disadvantage of RFID is that the hardware tends to be more expensive than for most other ADC technologies. For this reason, RFID systems are generally appropriate only for data collection situations in which environmental factors preclude the use of optical techniques such as bar codes. For example, RF systems are suited for identification of products with high unit values in manufacturing processes that would obscure any optically coded data (such as spray painting). They are also used for identifying railroad cars and in highway trucking applications where the environment and conditions make other methods of identification infeasible.

### 12.3.2 Magnetic Stripes

Magnetic stripes attached to the product or container are used for item identification in factory and warehouse applications. A *magnetic stripe* is a thin plastic film containing small magnetic particles whose pole orientations can be used to encode bits of data into the film. The film can be encased in or attached to a plastic card or paper ticket for automatic identification. These are the same kinds of magnetic stripes used to encode data onto plastic credit cards and bank access cards. Although they are widely used in the financial community, their use seems to be declining in shop floor control applications for the following reasons: (1) The magnetic stripe must be in contact with the scanning equipment for reading to be accomplished, (2) unavailability of convenient shop floor encoding methods to write data into the stripe, and (3) the magnetic stripe labels are more expensive than bar code labels. Two advantages of magnetic stripes are their large data storage capacity and the ability to alter the data contained in them.

### 12.3.3 Optical Character Recognition

*Optical character recognition* (OCR) refers to the use of specially designed alphanumeric characters that are machine readable by an optical reading device. Optical character recognition is a 2-D symbology, and scanning involves interpretation of both the vertical and horizontal features of each character during decoding. Accordingly, when manually operated scanners are used, a certain level of skill is required by the human operator, and first read rates are relatively low (often less than 50% [13]). The substantial benefit of OCR technology is that the characters and associated text can be read by humans as well as by machines.

As an interesting historical note, OCR was selected as the standard automatic identification technology by the National Retail Merchants Association (NRMA) shortly after the UPC bar code was adopted by the grocery industry. Many retail establishments made the investment in OCR equipment at that time. However, the problems with the technology became apparent by the mid-1980s [13]: (1) low first read rate and high substitution error rate when hand-held scanners were used, (2) lack of an omnidirectional scanner for automatic checkout, and (3) widespread and growing adoption of bar code technology. NRMA was subsequently forced to revise its recommended standard from OCR technology to bar codes.

For factory and warehouse applications, the list of disadvantages includes: (1) the requirement for near-contact scanning, (2) lower scanning rates, and (3) higher error rates compared to bar code scanning.

### 12.3.4 Machine Vision

The principal application of machine vision currently is for automated inspection tasks (Section 23.6). For ADC applications, machine vision systems are required to read 2-D matrix symbols, such as Data Matrix (Figure 12.9), and they can also be used for stacked bar codes, such as PDF-417 (Figure 12.8) [9]. Applications of machine vision also include other types of automatic identification problems, and these applications may grow in number as the technology advances. For example, machine vision systems are capable of distinguishing between a limited variety of products moving down a conveyor so that the products can be sorted. The recognition task is accomplished without requiring that a special identification code be placed on the product. The recognition by the machine vision system is based on the inherent geometric features of the object.

## REFERENCES

[1] Accu-Sort Systems, Inc., *Bar Code Technology—Present State, Future Promise* (Second Edition), Telford, Pennsylvania.

[2] "ADC Technologies-Who Uses Them and Why," *Modern Materials Handling*, March 1993, pp. 12-13.

[3] Allais, D. C., *Bar Code Symbology*, Intermec Corporation, 1984.

[4] Automatic Identification Manufacturers, *Automatic Identification Manufacturers Manual*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

[5] "Bar Codes Move into the Next Dimension," *Modern Materials Handling/ADC News & Solutions*, June 1998, p. A11.

[6] "Bar Codes Offer More Variety than Ever," *Modern Materials Handling/ADC News & Solutions*, February 1999, pp. A14-A15.

[7] Cohen, J., *Automatic Identification and Data Collection Systems*, McGraw-Hill Book Company Europe, Berkshire, England, 1994.

[8] Forcino, H., "Bar Code Revolution Conquers Manufacturing," *Managing Automation*, July 1998, pp. 59-61.

[9] Moore, B., "New Scanners for 2D Symbols," *Material Handling Engineering*, March 1998, pp. 73-77.

[10] MULCAHY, D. E., *Materials Handling Handbook*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1999.

[11] NAVAS, D., "Vertical Industry Overview: Electronics '98," *ID Systems*, February 1998, pp. 16-26.

[12] NELSON, B., *Punched Cards to Bar Codes*, Helmers Publishing, Inc., Peterborough, New Hampshire, 1997.

[13] PALMER, R. C., *The Bar Code Book*, Third Edition, Helmers Publishing, Inc., Peterborough, New Hampshire, 1995.

[14] PAN, J., "Automatic Identification Techniques and Their Applications in Manufacturing," *Unpublished Report*, Department of Industrial and Manufacturing Systems Engineering, Lehigh University, 1998.

[15] SOLTIS, D. J., "Automatic Identification System: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Future Trends," *Industrial Engineering*, November 1985, pp. 55-59.

[16] "Ten Ground Rules for Planning a Successful ADC System," *Modern Materials Handling/ADC News & Solutions*, July 1999, pp. A2-A3.

[17] UDOKA, S. J., "The Role of Automatic Identification (Auto ID) in the Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) Architecture," *Computers and Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-4, 1992, pp. 1-5.

[18] WARD, R. E., "Information Flow Control," *The Essentials of Material Handling*, Module 4.2, The Material Handling Institute, Charlotte, North Carolina.

[19] Website of AIM USA: www.aimusa.org/techinfo/aidc.html.

[20] WITT, C. E., "RFID: The Future of Data Acquisition," *Material Handling Engineering*, May 1997, pp. 37-40.

[21] "Your Guide to Hand Held Laser Scanners," *Modern Materials Handling*, May 1998, pp. 48-50.

# PART III
# Manufacturing Systems

## chapter 13

# Introduction to Manufacturing Systems

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



In this part of the book, we consider how automation and material handling technologies are synthesized to create manufacturing systems. We define a *manufacturing system* to be a collection of integrated equipment and human resources, whose function is to perform one or more processing and/or assembly operations on a starting raw material, part, or set of parts. The integrated equipment includes production machines and tools, material handling and work positioning devices, and computer systems. Human resources are required either full time or periodically to keep the system running. The manufacturing system is

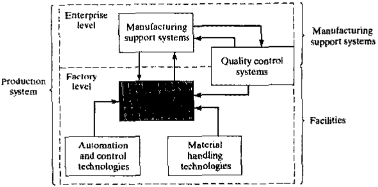



**Figure 13.1** The position of the manufacturing system in the larger production system.

where the value-added work is accomplished on the part or product. The position of the manufacturing system in the larger production system is seen in Figure 13.1. Examples of manufacturing systems include:

- one worker tending one machine, which operates on semi-automatic cycle
- a cluster of semi-automatic machines, attended by one worker
- a fully automated assembly machine, periodically attended by a human worker
- a group of automated machines working on automatic cycles to produce a family of similar parts
- a team of workers performing assembly operations on a production line.

In the present chapter, we classify these manufacturing systems and examine their features and performance. In other chapters in this part of the book, we discuss the various manufacturing systems of greatest commercial and technological importance.

## 13.1 COMPONENTS OF A MANUFACTURING SYSTEM

A manufacturing system consists of several components. In a given system, these components usually include:

- production machines plus tools, fixtures, and other related hardware
- material handling system
- computer systems to coordinate and/or control the above components
- human workers

In this section, we discuss each of these components and the variety of types within each category. In the following section, we consider how these components are combined and organized in different ways to achieve various objectives in production.

### 13.1.1 Production Machines

In virtually all modern manufacturing systems, most of the actual processing or assembly work is accomplished by machines or with the aid of tools. The machines can be classified as (1) manually operated, (2) semi-automated, or (3) fully automated. *Manually operated machines* are directed or supervised by a human worker. The machine provides the power for the operation and the worker provides the control. Conventional machine tools (e.g., lathes, milling machines, drill presses) fit into this category. The worker must be at the machine continuously.

A *semi-automated machine* performs a portion of the work cycle under some form of program control, and a human worker tends to the machine for the remainder of the cycle, by loading and unloading it or performing some other task each cycle. An example of this category is a CNC lathe controlled for most of the work cycle by the part program, but requiring a worker to unload the finished part and load the next workpiece at the end of the part program. In these cases, the worker must attend to the machine every cycle, but continuous presence during the cycle is not always required. If the automatic machine cycle takes, say, 10 min, while the part unloading and loading portion of the work cycle only takes 1 min, then there may be an opportunity for one worker to tend more than one machine. We analyze this possibility in Chapter 14 (Section 14.4.2).

What distinguishes a *fully automated machine* from its semi-automated cousin is its capacity to operate for extended periods of time with no human attention. By extended periods of time, we generally mean longer than one work cycle. A worker is not required to be present during each cycle. Instead, the worker may need to tend the machine every tenth cycle or every hundredth cycle. An example of this type of operation is found in many injection molding plants, where the molding machines run on automatic cycle, but periodically the collection bin full of molded parts at the machine must be taken away and replaced by an empty bin.

In manufacturing systems, we use the term *workstation* to refer to a location in the factory where some well-defined task or operation is accomplished by an automated machine, a worker-and-machine combination, or a worker using hand tools and/or portable powered tools. In this last case, there is no definable production machine at the location. Many assembly tasks are in this category. A given manufacturing system may consist of one or more workstations. A system with multiple stations is called a production line, or assembly line, or machine cell, or other name, depending on its configuration and function.

### 13.1.2 Material Handling System

In most processing and assembly operations performed on discrete parts and products, the following ancillary functions must be provided: (1) *loading* and *unloading* work units and (2) *positioning* the work units at each station. In manufacturing systems composed of multiple workstations, a means of (3) *transporting* work units between stations is also required. These functions are accomplished by the material handling system. In many cases, the units are moved by the workers themselves, but more often some form of mechanized or automated material transport system (Chapter 10) is used to reduce human effort. Most material handling systems used in production also provide (4) a *temporary storage* function. The purpose of storage in these systems is usually to make sure that work is always present for the stations, that is, that the stations are not starved (meaning that they have nothing to work on).

Some of the issues related to the material handling system are often unique to the particular type of manufacturing system, and so it makes sense to discuss the details of each handling system when we discuss the manufacturing system itself in later chapters. Our discussion here is concerned with general issues relating to the material handling system.

*Loading, Positioning, and Unloading.* These material handling functions occur at each workstation. *Loading* involves moving the work units into the production machine or processing equipment from a source inside the station. For example, starting parts in batch processing operations are often stored in containers (pallets, tote bins, etc.) in the immediately vicinity of the station. For most processing operations, especially those requiring accuracy and precision, the work unit must be *positioned* in the production machine. Positioning provides for the part to be in a known location and orientation relative to the workhead or tooling that performs the operation. Positioning in the production equipment is often accomplished using a workholder. A *workholder* is a device that accurately locates, orients, and clamps the part for the operation and resists any forces that may occur during processing. Common workholders include jigs, fixtures, and chucks. When the production operation has been completed, the work unit must be *unloaded*, that is, removed from the production machine and either placed in a container at the workstation or prepared for transport to the next workstation in the processing sequence. "Prepared for transport" may consist of simply loading the part onto a conveyor leading to the next station.

When the production machine is manually operated or semi-automatic, loading, positioning, and unloading are performed by the worker either by hand or with the aid of a hoist. In fully automated stations, a mechanized device such as an industrial robot, parts feeder, coil feeder (in sheet metal stamping), or automatic pallet changer is used to accomplish these material handling functions.

*Work Transport Between Stations.* In the context of manufacturing systems, work *transport* means moving parts between workstations in a multi-station system. The transport function can be accomplished manually or by the most appropriate material transport equipment.

In some manufacturing systems, work units are passed from station to station by hand. Manual work transport can be accomplished by moving the units one at a time or in batches. Moving parts in batches is generally more efficient, according to the Unit Load Principle (Section 9.3). Manual work transport is limited to cases in which the parts are small and light, so that the manual labor is ergonomically acceptable. When the load to be moved exceeds certain weight standards, powered hoists (Section 10.5) and similar lift equipment are used. Manufacturing systems that utilize manual work transport include manual assembly lines and group technology machine cells.

Various types of mechanized and automated material handling equipment are widely used to transport work units in manufacturing systems. We distinguish two general categories of work transport, according to the type of routing between stations: (1) variable routing and (2) fixed routing. In *variable routing*, work units are transported through a variety of different station sequences. This means that the manufacturing system is processing or assembling different work units. Variable routing transport is associated with job shop production and many batch production operations. Manufacturing systems that use variable routing include group technology machine cells (Chapter 15) and flexible manufacturing systems (Chapter 16). In *fixed routing*, the work units always flow through the same sequence of stations. This means that the work units are identical or similar enough

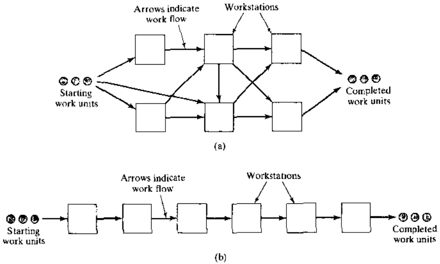



**Figure 13.2** Types of routing in multiple station manufacturing systems: (a) variable routing and (b) fixed routing.

**TABLE 13.1** Common Material Transport Equipment Used for Variable and Fixed Routing in Multiple Station Manufacturing Systems

| *Type of Part Routing* | *Material Handling Equipment** |
|---|---|
| Variable routing | Automated guided vehicle system<br>Power-and-free overhead conveyor<br>Monorail system<br>Cart-on-track conveyor |
| Fixed routing | Powered roller conveyor<br>Belt conveyor<br>Drag chain conveyor<br>Overhead trolley conveyor<br>Rotary indexing mechanisms<br>Walking beam transfer equipment |

* Described in Chapters 10 and 18.

that the processing sequence is identical. Fixed routing transport is used on production lines (Chapters 17 and 18). The difference between variable and fixed routing is portrayed in Figure 13.2. Table 13.1 lists some of the typical material transport equipment used for the two types of part routing.

*Pallet Fixtures and Work Carriers in Transport Systems.* Depending on the geometry of the work units and the nature of the processing and/or assembly operations to be performed, the transport system may be designed to accommodate some form of pallet fixture. A *pallet fixture* is a workholder that is designed to be transported by the material handling system. The part is accurately attached to the fixture on the upper face of the pallet, and the under portion of the pallet is designed to be moved, located, and clamped in position at each workstation in the system. Since the part is accurately located in the fixture, and the pallet is accurately clamped at the station, the part is therefore accurately located at each station for processing or assembly. Use of pallet fixtures is common in automated manufacturing systems, such as single machine cells with automatic pallet changers, transfer lines, and automated assembly systems.

The fixtures can be designed with modular features that allow them to be used for different workpart geometries. By changing components and making adjustments in the fixture, variations in part sizes and shapes can be accommodated. These *modular pallet fixtures* are ideal for use in flexible manufacturing systems.

Alternative methods of workpart transport avoid the use of pallet fixtures. Instead, parts are moved by the handling system either with or without work carriers. A *work carrier* is a container (e.g., tote pan, flat pallet, wire basket) that holds one or more parts and can be moved in the system. Work carriers do not fixture the part(s) in an exact position. Their role is simply to contain parts during transport. When the parts arrive at the desired destination, any locating requirements for the next operation must be satisfied at that station. (This is usually done manually.)

An alternative to using pallet fixtures or work carriers is *direct transport*, in which the transport system is designed to move the work unit itself. The obvious benefit of this arrangement is that it avoids the expense of pallet fixtures or work carriers as well as the added cost of providing for their return to the starting point in the system for reuse. In manually operated manufacturing systems, direct transport is quite feasible, since any positioning required at workstations can be accomplished by the worker. In automated manufacturing systems, in particular systems that require accurate positioning at workstations, the feasibility of direct transport depends on the part's geometry and whether an automated handling method can be devised that is capable of moving, locating, and clamping the part with sufficient precision and accuracy. Not all part shapes allow for direct handling by a mechanized or automated system.

### 13.1.3 Computer Control System

In today's automated manufacturing systems, a computer is required to control the automated and semi-automated equipment and to participate in the overall coordination and management of the manufacturing system. Even in manually driven manufacturing systems, such as a completely manual assembly line, a computer system is useful to support production. Typical computer system functions include the following:

- *Communicate instructions to workers*. In manually operated workstations that perform different tasks on different work units, processing or assembly instructions for the specific work unit must be communicated to the operator.
- *Download part programs* to computer-controlled machines (e.g., CNC machine tools).
- *Material handling system control*. This function is concerned with controlling the material handling system and coordinating its activities with those of the workstations.
- *Schedule production*. Certain production scheduling functions are accomplished at the site of the manufacturing system.

- *Failure diagnosis.* This involves diagnosing equipment malfunctions, preparing preventive maintenance schedules, and maintaining spare parts inventory.
- *Safety Monitoring.* This function ensures that the system does not operate in an unsafe condition. The goal of safety monitoring is to protect both the human workers manning the system and the equipment comprising the system.
- *Quality Control.* The purpose of this control function is to detect and possibly reject defective work units produced by the system.
- *Operations management.* Managing the overall operations of the manufacturing system, either directly (by supervisory computer control) or indirectly (by preparing the necessary reports for management personnel).

### 13.1.4 Human Resources

In many manufacturing systems, humans perform some or all of the value-added work that is accomplished on the parts or products. In these cases, the human workers are referred to as *direct labor.* Through their physical labor, they directly add to the value of the work unit by performing manual work on it or by controlling the machines that perform the work. In manufacturing systems that are fully automated, direct labor is still needed to perform such activities as loading and unloading parts to and from the system, changing tools, resharpening tools, and similar functions. Human workers are also needed for automated manufacturing systems to manage or support the system as computer programmers, computer operators, part programmers for CNC machine tools (Chapter 6), maintenance and repair personnel, and similar *indirect labor* tasks. In automated systems, the distinction between direct and indirect labor is not always precise.

## 13.2 CLASSIFICATION OF MANUFACTURING SYSTEMS

In this section, we explore the variety of manufacturing system types and develop a classification scheme based on the factors that define and distinguish the different types. The factors are: (1) types of operations performed, (2) number of workstations and system layout, (3) level of automation, and (4) part or product variety. The four factors in our manufacturing systems classification scheme are defined in Table 13.2 and discussed below.

**TABLE 13.2** Factors in Manufacturing Systems Classification Scheme

| *Factor* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| Types of operations performed | Processing operations versus assembly operations<br>Type of processing or assembly operation |
| Number of workstations and system layout | One station versus more than one station<br>For more than one station, variable routing versus fixed routing |
| Level of automation | Manual or semi-automated workstations that require full-time operator attention versus fully automated that require only periodic worker attention |
| Part or product variety | All work units identical versus variations in work units that require differences in processing |

### 13.2.1 Types of Operations Performed

First of all, manufacturing systems are distinguished by the types of operations they perform. At the highest level, the distinction is between (1) *processing operations* on individual work units and (2) *assembly operations* to combine individual parts into assembled entities. Beyond this distinction, there are the technologies of the individual processing and assembly operations (Section 2.2.1).

Additional parameters of the product that play a role in determining the design of the manufacturing system include: type of material processed, size and weight of the part or product, and part geometry. For example, machined parts can be classified according to part geometry as rotational or nonrotational. *Rotational* parts are cylindrical or disk-shaped and require turning and related rotational operations. *Nonrotational* (also called *prismatic*) parts are rectangular or cube-like and require milling and related machining operations to shape them. Manufacturing systems that perform machining operations must be distinguished according to whether they make rotational or nonrotational parts. The distinction is important not only because of differences in the machining processes and machine tools required, but also because the material handling system must be engineered differently for the two cases.

### 13.2.2 Number of Workstations and System Layout

The number of workstations is a key factor in our classification scheme. It exerts a strong influence on the performance of the manufacturing system in terms of production capacity, productivity, cost per unit, and maintainability. Let us denote the number of workstations in the system by the symbol $n$. The individual stations in a manufacturing system can be identified by the subscript $i$, where $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$. This might be useful in identifying parameters of the individual workstations, such as operation time or number of workers at a station.

The number of workstations in the manufacturing system is a convenient measure of its size. As the number of stations is increased, the amount of work that can be accomplished by the system increases. This translates into a higher production rate, certainly as compared with a single workstation's output, but also compared with the same number of single stations working independently. There must be a synergistic benefit obtained from multiple stations working in a coordinated manner rather than independently; otherwise, it makes more sense for the stations to work as independent entities. The synergistic benefit might be derived from the fact that the totality of work performed on the part or product is too complex to engineer at a single workstation. There are too many individual tasks to perform at one workstation. By assigning separate tasks to individual stations, the task performed at each station is simplified.

More stations also mean that the system is more complex and therefore more difficult to manage and maintain. The system consists of more workers, more machines, and more parts being handled. The logistics and coordination of the system becomes more involved. Maintenance problems occur more frequently.

Closely related to number of workstations is the arrangement of the workstations, that is, the way the stations are laid out. This, of course, applies mainly to systems with multiple stations. Are the stations arranged for variable routing or fixed routing? Workstation layouts organized for variable routing can have a variety of possible configurations, while layouts organized for fixed routing are usually arranged linearly, as in a production line. The layout of stations is an important factor in determining the most appropriate material handling system.

Our classification scheme is applicable to manufacturing systems that perform either processing or assembly operations. Although these operations are different, the manufacturing systems to perform them possess similar configurations. According to number of stations and the layout of the stations, our classification scheme has three levels:

**Type I** *Single station.* This is the simplest case, consisting of one workstation ($n = 1$), usually including a production machine that can be manually operated, semi-automated, or fully automated.

**Type II** *Multiple stations with variable routing.* This manufacturing system consists of two or more stations ($n > 1$) that are designed and arranged to accommodate the processing or assembly of different part or product styles.

**Type III** *Multiple stations with fixed routing.* This system has two or more workstations ($n > 1$), which are laid out as a production line.

### 13.2.3 Level of Automation

The level of automation is another factor that characterizes the manufacturing system. As defined above, the workstations (machines) in a manufacturing system can be manually operated, semi-automated, or automated.

*Manning Level.* Closely correlated with the level of automation is the proportion of time that direct labor must be in attendance at each station. The ***manning level*** of a workstation, symbolized $M_i$, is the proportion of time that a worker is in attendance at the station. If $M_i = 1$ for station $i$, it means that one worker must be at the station continuously. If one worker tends four automatic machines, then $M_i = 0.25$ for each of the four machines, assuming each machine requires the same amount of attention. On portions of an automobile final assembly line, there are stations where multiple workers perform assembly tasks on the car, in which case $M_i = 2$ or 3 or more. In general, high values of $M_i$ ($M_i \geq 1$) indicate manual operations at the workstation, while low values ($M_i < 1$) denote some form of automation.

The average manning level of a multi-station manufacturing system is a useful indicator of the direct labor content of the system. Let us define it as follows:

$$M = \frac{w_u + \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i}{n} = \frac{w}{n} \tag{13.1}$$

where $M$ = average manning level for the system; $w_u$ = number of utility workers assigned to the system; $w_i$ = number of workers assigned specifically to station $i$, for $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$; and $w$ = total number of workers assigned to the system. ***Utility workers*** are workers who are not specifically assigned to individual processing or assembly stations; instead they perform functions such as: (1) relieving workers at stations for personal breaks, (2) maintenance and repair of the system, (3) tool changing, and (4) loading and/or unloading work units to and from the system. Even a fully automated multi-station manufacturing system is likely to have one or more workers who are responsible for keeping it running.

*Automation in the Classification Scheme.* Including automation in our classification scheme, we have two possible automation levels for single stations and three possible levels for multi-station systems. The two levels for single stations (type I) are: M = manned station and A = fully automated. The manned station is identified by the fact that one or more workers must be at the station every cycle. This means that any machine at the station is manually operated or semi-automatic and that manning is equal to or greater than one ($M \geq 1$). However, in some cases, one worker may be able to attend more than one machine, if the semi-automatic cycle is long relative to the service required each cycle of the worker (thus, $M < 1$). We address this issue in Section 14.4.2. A fully automated station requires less than full-time attention of a worker ($M < 1$). For multi-station systems (types II and III), the levels M and A are applicable, and a third level is possible: H = hybrid, in which some stations are manned and others are fully automated. Listing the alternatives, we have the following:

**Type I M** *Single-station manned cell.* The basic case is one machine and one worker ($n = 1, w = 1$). The machine is manually operated or semi-automated, and the worker must be in continuous attendance at the machine.

**Type I A** *Single station automated cell.* This is a fully automated machine capable of unattended operation ($M < 1$) for extended periods of time (longer than one machine cycle). A worker must periodically load and unload the machine or otherwise service it.

**Type II M** *Multi-station manual system with variable routing.* This has multiple stations that are manually operated or semi-automated. The layout and work transport system allow for various routes to be followed by the parts or products made by the system. Work transport between stations is either manual or mechanized.

**Type II A** *Multi-station automated system with variable routing.* This is the same as the previous system, except the stations are fully automated ($n > 1$, $w_i = 0$, $M < 1$). Work transport is also fully automated.

**Type II H** *Multi-station hybrid system with variable routing.* This manufacturing system contains both manned and automated stations. Work transport is manual, automated, or a mixture (hybrid).

**Type III M** *Multi-station manual system with fixed routing.* This manufacturing system consists of two or more stations ($n > 1$), with one or more workers at each station ($w_i \geq 1$). The operations are sequential, thus necessitating a fixed routing, usually laid out as a production line. Work transport between stations is either manual or mechanized.

**Type III A** *Multi-station automated system with fixed routing.* This system consists of two or more automated stations ($n > 1$, $w_i = 0$, $M < 1$) arranged as a production line or similar configuration. Work transport is fully automated.

**Type III H** *Multi-station hybrid system with fixed routing.* This system includes both manned and automated stations ($n > 1$, $w_i \geq 1$ for some stations, $w_i = 0$ for other stations, $M > 0$). Work transport is manual, automated, or a mixture (hybrid).

The eight types of manufacturing system are depicted in Figure 13.3.

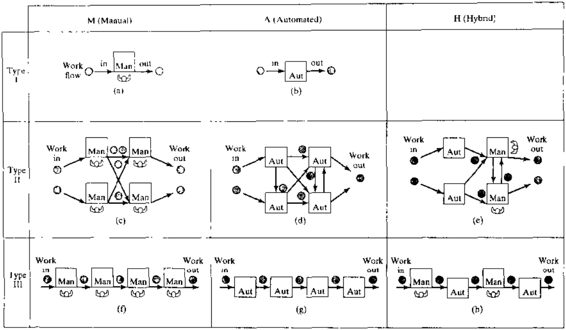



**Figure 13.3** Classification of manufacturing systems: (a) single station manned cell, (b) single station automated cell, (c) multi-station manual system with variable routing, (d) multi-station automated system with variable routing, (e) multi-station hybrid system with variable routing, (f) multi-station manual system with serial operations, (g) multi-station automated system with serial operations, and (h) multi-station hybrid system with serial operations. Key: Man = manned station, Aut = automated station.

### 13.2.4 Part or Product Variety

A fourth factor that characterizes a manufacturing system is the degree to which it is capable of dealing with variations in the parts or products it produces. Examples of possible variations that a manufacturing system may have to cope with include:

- variations in type and/or color of plastic of molded parts in injection molding
- variations in electronic components placed on a standard size printed circuit board
- variations in the size of printed circuit boards handled by a component placement machine
- variations in geometry of machined parts
- variations in parts and options in an assembled product on a final assembly line.

In this section, we borrow from the terminology of assembly lines to identify three types of manufacturing systems, distinguished by their capacity to cope with part or product variety. We then discuss two ways in which manufacturing systems can be endowed with this capability.

**TABLE 13.3** Three Types of Manufacturing System According to Their Capacity to Deal with Product Variety

| *System Type* | *Symbol* | *Typical Product Variety* | *Flexibility* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Single model | S | No product variety | None required |
| Batch model | B | Hard product variety typical* | Most flexible |
| Mixed model | X | Soft product variety typical* | Some flexibility |

*Hard and soft product variety are defined in Chapters 1 (Section 1.1) and 2 (Section 2.3.1).

*Model Variations: Three Cases.* Manufacturing systems can be distinguished according to their capability to deal with variety in the work units produced. Terminology used in assembly line technology (Section 17.1.4) can be applied here. Three cases of part or product variation in manufacturing systems are distinguished: (1) single model, (2) batch model, and (3) mixed model. The three cases can be identified by letter, S, B, and X, respectively. The typical level of product variety can also be correlated with the three categories. These features are summarized in Table 13.3.

In the *single model case*, all parts or products made by the manufacturing system are identical. There are no variations. In this case, demand for the item must be sufficient to justify dedication of the system to production of that item for an extended period of time, perhaps several years. Equipment associated with the system is specialized and designed for highest possible efficiency. Fixed automation (Section 1.3.1) in single model systems is common.

In the *batch model case*, different parts or products are made by the system, but they are made in batches because a changeover in physical setup and/or equipment programming is required between models. Changeover of the manufacturing system is required because the differences in part or product style are significant enough that the system cannot cope unless changes in tooling and programming are made. It is a case of hard product variety (Section 1.1). The time needed to accomplish the changeover requires the system to be operated in a batch mode, in which a batch of one product style is followed by a batch of another, and so on. Batch production is illustrated in Figure 13.4. The plot shows production quantity as a function of time, with interruptions between batches for changeover (setup).

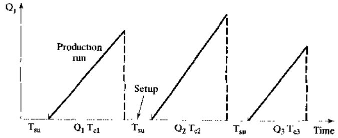



**Figure 13.4** The sawtooth plot of production quantity over time in batch production. Key: $T_{su}$ = setup time, $Q_j$ = batch quantity, $T_{cj}$ = cycle time for part or product $j$. Production runs vary because batch quantities and production rates vary.

In the *mixed model case*, different parts or products are made by the manufacturing system, but the system is able to handle these differences without the need for a changeover in setup and/or program. This means that the mixture of different styles can be produced continuously rather than in batches. The requirement for continuous production of different work unit styles is that the manufacturing system be designed so that whatever adjustments need to be made from one part or product style to the next, these adjustments can be made quickly enough that it is economical to produce the units in batch sizes of one.

*Flexibility in Manufacturing Systems.* *Flexibility* is the term used for the attribute that allows a mixed model manufacturing system to cope with a certain level of variation in part or product style without interruptions in production for changeovers between models. Flexibility is generally a desirable feature of a manufacturing system. Systems that possess it are called *flexible manufacturing systems*, or *flexible assembly systems*, or similar names. They can produce different part styles or can readily adapt to new part styles when the previous ones become obsolete. To be flexible, a manufacturing system must possess the following capabilities:

- *Identification of the different work units*. Different operations are required on different part or product styles. The manufacturing system must identify the work unit to perform the correct operation. In a manually operated or semi-automatic system, this task is usually an easy one for the worker(s). In an automated system, some means of automatic work unit identification must be engineered.
- *Quick changeover of operating instructions*. The instructions, or part program in the case of computer-controlled production machines, must correspond to the correct operation for the given part. In the case of a manually operated system, this generally means workers who (1) are skilled in the variety of operations needed to process or assemble the different work unit styles, and (2) know which operations to perform on each work unit style. In semi-automatic and fully automated systems, it means that the required part programs are readily available to the control unit.
- *Quick changeover of physical setup*. Flexibility in manufacturing means that the different work units are not produced in batches. For different work unit styles to be produced with no time lost between one unit and the next, the flexible manufacturing system must be capable of making any necessary changes in fixturing and tooling in a very short time. (The changeover time should correspond approximately to the time required to exchange the completed work unit for the next unit to be processed.)

These capabilities are often difficult to engineer. In manually operated manufacturing systems, human errors can cause problems: operators not performing the correct operations on the different work unit styles. In automated systems, sensor systems must be designed to enable work unit identification. Part program changeover is accomplished with relative ease using today's computer technology. Changing the physical setup is often the most challenging problem, and its solution becomes more difficult as part or product variety increases. Endowing a manufacturing system with flexibility increases its complexity. The material handling system and/or pallet fixtures must be designed to hold a variety of part shapes. The required number of different tools increases. Inspection becomes more complicated because of part variety. The logistics of supplying the system with the correct quantities of different starting workparts is more involved. Scheduling and coordination of the system become more difficult.

Flexibility itself is a complex issue. certainly more complex than we have discussed in this introductory treatment of it. It is recognized as a significantly important attribute for a system to possess. We dedicate a more in-depth discussion of the issue in Chapter 16 on flexible manufacturing systems.

*Reconfigurable Manufacturing Systems.* In an era when new product styles are being introduced with ever-shortening life cycles, the cost of designing, building, and installing a new manufacturing system every time a new part or product must be produced is becoming prohibitive, both in terms of time and money. One alternative is to reuse and reconfigure components of the original system in a new manufacturing system. In modern manufacturing engineering practice, even single model manufacturing systems are being built with features that enable them to be changed over to new product styles when this becomes necessary. These kinds of features include [1]:

- *Ease of mobility.* Machine tools and other production machines designed with a three-point base that allows them be readily lifted and moved by a crane or forklift truck. The three-point base facilitates leveling of the machine after moving.
- *Modular design of system components.* This permits hardware components from different machine builders to be connected together.
- *Open architecture in computer controls.* This permits data interchange between software packages from different vendors.
- *CNC workstations.* Even though the production machines in the system are dedicated to one product, they are nevertheless computer numerical controlled to allow for upgrades in software, engineering changes in the part currently produced, and changeover of the equipment when the production run finally ends.

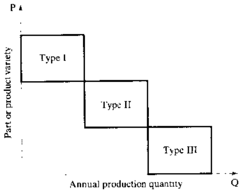
## 13.3 OVERVIEW OF THE CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

Our manufacturing systems classification scheme is defined by four factors: (1) type of processing or assembly operations performed, (2) number of stations and layout, (3) automation level, and (4) flexibility to deal with part or product variety. In Table 13.4, we list some examples of manufacturing systems in the classification scheme. These systems are described in Chapters 14–19.

A sense of the relative flexibility and productivity of the various types of manufacturing systems is provided in the P-Q chart of Figure 13.5(a). Type I systems, in particular manual systems, inherently possess the greatest flexibility in terms of part or product variety. However, single stations are limited in terms of the part or product complexity they can cope with, as indicated in Figure 13.5(b). We have suggested that the number of components in an assembly and the number of processing steps for a part are reasonable quantitative measures of part or product complexity (Section 2.3.2). If the work unit is simple, requiring only one or a few processing or assembly operations, then a single station system can be justified for high production as well as low production. As the complexity of the work unit increases, the advantage shifts toward a multi-station manufacturing system. The larger number of tasks and additional tooling required for more-complex parts or products begins to overwhelm a single station. By dividing the work among multiple stations (as in division of labor), the complexity becomes more manageable. If there is no product variety or very soft product variety, then a type III system is appropriate. As product variety

**TABLE 13.4** Examples in the Manufacturing Systems Classification Schemes

| *Type* | Description | Operation | Product Variety Case | Example |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I M | Single station manned cell | Processing (machining) | S or B | Worker at CNC lathe |
| | | Processing (stamping) | S or B | Worker at stamping press |
| | | Assembly (welding) | S or B or X | Welder and fitter at arc welding setup |
| I A | Single station automated cell | Processing (machining) | B or X | A CNC machining center with parts carousel operating in an unattended mode |
| | | Assembly (mechanical) | S or X | An assembly system in which one robot performs multiple assembly tasks to complete a product |
| II M | Multi-station manual system with variable routing | Processing (machining) | X | A group technology machine cell that machines a family of metal parts |
| | | Processing (machining) | B | A small job shop with a process layout might be considered a type II M system. It produces a variety of different part or product styles requiring a variety of process routings |
| II A | Multi-station automated system with variable routing | Processing (machining) | X | A flexible manufacturing system |
| III M | Multi-station manual system with fixed routing | Assembly | S or B or X | A manual assembly line that produces small power tools |
| III A | Multi-station automated system with fixed routing | Processing (machining) | S | A machining transfer line |
| | | Assembly | S | An automated assembly machine with a carousel-type transfer system for work transport |
| III H | Multi-station hybrid system with fixed routing | Assembly and processing (spot welding, spray painting, and mechanical assembly) | X | An automobile final assembly plant, in which many of the spot welding and spray painting operations are automated while other assembly is manual |



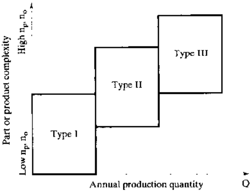




**Figure 13.5** (a) P-Q chart for the types of manufacturing systems in our classification scheme, indicating trends in flexibility and productivity; and (b) part or product complexity for the three basic manufacturing system types. Key: I = single station system, II = multi-station system with variable routing, III = multi-station system with fixed routing,

increases, a type II system with variable routing becomes more appropriate. Our charts indicate that the type III systems are the most productive.

Let us briefly describe types I, II, and III manufacturing systems. In subsequent chapters, these systems are discussed in greater detail.

### 13.3.1 Type I Manufacturing Systems: Single Stations

Applications of single workstations are widespread. The typical case is a worker-machine cell. Our classification scheme distinguishes two categories: (1) type M: *manned worksta-*

*tions*, in which a worker must be in attendance either continuously or for a portion of each work cycle, and (2) type A: *automated stations*, in which periodic attention is required less frequently than every cycle. In either case, these systems are used for processing as well as for assembly operations, and their applications include single model, batch model, and mixed model production.

Reasons for the popularity of the single model workstation include: (1) It is the easiest and least expensive manufacturing method to implement, especially the manned version; (2) it is the most adaptable, adjustable, and flexible manufacturing system; and (3) a manned single workstation can be converted to an automated station if demand for the parts or products made in the station justifies this conversion.

### 13.3.2 Type II Manufacturing Systems: Multi-Station Cells

A multiple station system with variable routing is a group of workstations organized to achieve some special purpose. It is typically intended for production quantities in the medium range (annual production = $10^2$–$10^4$ parts or products), although its applications sometimes extend beyond these boundaries. The special purpose may be any of the following:

- Production of a family of parts having similar processing operations.
- Assembly of a family of products having similar assembly operations.
- Production of the complete set of components used in the assembly of one unit of final product. By producing all of the parts in one product, rather than batch production of the parts, work-in-process inventory is reduced.

As our list of examples indicates, the multi-station system with variable routing is applicable to either processing or assembly operations. It also indicates that the applications usually involve a certain degree of part or product variety, which means differences in operations and sequences of operations that must be performed. The machine groups must possess flexibility to cope with this variety.

The machines in the group may be manually operated, semi-automatic, or fully automated. In our classification scheme, manually operated machine groups are type II M. These groups are often called *machine cells*, and the use of these cells in a factory is called *cellular manufacturing*. Cellular manufacturing and its companion topic, group technology, are discussed in Chapter 15. When the machines in the group are fully automated, with automated material handling between workstations, it is classified as type II A. If an automated machine group is flexible, it is referred to as a *flexible manufacturing system* or *flexible manufacturing cell*. We discuss flexibility and flexible manufacturing systems in Chapter 16.

### 13.3.3 Type III Manufacturing Systems: Production Lines

A multi-station manufacturing system with fixed routing is a production line. A *production line* consists of a series of workstations laid out so that the part or product moves from one station to the next, and a portion of the total work is performed on it at each station. Production lines are generally associated with mass production ($10^4$–$10^6$ parts or products per year). Conditions that favor the use of a production line are:

- The quantity of parts or products to be made is very high (up to millions of units).
- The work units are identical or very similar. (Thus they require the same or similar operations to be performed in the same sequence.)
- The total work can be divided into separate tasks of approximately equal duration that can be assigned to individual workstations.

The production rate of the line is determined by its slowest station. Workstations whose pace is faster than the slowest must ultimately wait for that bottleneck station. Transfer of work units from one station to the next is usually accomplished by a conveyor or other mechanical transport system, although in some cases the work is simply pushed between stations by hand.

Production lines are used for either processing or assembly operations. It is unusual for both types of operation to be accomplished on the same line. Production lines are either manually operated or automated. In our classification scheme, the manual lines are designated type III M, and the automated lines are designated type III A. Manual production lines usually perform assembly operations, and we discuss manual assembly lines in Chapter 17. Automated lines perform either processing or assembly operations, and we discuss these two system types in Chapters 18 and 19. There are also hybrid systems (type III H), in which both manual and automated stations exist in the same line. This case is analyzed in Section 19.3.4.

## 13.4 MANUFACTURING PROGRESS FUNCTIONS (LEARNING CURVES)

A phenomenon manifested in virtually all manufacturing systems is the learning curve, which was first observed and studied in aircraft assembly in the 1930s [8]. It applies to any repetitive activity. The *learning curve phenomenon* occurs when the cycle time required to perform a given activity decreases as the number of cycles increases. It is easiest to visualize learning in terms of an individual human worker. When a given task is performed repeatedly by the worker, it is gradually learned so that the time required to perform it decreases with each successive work unit. At first, the learning effect is rapid, and the time per work unit decreases significantly with each consecutive unit. As the worker completes more and more units, the reduction in task time with each additional unit becomes less and less. The improvement that results from learning occurs at a diminishing rate.

Although it is easier to envision learning when applied to individual humans, the same kind of cycle time reduction occurs in the repetitive operations of work teams, large organizations, and manufacturing systems. In these cases, the phenomenon is called the *manufacturing progress function*.

For the case of an automated manufacturing system, one might think that since the cycle is set by the machine(s), then cycle time reduction is not possible. However, it must be realized that in all but the simplest of systems, there is invariably a beginning period after the system is first installed during which "bugs" in the system are being worked out, and the people responsible for operating the system are learning what makes it work. This is often called the *break-in period* or a similar name. Production tends to be very low during this break-in period. But repairs are made, the bugs are fixed, and the system is "tuned," so that the production rate increases. Learning has taken place. After the break-in period, if learning and "fine-tuning" are allowed to proceed in the spirit of *continuous improvement* that is encouraged by many organizations, the learning curve will continue.

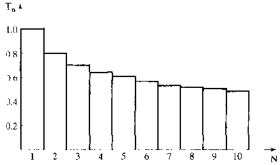



**Figure 13.6** The learning curve phenomenon for a learning rate of 80%.

According to learning curve theory, there is a constant learning rate that applies to a given task. Different learning rates are associated with different types of tasks. And different workers have different learning capabilities that affect the learning rate. Whatever the learning rate, its effect is most identifiable every time the number of units doubles. This doubling effect can be seen in our hypothetical plot in Figure 13.6. Assuming a learning rate of 80%, as in our figure, the time to produce the second unit is 80% of that for the first unit; the time to produce the fourth unit is 80% of that for the second; and so forth. Every time the number of units doubles, the task time per unit has been reduced to 80% of its previous value. Between these points, the unit task times gradually decrease. We can calculate the expected time for the $N$th work unit by means of the following equation:

$$T_N = T_1(N)^m \tag{13.4}$$

where $T_N$ = task time for the $N$th unit of work; $T_1$ = task time for the first work unit; $N$ = the number of the unit produced in the series; and $m$ = an exponent that depends on the learning rate. The value of $m$ can be determined as follows:

$$m = \frac{\ln(LR)}{\ln(2)} \tag{13.5}$$

where $LR$ = learning rate, expressed as a decimal fraction, such as 0.80. The natural logarithm of 2 in the denominator manifests the doubling effect of the learning rate. This causes the curve to plot as a straight line in a log-log graph, as in Figure 13.7. Typical values of the learning rate for various types of work are compiled in Table 13.5. The following example demonstrates the effect of learning in assembly line work.

**EXAMPLE 13.3 The Learning Curve**

A certain mechanical assembly task required 3.75 min to complete when a skilled worker did it for the first time. The task will be performed on an assembly line used to produce 1000 units of a particular product. The line is currently operating on a pilot basis, while workers are learning their respective tasks. The line will run on this basis for 50 units, after which it will go into reg-

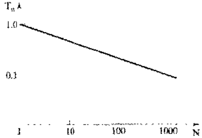



**Figure 13.7** The learning curve plots as a straight line on a log-log graph.

**TABLE 13.5** Typical Learning Rates for Various Types of Work

| *Type of Work* | *Typical Learning Rate (%)* |
|---|---|
| Assembly, electrical harness | 85 |
| Assembly, electronic | 85 |
| Assembly, mechanical | 84 |
| Assembly of prototypes | 65 |
| Inspection | 86 |
| Machining | 90–95 |
| Sheet metal working | 90 |
| Welding | 85 |

*Source* [6], [8].

ular production. (a) If the learning rate for tasks of this type is 84% (Table 13.5), what will the task time be for the 50th unit and (b) for the 1000th unit?

***Solution:*** (a) To determine the task time for any numbered unit, we need to compute the exponent $m$ from Eq. (13.5).

$$m = \frac{\ln(0.84)}{\ln(2)} = -0.2515$$

The task time for the 50th unit is found from Eq. (13.4):

$$T_{50} = 3.75(50)^{-0.2515} = 3.75(0.3738) = 1.402 \text{ min}$$

(b) The task time for the 1000th unit:

$$T_{1000} = 3.75(1000)^{-0.2515} = 0.660 \text{ min}$$

This example demonstrates the powerful effect of learning curves (manufacturing progress functions) in manufacturing systems. As mentioned, the learning curve phenomenon applies to both manual work as well as automated systems, if continuous improvement is allowed to take place.

## REFERENCES

[1] ARONSON, R. B., "Operation Plug-and-Play is On the Way," *Manufacturing Engineering*, March 1997, pp. 108-112.

[2] ENGWALL, R. L., "Learning Curves," *Maynard's Industrial Engineering Handbook*, Fourth Edition. W. Hodson, Editor. McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1992, pp. 5.145-5.161.

[3] GROOVER, M. P., and O. MEJABI, "Trends in Manufacturing System Design," *Proceedings*, IIE Fall Conference, Nashville, Tennessee, November 1987.

[4] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Chapter 38, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[5] HANCOCK, W. M., and F. H. BAYHA, "The Learning Curve," *Handbook of Industrial Engineering*, Second Edition, G. Salvendy, Editor, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1992, pp. 1585-1598.

[6] KONZ, S., and S. JOHNSON, *Work Design: Industrial Ergonomics*, Fifth Edition, Holcomb Hathaway, Publishers, Scottsdale, Arizona, 2000.

[7] NIEBEL, B., and A. FREIVALDS, *Methods, Standards, and Work Design*, (10th Ed) WCB/McGraw-Hill, 1999.

[8] SMITH, J., *Learning Curve for Cost Control*, Industrial Engineering and Management Press, Institute of Industrial Engineers, Norcross, Georgia, 1989.

[9] K. WILLIAMS et al. *Cars: Analysis, History, Cases*, Berghahn Books, Providence, Rhode Island, 1994.

## PROBLEMS

### Learning Curves

**13.1** A certain electrical harness assembly job required 35.0 min to complete when a skilled worker did it the first time. The job will be performed to produce 100 harnesses. If the learning rate is 85% (Table 13.5), what will the time be (a) for the 10th unit and (b) for the 100th unit?

**13.2** A job shop fabricated a prototype of a new product in a total of 640 direct labor hours, using a team of eight workers. It charged the customer a labor cost of \$20/hr, plus an overhead of 70%, plus a profit margin of 10% above that, for a total price of \$23,936. (a) What was the profit (in dollars) for this job? (b) If the shop fabricated a second prototype exactly like the first one, using the same work team, and charged the customer the same total as it did for the first unit, what profit would the company make for that second prototype? Assume that learning occurred. Use Table 13.5 to estimate the learning rate.

**13.3** In an aircraft assembly plant, it took 54 min to assemble the 7th control panel. It took 49 min to assemble the 12th panel. If you developed a learning curve to predict assembly times for this operation, (a) what would be the percentage learning and (b) how long would it take to assemble the 25th panel?

**13.4** One hundred units of a special pump product are scheduled to be made for a middle eastern country to move water across the desert. The pumps are being assembled at one workstation by a team of four workers. Time records for the first unit were not kept; however, the second and third units took 15.0 hr and 13.4 hr, respectively, to complete. Determine: (a) the percentage learning rate; (b) the most likely time it took to do the first unit; and (c) if the learning rate continues, how long it will take to complete the last unit (100th unit).

**13.5** Four units of a welded steel product were assembled by one welder and one fitter in an arc welding setup. Total time to complete all four units was 100 hr. If the learning rate applicable to the fabrication of products of this type is known to be 85% (Table 13.5), how much time did each of the four units take?

**13.6** The learning curve phenomenon is one of the important reasons why an assembly line with $n$ stations is capable of outproducing $n$ single workstations, where each single station does the entire work content of the job. Consider the case of a product whose theoretical work content time for the first unit is 20 min. The effect of an 84% learning rate is to be compared for two cases: 10 single station manual cells, each doing the entire assembly task, and one perfectly balanced 10-station manual assembly line, where each station does 2.0 min of the total work content. For the 1000th unit produced, determine the rate of production of: (a) the 10 single workstations and (b) the 10-station assembly line.

**13.7** A worker at a single station manual cell produces seven parts during the first day on a new job, and the seventh part takes 45 min. The worker produces 10 parts on the second day, and the 10th part on the second day takes 30 min. Given this information, what is the percentage learning rate?

**13.8** One of the great examples of the learning curve phenomenon was the improvement in labor hours per car at Ford Motor Company during the early years of Model T production. During these years, assembly lines and other manufacturing systems were installed, and a variety of process and methods improvements were made in the assembly of the Model T and the fabrication of its component parts. The table below presents data on several years of production of the Model T as the improvements were being made [Data based on K. Williams et al.Ref. 9]. (a) What is the learning rate demonstrated by these data? (Hint: To find $N$ for each year, use the midpoint of units produced; that is, for year 1909, which is assumed to be the first year of production, $N = 14.000/2 = 7{,}000$ and $T_{7000} = 357$ hr; for 1910, $N = 14{,}000 + 21{,}000/2 = 24{,}500$ and $T_{24{,}500} = 400$ hr; and so on. Plot the data or use regression analysis to determine slope $m$. (b) Based on your result from part (a), what is your best guess for the time to assemble the very first unit (that is, find $T_1$)?

| *Year* | *Units Produced* | *Average Labor (hr/unit)* | *Selling Price ($)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1909 | 14,000 | 357 | 850 |
| 1910 | 21,000 | 400 | 950 |
| 1911 | 54,000 | 222 | 780 |
| 1912 | 83,000 | 250 | 690 |
| 1913 | 199,000 | 216 | 600 |
| 1914 | 250,000 | 127 | 550 |
| 1915 | 369,000 | 123 | 440 |
| 1916 | 585,000 | 134 | 360 |

# chapter 14

# Single Station Manufacturing Cells

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



Single stations constitute the most common manufacturing system in industry. They operate independently of other workstations in the factory, although their activities are coordinated with the larger production system. Single station manufacturing cells are used for either processing or assembly operations. They can be designed for single model production (where all parts or products made by the system are identical), for batch production (where different part styles are made in batches), or for mixed-model production (where different parts are made sequentially; i.e., not in batches). In our classification scheme of the previous chapter (Section 13.2), we identified the single station category as type I manufacturing systems. There are two forms of type I systems:

1. *Single station manned cell* (type I M)
2. *Single station automated cell* (type I A).

These manufacturing systems are discussed in this chapter. We also examine two analysis issues that must be considered in the planning of single station systems: (1) how many workstations are required to satisfy production requirements, and (2) how many machines can be assigned to one worker in a machine cluster. A *machine cluster* is a collection of two or more identical or similar machines that are serviced by one worker.

## 14.1 SINGLE STATION MANNED CELLS

The *single station manned cell*, the standard model for which consists of one worker tending one machine, is probably the most widely used production method today. It dominates job shop production and batch production, and it is not uncommon even in high production. There are many reasons for its widespread adoption.

- It requires the shortest amount of time to implement. The user company can quickly launch production of a new part or product, while it plans and designs a more automated production method.
- It requires the least capital investment of all manufacturing systems.
- Technologically, it is the easiest system to install and operate.
- For many situations, particularly for low quantities, it results in the lowest cost per unit produced.
- In general, it is the most flexible manufacturing system with regard to changeovers from one part or product style to the next.

In the one machine-one worker station ($n = 1, w = 1$), the machine is manually operated or semi-automated. In a *manually operated station*, the operator controls the machine and loads and unloads the work. A typical processing example is a worker operating a standard machine tool such as an engine lathe, drill press, or forge hammer. The work cycle requires the attention of the worker either continuously or for most of the cycle (e.g., the operator might relax temporarily during the cycle when the machine feed is engaged on the lathe or drill press). An assembly example is a worker assembling components to a one-of-a-kind printed circuit board in an electronics plant. The task requires the constant attention of the worker.

The manually operated workstation also includes the case of a worker using hand tools (e.g., screwdriver and wrench in mechanical assembly) or portable powered tools (e.g., powered hand-held drill, soldering iron, or arc welding gun). The key factor is that the worker performs the task at one location (one workstation) in the factory.

In a *semi-automated station*, the machine is controlled by some form of program, such as a part program that controls a CNC machine tool during a portion of the work cycle, and the worker's function is simply to load and unload the machine each cycle and periodically change cutting tools. In this case, the worker's attendance at the station is required every work cycle, although the worker's attention may not be continuously occupied throughout the cycle.

There are several variations from the standard model of a one machine-one worker station. Even though they do not perfectly fit the model, they are nevertheless best classified as type I M workstations. First, the single station manned cell classification includes the case where two or more workers are needed full-time to operate the machine or to accomplish the task at the workplace ($n = 1, w > 1$). Examples include:

- two workers required to manipulate heavy forgings in a forge press
- a welder and fitter working in an arc welding setup
- multiple workers combining their efforts to assemble one large piece of machinery at a single assembly station.

Another variation of the standard case occurs when there is a principal production machine plus other equipment in the station that supports the principal machine. The other equipment is clearly subordinate to the main machine; otherwise, this situation should be classified as a type II or type III manufacturing system. Examples of clearly subordinate equipment include:

- drying equipment used to dry plastic molding powder prior to molding in a manually operated injection molding machine
- a grinder used at an injection molding machine to grind the sprues and runners from plastic moldings for recycling
- trimming shears used in conjunction with a forge hammer to trim flash from the forgings.

## 14.2 SINGLE STATION AUTOMATED CELL

The *single station automated cell* (type I A) consists of a fully automated machine capable of unattended operation for a time period longer than one machine cycle. A worker is not required to be at the machine except periodically to load and unload parts or otherwise tend it. Reasons why this system category is important include the following:

- Labor cost is reduced compared with the single manned station.
- Among automated manufacturing systems, the single station automated cell is the easiest and least expensive system to implement.
- Production rates are generally higher than for a comparable manned machine.
- It often represents the first step in implementing an integrated multi-station automated system. The user company can install and debug the single automated machines individually and subsequently integrate them (1) electronically by means of a supervisory computer system and/or (2) physically by means of an automated material handling system. Recall the automation migration strategy from Chapter 1 (Section 1.5.3).

The issue of supporting equipment arises in single station automated cells, just as it does in manned single station cells. In the case of a fully automated injection molding machine that uses drying equipment for the incoming plastic molding compound, the drying equipment clearly plays a supporting role to the molding machine. Other examples of supporting equipment in automated cells include:

- A robot loading and unloading an automated production machine. The production machine is the principal machine in the cell, and the robot plays a supporting role.
- Bowl feeders and other parts-feeding devices used to deliver components in a single robot assembly cell. In this case, the assembly robot is the principal production machine in the cell, and the parts feeders are subordinate.

Let us consider some of the technological features of this type I A manufacturing system, beginning with the enablers that make it possible.

### 14.2.1 Enablers for Unattended Cell Operation

A key feature of a single station automated cell is its ability to operate unattended for extended periods of time. The enablers required for unattended operation in single and batch model production must be distinguished from those required for mixed model production.

*Enablers for Unattended Single Model and Batch Model Production.* The technical attributes required for unattended operation of a single model or batch model cell are the following:

- *Programmed cycle* that allows the machine to perform every step of the processing or assembly cycle automatically.
- *Parts storage subsystem* and a supply of parts that permit continuous operation beyond one machine cycle. The storage system must be capable of holding both raw workparts and completed work units. This sometimes means that two storage units are required, one for the starting workparts and the second for the completed parts.
- *Automatic transfer of workparts* between the storage system and the machine (automatic unloading of finished parts from the machine and loading of raw workparts to the machine); this transfer is a step in the regular work cycle. The parts storage subsystem and automatic transfer of parts are discussed in more detail in Section 14.2.2.
- *Periodic attention of a worker* who resupplies raw workparts, takes away finished parts, changes tools as they wear out (depending on the process), and performs other machine tending functions that are necessary for the particular processing or assembly operation.
- *Built-in safeguards* that protect the system against operating under conditions that may be (1) unsafe or destructive to itself or (2) destructive to the work units being processed or assembled. Some of these safeguards may simply be in the form of very high process and equipment reliability. In other cases, the cell must be furnished with the capability for error detection and recovery (Section 3.2.3).

*Enablers for Mixed Model Production.* The preceding list of enablers applies to single model and batch model production. In cases when the system is designed to process or assemble a variety of part or product styles in sequence (i.e., a flexible manufacturing workstation), then the following enablers must be provided in addition to the preceding:

- *Work identification subsystem* that can distinguish the different raw work units entering the station, so that the correct processing sequence can be used for that part or product style. This may take the form of sensors that can recognize the features of the work unit. Or the identification subsystem may consist of automatic identification methods such as bar codes (Chapter 12). In some cases, identical starting work units are subjected to different processing operations according to a specified production schedule. If the starting units are identical, a workpart identification subsystem is unnecessary.
- *Program downloading capability* to transfer the machine cycle program corresponding to the identified part or product style. This assumes that programs have been pre-

pared in advance for all part styles and that these programs are stored in the machine control unit or that the control unit has access to them.

- *Quick setup changeover capability* so that the necessary workholding devices and other tools for each part are available on demand.

The same enablers that we have described here are required for the unattended operation of workstations in multi-station flexible manufacturing systems discussed in later chapters.

### 14.2.2 Parts Storage Subsystem and Automatic Parts Transfer

The parts storage subsystem and automatic transfer of parts between the storage subsystem and the processing station are necessary conditions for a single station automated cell, that is, a cell that operates unattended for extended periods of time. The storage subsystem has a designed parts storage capacity $n_p$. Accordingly, the cell can theoretically operate unattended for a length of time given by:

$$UT = n_p T_c \tag{14.1}$$

where $UT$ = unattended time of operation of the manufacturing cell (min), $n_p$ = parts storage capacity of the storage subsystem (pc), and $T_c$ = cycle time of the automated workstation (min/pc). This assumes that one work unit is processed each cycle. In reality, the unattended time of operation will be somewhat less than this amount (by one or more cycle times), because the worker needs time to unload all of the finished pieces and load starting work units into the storage subsystem.

Capacities of parts storage subsystems range from one part to hundreds. As Eq. (14.1) indicates, the time of unattended operation increases directly with storage capacity, so there is an advantage in designing the storage subsystem with sufficient capacity to satisfy the plant's operational objectives. Typical objectives include the following, expressed in terms of the time periods of unattended operation:

- A fixed time interval that allows a worker to tend multiple machines
- The time between scheduled tool changes, so that tools and parts can be changed during the same machine downtime
- One complete shift
- Overnight operation, sometimes referred to as *lights out operation*. The objective is to keep the machines running with no workers in the plant during the middle and/or night shifts.

*Storage Capacity of One Part.* The minimum storage capacity of a parts storage subsystem is one workpart. This case is represented by an automatic parts transfer mechanism operating with manual loading/unloading rather than with a parts storage subsystem. An example of this arrangement in machining is a two-position *automatic pallet changer* (APC), used as the parts input/output interface for a CNC machining center. The APC is used to exchange pallet fixtures between the machine tool worktable and the load/unload position. The workparts are clamped and located on the pallet fixtures, so that by accurately positioning the pallet fixture in front of the spindle, the part itself is accurately located. Figure 14.1 shows an APC setup for the manual unloading and loading of parts.

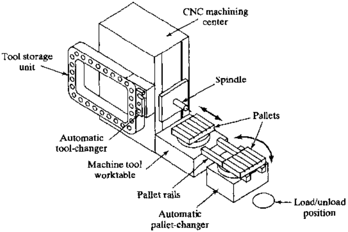



**Figure 14.1** Automatic pallet changer integrated with a CNC machining center, set up for manual unloading and loading of workparts. At the completion of the machining cycle, the pallet currently at the spindle is moved onto the automatic pallet changer (APC), and the APC table is rotated 180° to move the other pallet into position for transfer to the machine tool worktable.

When the storage capacity is only one part, this usually means that the worker must be in attendance at the machine full-time, which makes this a type I M manufacturing system rather than a type I A. While the machine is processing one workpart, the worker is unloading the piece just finished and loading the next workpart to be processed. This is an improvement over no storage capacity, in which case the processing machine is not being utilized during unloading and loading. If $T_m$ = machine processing time and $T_s$ = worker service time (to perform unloading and loading or other tending duties), then the overall cycle time of the single station with no storage is

$$T_c = T_m + T_s \tag{14.2}$$

By contrast, the overall cycle time for a single station with one part storage capacity, such as the case in Figure 14.1, is

$$T_c = \text{Max}\{T_m, T_s\} + T_r \tag{14.3}$$

where $T_r$ = the *repositioning time* to move the completed part away from the processing head and move the raw workpart into position in front of the workhead. In most instances, the worker service time is less than the machine processing time, and machine utilization is high. If $T_s > T_m$, the machine experiences forced idle time during each work cycle, and this is undesirable.

***Storage Capacities Greater Than One.*** Larger storage capacities allow unattended operation, as long as loading and unloading of all parts can be accomplished in less

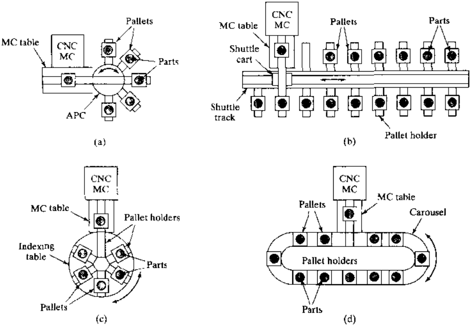



**Figure 14.2** Alternative designs of parts storage subsystems that might be used with CNC machining centers: (a) automatic pallet changer with pallet holders arranged radially, parts storage capacity = 5; (b) in-line shuttle cart system with pallet holders along its length, parts storage capacity = 16; (c) pallets held on indexing table, parts storage capacity = 6; and (d) parts storage carousel, parts storage capacity = 12. Key: MC = machining center.

time than the machine processing time. Figure 14.2 shows several possible designs of parts storage subsystems for CNC machining centers. The parts storage unit is interfaced with an automatic pallet changer. shuttle cart, or other mechanism that is interfaced directly with the machine tool. Comparable arrangements are available for turning centers, in which an industrial robot is commonly used to perform loading and unloading between the machine tool and the parts storage subsystem. Pallet fixtures are not employed; instead, the robot uses a specially designed dual gripper (Section 7.3.1) to handle the raw parts and finished parts during the unloading/loading portion of the work cycle.

In processes other than machining, a variety of techniques are used to achieve parts storage. In many cases, the starting material is not a discrete workpart. The following examples illustrate some of the methods:

- *Sheet metal stamping*. In sheet metal pressworking, automated operation of the press is accomplished using a starting sheet metal coil, whose length is enough for hundreds or even thousands of stampings. The stampings either remain attached to the remainder of the coil or are collected in a container. Periodic attention is required by a worker to change the starting coil and to remove the completed stampings.

- *Plastic injection molding*. The starting molding compound is in the form of small pellets, which are loaded into a hopper above the heating barrel of the molding machine. The hopper contains enough material for dozens or hundreds of molded parts. Prior to loading into the hopper, the molding compound is often subjected to a drying process to remove moisture and this represents another material storage unit. The molded parts drop by gravity after each molding cycle and are stored temporarily in a container beneath the mold. A worker must periodically attend the machine to load molding compound into the dryer or the hopper (if no dryer is used) and to collect the molded parts.
- *Plastic extrusion*. Plastic extrusion operations are similar to injection molding except that the product is continuous rather than discrete. The starting material and the methods for loading into the extrusion machine are basically the same as for injection molding. The product, if pliable, can be collected in a coil. If rigid, it is usually cut to standard lengths. Either method can be automated to allow unattended operation of the extrusion machine.

In single station automated assembly systems, parts storage must be provided for each component as well as for the assembled work unit. A variety of parts storage and delivery systems are used in practice. We discuss these systems in Chapter 19 on automated assembly.

## 14.3 APPLICATIONS OF SINGLE STATION CELLS

Single station cells are abundant. Most industrial production operations are based on the use of single station manned and automated cells. Let us distinguish the applications between manned and automated single stations.

### 14.3.1 Applications of Single Station Manned Cells

Our examples in Section 14.1 illustrate the variety of possible manually operated and semiautomatic workcells (type I M manufacturing systems). Let us expand the list here:

- A CNC machining center. The machine executes a part program for each part. The parts are identical. A worker is required to be at the machine at the end of each program execution to unload the part just completed and load a raw workpart onto the machine table.
- A CNC turning center. The machine executes a part program for each part. The parts are identical. A worker is required to unload finished parts and place them in a tote pan and then load raw parts from another tote pan. This is similar to the preceding machining center, but a different machining process is performed.
- Same as the preceding except the parts are not identical. In this case, the machine operator must call the appropriate part program and load it into the CNC control unit for each consecutive workpart.
- A cluster of two CNC turning centers, each producing the same part but operating independently from its own machine control unit. A single worker attends to the load-

ing and unloading of both machines. The part programs are long enough relative to the load/unload portion of the work cycle that this can be accomplished without forced machine idle time.

- A plastic injection molding machine on semi-automatic cycle, with a worker present to remove the molding, sprue, and runner system when the mold opens each molding cycle. Parts are placed in a box by the worker. Another worker must periodically exchange the tote box and resupply molding compound to the machine.
- A worker at an electronics assembly workstation placing components onto printed circuit boards in a batch operation. The worker must periodically delay production and replace the supply of components that are stored in tote bins at the station. Starting and finished boards are stored in magazines that must be periodically replaced by another worker.
- A worker at an assembly workstation performing mechanical assembly of a simple product (or subassembly of a product) from components located in tote bins at the station.
- A stamping press that punches and forms sheet metal parts from flat blanks in a stack near the press. A worker is required to load the blank into the press, actuate the press, and then remove the stamping each cycle. Completed stampings are stored in four-wheel trucks that have been especially designed for the part.

### 14.3.2 Applications of Single Station Automated Cells

Following are examples of single station automated cells. We have taken each of the preceding examples of type I M cells and converted them to a type I A cell.

- A CNC machining center with parts carousel and automatic pallet changer, as in the layout of Figure 14.2(d). The parts are identical, and the machining cycle is controlled by a part program. Each part is held on a pallet fixture. The machine cuts the parts one-by-one. When all of the parts in the carousel have been machined, a worker removes the finished pieces from the carousel and loads starting workparts. Loading and unloading of the carousel can be performed while the machine is operating.
- A CNC turning center with parts storage tray and robot. The robot is equipped with a dual gripper to unload the completed piece and load a starting workpart from the parts storage tray each cycle. The parts storage tray can hold a certain quantity of parts. In effect, this is the same case as the CNC machining center, just a different machining process.
- Same as the preceding except the parts are not identical. In this case, the appropriate part program is automatically downloaded to the CNC control unit for each consecutive workpart, based on either a given production schedule or an automatic part recognition system that identifies the raw part.
- A cluster of ten CNC turning centers, each producing a different part. Each workstation has its own parts carousel and robotic arm for loading and unloading between the machine and the carousel. A single worker must attend all ten machines by periodically unloading and loading the storage carousels. The time required to service a carousel is short relative to the time each machine can run unattended, so all ten machines can be serviced with no machine idle time.
- A plastic injection molding machine on automatic cycle, with mechanical arm to ensure removal of the molding, sprue, and runner system each molding cycle. Parts are

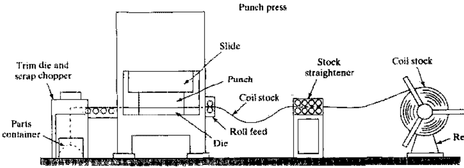



**Figure 14.3** Stamping press on automatic cycle producing stampings from a sheet metal coil.

collected in a tote box beneath the mold. A worker must periodically exchange the tote box and resupply molding compound to the machine.

- An automated insertion machine assembling electronic components onto printed circuit boards in a batch operation. Starting boards and finished boards are stored in magazines for periodic replacement by a human worker. The worker must also periodically replace the supply of components, which are stored in long magazines.
- A robotic assembly cell consisting of one robot that assembles a simple product (or subassembly of a product) from components presented by several parts delivery systems (e.g., bowl feeders).
- A stamping press that punches and forms small sheet metal parts from a long coil, as depicted in Figure 14.3. The press operates at a rate of 180 cycles/min, and 9000 parts can be stamped from each coil. The stampings are collected in a tote box on the output side of the press. When the coil runs out, it must be replaced with a new coil, and the tote box is replaced at the same time.

### 14.3.3 CNC Machining and Turning Centers

Several of our application examples of single station manufacturing cells consisted of CNC machining centers and turning centers. Let us discuss this important class of machine tool, which was identified in Section 6.4.1. The *machining center*, developed in the late 1950s before the advent of computer numerical control (CNC), is a machine tool capable of performing multiple machining operations on a workpart in one setup under NC program control. Today's machining centers are CNC. Typical cutting operations performed on a machining center are those that use a rotating cutting tool, such as milling, drilling, reaming, and tapping.

Machining centers are classified as vertical, horizontal, or universal. The designation refers to the orientation of the machine spindle. A vertical machining center has its spindle on a vertical axis relative to the worktable, and a horizontal machining center has its spindle on a horizontal axis. This distinction generally results in a difference in the type of work that is performed on the machine. A vertical machining center is typically used for flat work that requires tool access from the top. A horizontal machining center is used for cube-shaped parts where tool access can best be achieved on the sides of the cube. Universal machining centers have workheads that swivel their spindle axes to any angle between horizontal and vertical, thus making this a very flexible machine tool.

Numerical control machining centers are usually designed with features to reduce nonproductive time. These features include the following:

- *Automatic tool-changing*. A variety of machining operations means that a variety of cutting tools is required. The tools are contained in a tool storage unit that is integrated with the machine tool. When a cutter needs to be changed, the tool drum rotates to the proper position, and an automatic tool changer (ATC), operating under part program control, exchanges the tool in the spindle for the tool in the tool storage unit. Capacities of the tool storage unit commonly range from 16 to 80 cutting tools.
- *Automatic workpart positioning*. Many horizontal and universal machining centers have the capability to orient the workpart relative to the spindle. This is accomplished by means of a rotary table on which the workpart is fixtured. The table can be oriented at any angle about a vertical axis to permit the cutting tool to access almost the entire surface of the part in a single setup.
- *Automatic pallet changer*. Machining centers are often equipped with two (or more) separate pallets that can be presented to the cutting tool using an automatic pallet changer (Section 14.2.2). While machining is being performed with one pallet in position at the machine, the other pallet is in a safe location away from the spindle. In this safe location, the operator can unload the finished part from the prior cycle and then fixture the raw workpart for the next cycle while the current workpiece is being machined.

A numerically controlled horizontal machining center, with many of the features described above, is shown in Figure 14.1.

The success of NC machining centers motivated the development of NC turning centers. A modern *NC turning center*, Figure 14.4, is capable of performing various turning

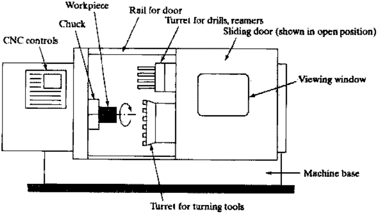



**Figure 14.4** Front view of a CNC turning center showing two tool turrets, one for single point turning tools and the other for drills and similar tools. Turrets can be positioned under NC control to cut the workpiece.

and related operations, contour turning, and automatic tool indexing, all under computer control. In addition, the most sophisticated turning centers can accomplish: (1) workpart gaging: checking key dimensions after machining, (2) tool monitoring: sensing when the tools are worn, (3) automatic tool changing when tools become worn, and (4) automatic workpart changing at the completion of the work cycle.

Another development in NC machine tool technology is the *mill-turn center*. This machine has the general configuration of a turning center. However, it also has the capability to position a cylindrical workpart at a specified angle so that a rotating cutting tool such as a milling cutter can machine features into the outside surface of the part, as illustrated in Figure 14.5. The mill-turn center has the traditional $x$- and $z$-axes of an NC lathe. In addition, orientation of the work provides a third axis, while manipulation of the rotational tool with respect to the work provides two more axes. A conventional NC turning center does not have the capability to stop the rotation of the workpart at a defined angular position, and it does not possess rotating tool spindles.

CNC machining centers, turning centers, and mill-turn centers can be operated either as type I M or type I A manufacturing systems. Whether a center operates with a worker in continuous attendance or as an automated single station depends on the existence of an integrated parts storage subsystem with automatic transfer of workparts between the machine tool and the storage unit. These machine tools can also be used in flexible machine cells (type II M and type II A manufacturing systems, Chapters 15 and 16).

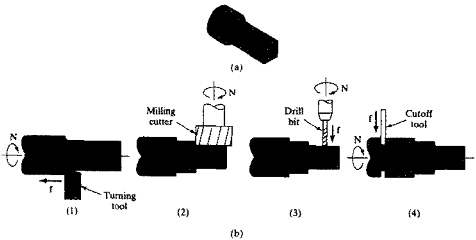



**Figure 14.5** Operation of a mill-turn center: (a) example part with turned, milled, and drilled surfaces; and (b) sequence of cutting operations: (1) turn smaller diameter; (2) mill flat with part in programmed angular position, four positions for square cross-section; (3) drill hole with part in programmed angular position, and (4) cutoff of the machined piece.

## 14.4 ANALYSIS OF SINGLE STATION SYSTEMS

Two analysis issues related to single station manufacturing systems are the determination of: (1) the number of single stations required to satisfy specified production requirements, and (2) the number of machines to assign to a worker in a machine cluster.

### 14.4.1 Number of Workstations Required

Any manufacturing system must be designed to produce a specified quantity of parts or products at a specified production rate. In the case of single station manufacturing systems, this may mean that more than one single station cell is required to achieve the specifications. The problem we address here is to determine the number of workstations required to achieve a given production rate or produce a given quantity of work units. The basic approach is: (1) determine the total workload that must be accomplished in a certain period (hour, week, month, year), where *workload* is defined as the total hours required to complete a given amount of work or to produce a given number of work units scheduled during the period; and (2) then divide the workload by the hours available on one workstation in the same period.

Workload is figured as the quantity of work units to be produced during the period of interest multiplied by the time (hours) required for each work unit. The time required for each work unit is the cycle time on the machine, in most cases, so that workload is given by the following:

$$WL = Q\,T_c \tag{14.4}$$

where $WL$ = workload scheduled for a given period (hr of work/hr or hr of work/wk), $Q$ = quantity to be produced during the period (pc/hr or pc/wk, etc.), and $T_c$ = cycle time required per piece (hr/pc). If the workload includes multiple part or product styles that can all be produced on the same type of workstation, then the following summation can be used:

$$WL = \sum_j Q_j T_{cj} \tag{14.5}$$

where $Q_j$ = quantity of part or product style j produced during the period (pc), $T_{cj}$ = cycle time of part or product style $j$ (hr/pc), and the summation includes all of the parts or products to be made during the period. In step (2) the workload is divided by hours available on one station; that is,

$$n = \frac{WL}{AT} \tag{14.6}$$

where $n$ = number of workstations, and $AT$ = available time on one station in the period (hr/period). Let us illustrate the use of these equations with a simple example and then consider some of the complications.

**EXAMPLE 14.1 Determining the Number of Workstations**

A total of 800 shafts must be produced in the lathe section of the machine shop during a particular week. Each shaft is identical and requires a machine cycle time $T_c$ = 11.5 min. All of the lathes in the department are equivalent in terms of their capability to produce the shaft in the specified cycle time. How many lathes must be devoted to shaft production during the given week, if there are 40 hr of available time on each lathe?

***Solution:*** The workload consists of 800 shafts at 11.5 min/shaft.

$$WL = 800(11.5 \text{ min}) = 9200 \text{ min} = 153.33 \text{ hr.}$$

Time available per lathe during the week $AT$ = 40 hr.

$$n = \frac{153.33}{40} = 3.83 \text{ lathes}$$

This calculated value would probably be rounded up to four lathes that are assigned to the production of shafts during the given week.

---

There are several factors present in most real life manufacturing systems that complicate the computation of the number of workstations. These factors include:

- *Setup time in batch production.* During setup, the workstation is not producing.
- *Availability.* This is a reliability factor that reduces the available production time.
- *Utilization.* Workstations may not be fully utilized due to scheduling problems, lack of work for a given machine type, workload imbalance among workstations, and other reasons.
- *Worker efficiency.* This occurs when the work is highly manual, and the worker performs either above- or below-standard performance for the given task.
- *Defect rate.* The output of the manufacturing system may not be 100% good quality. Defective units are produced at a certain fraction defect rate. This must be accounted for by increasing the total number of units processed.

These factors affect how many workstations or workers are required to accomplish a given workload. They influence either the workload or the amount of time available at the workstation during the period of interest. In addition, the workload may also be affected by the learning curve phenomenon, as discussed in Section 13.4.

*Setup time* in batch production occurs between batches because the tooling and fixturing must be changed over from the current part style to the next part style, and the equipment controller must be reprogrammed. Time is lost when no parts are produced (except perhaps trial parts to check out the new setup and program). Yet it consumes available time at a workstation. The following two examples illustrate two possible ways of dealing with the issue, depending on the information given.

**EXAMPLE 14.2 Including Setup Time in Workstation Calculations: Case 1**

In previous Example 14.1, suppose that a setup will be required for each lathe that is used to satisfy the production requirements. The lathe setup for this type of part takes 3.5 hr. How many lathes are required during the week?

***Solution:*** In this problem formulation, the number of hours available on any lathe used for the shaft order is reduced by the setup time. Hence $AT = 40 - 3.5 = 36.5$ hr.

The workload to actually produce the parts remains the same 153.33 hr. Hence,

$$n = \frac{153.33}{36.5} = 4.20 \text{ lathes}$$

This would round up to five lathes that must be devoted to the shaft job. That's a shame, because the lathes will not be fully utilized. With five lathes, utilization will be:

$$U = \frac{4.20}{5} = 0.840 \qquad (84.0\%)$$

Given this unfortunate result, it might be preferable to offer overtime to the workers on four of the lathes. How much overtime above the regular 40 hr will be required?

$$OT = \left(3.5 + \frac{153.33}{4}\right) - 40 = (3.5 + 38.33) - 40 = 1.83 \text{ hr}$$

This is a total of 4(1.83 hr) = 7.33 hr for the four machine operators.

---

**EXAMPLE 14.3 Including Setup Time in Workstation Calculations: Case 2**

This is another variation of Example 14.1. A total of 800 shafts must be produced in the lathe section of the machine shop during a particular week. The shafts are of 20 different types, each type being produced in its own batch. Average batch size is 40 parts. Each batch requires a setup and the average setup time is 3.5 hr. The average machine cycle time to produce a shaft $T_c$ = 11.5 min. How many lathes are required during the week?

***Solution:*** In this case we know how many setups are required during the week, because we know how many batches will be produced: 20. We can determine the workload for the 20 setups and the workload for 20 production batches.

$$WL = 20(3.5) + 20(40)(11.5/60) = 70 + 153.33 = 223.33 \text{ hr}$$

Given that each lathe is available 40 hr/wk (since setup is included in the workload calculation),

$$n = \frac{223.33}{40} = 5.58 \text{ lathes}$$

Again, rounding up, the shop would have to dedicate six lathes to the shaft work.

---

Availability and utilization (Section 2.4.3) tend to reduce the available time on the workstation. The available time becomes the actual clock time in the period multiplied by availability and utilization. In equation form,

$$AT = T\,A\,U \tag{14.7}$$

where $AT$ = available time (hr), $T$ = actual clock time during the period (hr), $A$ = availability; and $U$ = utilization. $A$ and $U$ are expressed as decimal fractions.

*Worker efficiency* is defined as the number of work units actually completed by the worker in a given time period divided by the number of units that would be produced at standard performance. If standard performance is 40 pieces per 8-hr shift, and the worker actually produces 48 pieces during the shift, then the worker's efficiency is $48/40 = 1.20$ or 120%. An efficiency greater than 1.00 reduces the workload, while an efficiency less than 1.00 increases the workload. Worker efficiency is a factor in manned systems but can be neglected in automated systems.

*Defect rate* is the fraction of parts produced that are defective. We discuss the issue of fraction defect rate in more detail later (Section 22.5). A defect rate greater than zero increases the quantity of work units that must be processed in order to yield the desired quantity. If a process is known to produce parts at a certain average scrap rate, then the starting batch size is increased by a scrap allowance to compensate for the defective parts that will be made. The relationship between the starting quantity and the quantity produced is the following:

$$Q = Q_o(1 - q) \tag{14.8}$$

where $Q$ = quantity of good units made in the process, $Q_o$ = original or starting quantity, and $q$ = fraction defect rate. Thus, if we want to produce $Q$ good units, we must process a total of $Q_o$ starting units, which is

$$Q_o = \frac{Q}{(1 - q)} \tag{14.9}$$

The combined effect of worker efficiency and fraction defect rate is given in the following equation, which amends the workload formula, Eq. (14.4):

$$WL = \frac{QT_c}{E_w(1 - q)} \tag{14.10}$$

where $E_w$ = worker efficiency, expressed as a fraction, and $q$ = fraction defect rate.

**EXAMPLE 14.4 Including Availability, Utilization, Efficiency, and Defect Rate in the Calculations**

Suppose in Example 14.3 that the anticipated availability of the lathes is 95%, and the expected utilization for calculation purposes is 100%. The expected worker efficiency during production = 110% and during setup = 100%. The fraction defect rate for lathe work of this type is 3%. Other data from Example 14.1 are applicable. How many lathes are required during the week, given this additional information?

***Solution:*** When there is a separation of tasks between two or more types of work (in this problem, setup and run are two separate types of work), we must be careful to use the various factors only where they are applicable. For example, fraction defect rate does not apply to the setup time. Availability is also assumed not to apply to setup. (How can the machine break down if it's not running?) We see that the worker efficiencies differ between setup and run. Accordingly, it is appropriate to compute the number of equivalent workstations for setup separately from the number for running production.

For setup, the workload is simply the time spent performing the 20 setups, adjusted by the worker efficiency (in this case, worker efficiency is 1.0):

$$WL = \frac{20(3.5)}{1.0} = 70.0 \text{ hr}$$

The available hours during the week are

$$AT = 40(1.0)(1.0) = 40$$

Thus, the number of lathes required just for setup is determined as follows:

$$n(\text{setup}) = \frac{70}{40} = 1.75 \text{ lathes}$$

The total workload for the 20 production runs is, from Eq. (14.10):

$$WL = \frac{20(40)(11.5/60)}{(1.10)(1 - 0.03)} = 143.7 \text{ hr}$$

The available time is affected by the 95% availability:

$$AT = 40(0.95) = 38 \text{ hr/machine}$$

$$n(\text{run}) = \frac{143.7}{38} = 3.78$$

Total machines required $= 1.75 + 3.78 = 5.53$ lathes

This should be rounded up to six lathes, unless the remaining time on the sixth lathe can be used for other production.

Note that the rounding up should occur after adding the machine fractions; otherwise, we risk overestimating machine requirements (not in this problem, however).

### 14.4.2 Machine Clusters

When the machine in a single workstation does not require the continuous attention of a worker during its semi-automatic machine cycle, an opportunity exists to assign more than one machine to the worker. The workstation is still classified as type I M because operator attention is required every work cycle. However, the manning level of the workstation is reduced from $M = 1$ to $M = \frac{1}{n}$ where $n$ = # machines assigned to the worker. This kind of machine organization has sometimes been referred to as a "machine cell"; however, we are more comfortable with the term machine cluster. A *machine cluster* is defined here as a collection of two or more machines producing parts or products with identical cycle times and is serviced (usually loaded and unloaded) by one worker. By contrast, a *machine cell* consists of one or more machines organized to produce a family of parts or products. Machine clusters are classified as type I systems, whereas machine cells are classified as type II. We discuss machine cells in Chapters 15 and 16.

Several conditions must be satisfied to organize a collection of machines into a machine cluster: (1) the semi-automatic machine cycle is long relative to the service portion of the cycle that requires the worker's attention; (2) the semi-automatic machine cycle time is the same for all machines; (3) the machines that the worker would service are located in close enough proximity to allow time to walk between them; and (4) the work rules of the plant permit a worker to service more than one machine.

Consider a collection of single workstations, all producing the same parts and operating on the same semi-automatic machine cycle time. Each machine operates for a certain portion of the total cycle under its own control $T_m$ (machine cycle), and then it requires servicing by the worker, which takes time $T_s$. Thus, assuming the worker is always available when servicing is needed, so that the machine is never idle, the total cycle time of a machine is $T_c = T_m + T_s$. If more than one machine is assigned to the worker, a certain amount of time will be lost because of walking from one machine to the next, referred to here as the *repositioning time* $T_r$. The time required for the operator to service one machine is therefore $T_s + T_r$, and the time to service $n$ machines is $n(T_s + T_r)$. For the system to be perfectly balanced in terms of worker time and machine cycle time,

$$n(T_s + T_r) = T_m + T_s$$

We can determine from this the number of machines that should be assigned to one worker by solving for $n$:

$$n = \frac{T_m + T_s}{T_s + T_r} \tag{14.11}$$

where $n$ = number of machines, $T_m$ = machine semi-automatic cycle time (min), $T_s$ = worker service time per machine (min), and $T_r$ = worker repositioning time between machines (min).

It is likely that the calculated value of $n$ will not be an integer, which means that the worker time in the cycle, that is, $n(T_s + T_r)$, cannot be perfectly balanced with the cycle time $T_c$ of the machines. However, the actual number of machines in the manufacturing system must be an integer, so either the worker or the machines will experience some idle time. The number of machines will either be the integer that is greater than $n$ from Eq. (14.11) or it will be the integer that is less than $n$. Let us identify these two integers as $n_1$ and $n_2$. We can determine which of the alternatives is preferable by introducing cost factors into the analysis. Let $C_L$ = the labor cost rate and $C_m$ = machine cost rate (certain overheads may be applicable to these rates, see Section 2.5.3). The decision will be based on the cost per work unit produced by the system.

**Case 1:** If we use $n_1$ = maximum integer $\leq n$, then the worker will have idle time, and the cycle time of the machine cluster will be the cycle time of the machines $T_c = T_m + T_s$. Assuming one work unit is produced by each machine during a cycle, we have the following cost:

$$C_{pc}(n_1) = \left(\frac{C_L}{n_1} + C_m\right)(T_m + T_s) \tag{14.12}$$

where $C_{pc}(n_1)$ = cost per work unit (\$/pc), $C_L$ = labor cost rate (\$/min), $C_m$ = cost rate per machine (\$/min), and $(T_m + T_s)$ is expressed in minutes.

**Case 2:** If we use $n_2$ = minimum integer $> n$, then the machines will have idle time, and the cycle time of the machine cluster will be the time it takes for the worker to service the $n_2$ machines, which is $n_2(T_s + T_r)$. The corresponding cost per piece is given by:

$$C_{pc}(n_2) = (C_L + C_m n_2)(T_s + T_r) \tag{14.13}$$

The selection of $n_1$ or $n_2$ is based on whichever case results in the lower value of cost per work unit.

In the absence of cost data needed to make these calculations the author's view is that it is generally preferable to assign machines to a worker such that the worker has some idle time and the machines are utilized 100%. The reason for this is that the total hourly cost rate of n production machines is usually greater than the labor rate of one worker. Therefore, machine idle time costs more than worker idle time. The corresponding number of machines to assign the worker is therefore given by:

$$n_1 = \text{maximum integer} \leq \frac{T_m + T_s}{T_s + T_r} \tag{14.14}$$

**EXAMPLE 14.5 How Many Machines for One Worker?**

A machine shop contains many CNC lathes that operate on a semi-automatic machining cycle under part program control. A significant number of these machines produce the same part, whose machining cycle time = 2.75 min. One worker is required to perform unloading and loading of parts at the end of each machining cycle. This takes 25 sec. Determine how many machines one worker can service if it takes an average of 20 sec to walk between the machines and no machine idle time is allowed.

***Solution:*** Given that $T_m = 2.75$ min, $T_s = 25$ sec $= 0.4167$ min, and $T_r = 20$ sec $= 0.3333$ min, Eq. (14.14) can be used to obtain $n_1$:

$$n_1 = \text{maximum integer} \leq \left(\frac{2.75 + 0.4167}{0.4167 + 0.3333} = \frac{3.1667}{0.75} = 4.22\right) = 4 \text{ machines}$$

Each worker can be assigned four machines. With a machine cycle $T_c = 3.1667$ min, the worker will spend $4(0.4167) = 1.667$ min servicing the machines, $4(0.3333) = 1.333$ min walking between machines, and the worker's idle time during the cycle will be 0.167 min (10 sec).

---

Note the regularity that exists in the worker's schedule in this example. If we imagine the four machines to be laid out on the four corners of a square, the worker services each machine and then proceeds clockwise to the machine in the next corner. For each cycle, servicing and walking take 3.0 min, with a slack time of 10 sec left over.

If this kind of regularity characterizes the operations of a cluster of single station automated cells (or, for that matter, a cluster of multiple station automated systems), then the same kind of analysis can be applied to determine the number of cells (or systems) to assign to one worker. If, on the other hand, servicing is required at random and unpredictable intervals by each cell, then there will be periods when several cells require servicing simultaneously, overloading the capabilities of the human worker; whereas in other periods, the worker will have no cells to service. Queueing analysis is appropriate in this case of random service requirements.

## REFERENCES


[1] ARONSON, R., "Turning's Just the Beginning," *Manufacturing Engineering*, June, 1999, pp. 42-53.

[2] ARONSON, R., "Cells and Centers," *Manufacturing Engineering*, February, 1999, pp. 52-60.

[3] DROZDA, T. J., and WICK, C., (Editors), *Tool and Manufacturing Engineers Handbook*, Fourth Edition, *Volume I: Machining*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1983.


## PROBLEMS

### Unattended Operation

**14.1** A CNC machining center has a programmed cycle time = 25.0 min for a certain part. The time to unload the finished part and load a starting work unit = 5.0 min. (a) If loading and unloading are done directly onto the machine tool table and no automatic storage capacity exists at the machine, what are the total cycle time and hourly production rate? (b) If the machine tool has an automatic pallet changer so that unloading and loading can be accomplished while the machine is cutting another part, what are the total cycle time and hourly production rate? (c) If the machine tool has an automatic pallet changer that interfaces with a parts storage unit whose capacity is 12 parts, and the repositioning time = 30 sec, what are the total cycle time and hourly production rate? Also, how long does it take to perform the loading and unloading of parts by the human worker, and what is the time the machine can operate unattended between parts changes?

### Determining Workstation Requirements

**14.2** An emergency situation has occurred in the milling department because the ship carrying a certain quantity of a required part from an overseas supplier sank on Friday evening. A certain number of machines in the department must therefore be dedicated to the production of this part during the next week. A total of 1000 of these parts must be produced, and the production cycle time per part = 16.0 min. Each milling machine used for this emergency production job must first be set up, which takes 5.0 hr. A scrap rate of 2% can be expected. (a) If the production week consists of 10 shifts at 8.0 hr/shift, how many machines will be required? (b) It so happens that only two milling machines can be spared for this emergency job, due to other priority jobs in the department. To cope with the emergency situation, plant management has authorized a three-shift operation for 6 days next week. Can the 1000 replacement parts be completed within these constraints?

**14.3** A machine shop has dedicated one CNC machining center to the production of two parts (A and B) used in the final assembly of the company's main product. The machining center is equipped with an automatic pallet changer and a parts carousel that holds ten parts. One thousand units of the product are produced per year, and one of each part is used in the product. Part A has a machining cycle time of 50 min. Part B has a machining cycle time of 80 min. These cycle times include the operation of the automatic pallet changer. No other changeover time is lost between parts. The anticipated scrap rate is zero. The machining center is 95% reliable. The machine shop operates 250 day/yr. How many hours, on average, must the CNC machining center be operational each day to supply parts for the product?

**14.4** Future production requirements in a machine shop call for several automatic bar machines to be acquired to produce three new parts (A, B, and C) that have been added to the shop's product line. Annual quantities and cycle times for the three parts are given in the table below. The machine shop operates one 8-hr shift for 250 day/yr. The machines are expected to be 95% reliable, and the scrap rate is 3%. How many automatic bar machines will be required to meet the specified annual demand for the three new parts?

| Part | Annual Demand | Machining Cycle Time (min) |
|---|---|---|
| A | 25,000 | 5.0 |
| B | 40,000 | 7.0 |
| C | 50,000 | 10.0 |

**14.5** A single product plant will operate 250 day/yr using a single 8-hr shift each day. Sales requirements are 100,000 units/yr. The product consists of two major components: A and B (one of each component goes into each product). The operations required to produce each component are given in the table below as are the associated standard time and scrap rates. Equipment utilization is expected to be 90% during each 8-hr shift. Determine how many machines are required of each type, assuming that a product layout will be used. Therefore, no machine will be shared between operations, thus eliminating the need for setup changes.

| Component | Operation | Machine | Production Time (min/pc) | Scrap Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1 | Lathe | 7.0 | 3 |
| A | 2 | Milling machine | 10.0 | 5 |
| B | 3 | Lathe | 5.0 | 3 |
| B | 4 | Milling machine | 13.0 | 6 |
| B | 5 | Drill | 4.0 | 4 |

**14.6** A certain type of machine will be used to produce three products: A, B, and C. Sales forecasts for these products are: 52,000, 65,000, and 70,000 units yr, respectively. Production rates for the three products are, respectively, 12, 15, and 10 pc hr; and scrap rates are, respectively, 5%, 7%, and 9%. The plant will operate 50 wk/yr, 10 shifts/wk, and 8 hr/shift. It is anticipated that production machines of this type will be down for repairs on average 10% of the time. How many machines will be required to meet the demand?

**14.7** A plastic injection molding plant will be built to produce 6 million molded parts per year. The plant will run three 8-hr shifts per day, 5 day/wk, 50 wk/yr. For planning purposes, the average order size = 5000 moldings, average changeover time between orders = 6 hr, and average molding cycle time per part = 30 sec. Assume scrap rate = 2%, and average uptime proportion (reliability) per molding machine = 97%, which applies to both run time and changeover time. How many molding machines are required in the new plant?

**14.8** A stamping plant must be designed to supply an automotive engine plant with sheet metal stampings. The plant will operate one 8-hr shift for 250 day/yr and must produce 15,000,000 good quality stampings annually. Batch size = 10,000 good stampings produced per batch. Scrap rate = 5%. On average, it takes 3.0 sec to produce each stamping when the presses are running. Before each batch, the press must be set up, and it takes 4 hr to accomplish each setup. Presses are 90% reliable during production and 100% reliable during setup. How many presses are needed?

**14.9** A new forging plant must supply parts to the automotive industry. Because forging is a hot operation, the plant will operate 24 hr/day, five day/wk, 50 wk/yr. Total output from the plant must be 10,000,000 forgings/yr in batches of 1250 parts/batch. Anticipated scrap rate = 3%. Each forging cell will consist of a furnace to heat the parts, a forging press, and a trim press. Parts are placed in the furnace an hour prior to forging; they are then removed and forged and trimmed one at a time. On average the forging and trimming cycle takes 0.6 min to complete one part. Each time a new batch is started, the forging cell must be changed over, which consists of changing the forging and trimming dies for the next part style. It takes 2.0 hr on average to complete a changeover between batches. Each cell is considered to be 96% reliable during operation and 100% reliable during changeover. Determine the number of forging cells that will be required in the new plant.

**14.10** A plastic extrusion plant will be built to produce 30 million meters of plastic extrusions per year. The plant will run three 8-hr shifts per day, 360 day/yr. For planning purposes, the average run length = 3000 meters of extruded plastic. The average changeover time between runs = 2.5 hr, and average extrusion speed = 15 m/min. Assume scrap rate = 1%, and average uptime proportion per extrusion machine = 95% during run time. Uptime proportion during changeover is assumed to be 100%. If each extrusion machine requires 500 sq. ft of floor space, and there is an allowance of 40% for aisles and office space, what is the total area of the extrusion plant?

## Machine Clusters

**14.11** The CNC grinding section has a large number of machines devoted to grinding of shafts for the automotive industry. The grinding machine cycle takes 3.6 min. At the end of this cycle, an operator must be present to unload and load parts, which takes 40 sec. (a) Determine how many grinding machines the worker can service if it takes 20 sec to walk between the machines and no machine idle time is allowed. (b) How many seconds during the work cycle is the worker idle? (c) What is the hourly production rate of this machine cluster?

**14.12** A worker is currently responsible for tending two machines ($n = 2$) in a machine cluster. The service time per machine $T_s = 0.35$ min, and the time to walk between machines $T_r = 0.15$ min. The machine automatic cycle time $T_m = 1.90$ min. If the worker's hourly rate = \$12/hr and the hourly rate for each machine = \$18/hr, determine: (a) the current hourly rate for the cluster and (b) the current cost per unit of product, given that two units are produced by each machine during each machine cycle. (c) What is the percentage idle time of the worker? (d) What is the optimum number of machines that should be used in the machine cluster, if minimum cost per unit of product is the decision criterion?

**14.13** In a machine cluster, the appropriate number of production machines to assign to the worker is to be determined. Let $n$ = the number of machines. Each production machine is identical and has an automatic processing time $T_m = 4.0$ min. The servicing time $T_s = 12$ sec for each machine. The full cycle time for each machine in the cell is $T_c = T_s + T_m$. The walk time for the worker is given by $T_r = 5 + 3n$, where $T_r$ is in seconds. $T_r$ increases with $n$ because the distance between machines increases with more machines. (a) Determine the maximum number of machines in the cell if no machine idle time is allowed. For your answer, compute (b) the cycle time and (c) the worker idle time expressed as a percentage of the cycle time.

**14.14** An industrial robot will service $n$ production machines in a machine cluster. Each production machine is identical and has an automatic processing time $T_m = 50$ sec. The robot servicing time for each machine is given by the equation $T_s = 10 + 4n$, where $T_s$ is the servicing time in seconds. $T_s$ increases with $n$ because more time is needed to move the robot arm as $n$ increases. The full cycle time for each machine in the cell is $T_c = T_s + T_m$. (a) Determine the maximum number of machines in the cell such that there is no machine interference. For your answer, (b) what is the machine cycle time, and (c) what are the robot idle time and machine idle time expressed as a percentage of the cycle time $T_c$?

**14.15** A factory production department consists of a large number of workcells. Each cell consists of one human worker performing electronics assembly tasks. The cells are organized into sections within the department, and each section is supervised by one foreman. It is desired to know how many workcells should be assigned to each foreman. The foreman's job consists of two tasks: (1) providing each cell with a sufficient supply of parts that it can work for 4.0 hr before it needs to be resupplied and (2) preparing production reports for each workcell. Task (1) takes 18.0 min on average per workcell and must be done twice per day The foreman must schedule the resupply of parts to every cell so that no idle time occurs in any cell. Task (2) takes 9.0 min/workcell and must be done once per day. The plant operates one shift which is 8.0 working hours. and neither the workers nor the foreman are allowed to work more than 8.0 hr/day. Each day, the cells continue production from where they stopped the day before. (a) What is the maximum number of workcells that should be assigned to a foreman, with the proviso that the workcells are never idle? (b) With the number of workcells from part (a), how many idle minutes does the foreman have each day?

chapter 15

# Group Technology and Cellular Manufacturing

CHAPTER CONTENTS



Batch manufacturing is estimated to be the most common form of production in the United States, constituting more than 50% of total manufacturing activity. There is a growing need to make batch manufacturing more efficient and productive. In addition, there is an increasing trend toward achieving a higher level of integration between the design and manufacturing functions in a firm. An approach directed at both of these objectives is group technology (GT).

***Group technology*** is a manufacturing philosophy in which similar parts are identified and grouped together to take advantage of their similarities in design and production. Similar parts are arranged into ***part families***, where each part family possesses similar design and/or manufacturing characteristics. For example, a plant producing 10,000 different part numbers may be able to group the vast majority of these parts into 30–40 distinct families. It is reasonable to believe that the processing of each member of a given family is similar, and this should result in manufacturing efficiencies. The efficiencies are generally achieved by arranging the production equipment into machine groups, or cells, to facilitate work flow. Grouping the production equipment into machine cells, where each cell specializes in the production of a part family, is called ***cellular manufacturing***. Cellular manufacturing is an example of mixed model production (Section 13.2.4). The origins of group technology and cellular production can be traced to around 1925 (Historical Note 15.1).

### Historical Note 15.1 Group technology

In 1925, R. Flanders presented a paper in the United States before the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in which he described a way of organizing manufacturing at Jones and Lamson Machine Company that would today be called group technology. In 1937, A. Sokolovskiy of the Soviet Union described the essential features of group technology by proposing that parts of similar configuration be produced by a standard process sequence, thus permitting flow line techniques to be used for work normally accomplished by batch production. In 1949, A. Korling of Sweden presented a paper (in Paris, France) on "group production," whose principles are an adaptation of production line techniques to batch manufacturing. In the paper, he describes how work is decentralized into independent groups, each of which contains the machines and tooling to produce "a special category of parts."

In 1959, researcher S. Mitrofanov of the Soviet Union published a book entitled ***Scientific Principles of Group Technology***. The book was widely read and is considered responsible for over 800 plants in the Soviet Union using group technology by 1965. Another researcher, H. Opitz in Germany studied workparts manufactured by the German machine tool industry and developed the well–known parts classification and coding system for machined parts that bears his name (Section 15.2.2).

In the United States, the first application of group technology was at the Langston Division of Harris–Intertype in New Jersey around 1969. Traditionally a machine shop arranged as a process type layout, the company reorganized into "family of parts" lines, each of which specialized in producing a given part configuration. Part families were identified by taking photos of about 15% of the parts made in the plant and grouping them into families. When implemented, the changes improved productivity by 50% and reduced lead times from weeks to days.

Group technology and cellular manufacturing are applicable in a wide variety of manufacturing situations. GT is most appropriately applied under the following conditions:

- ***The plant currently uses traditional batch production and a process type layout*** (Section 1.1.2), and this results in much material handling effort, high in-process inventory, and long manufacturing lead times.
- ***The parts can be grouped into part families.*** This is a necessary condition. Each machine cell is designed to produce a given part family, or limited collection of part families, so it must be possible to group parts made in the plant into families. However, it would be unusual to find a mid-volume production plant in which parts could not be grouped into part families.

There are two major tasks that a company must undertake when it implements group technology. These two tasks represent significant obstacles to the application of GT.

1. ***Identifying the part families.*** If the plant makes 10,000 different parts, reviewing all of the part drawings and grouping the parts into families is a substantial task that consumes a significant amount of time.
2. ***Rearranging production machines into machine cells.*** It is time consuming and costly to plan and accomplish this rearrangement, and the machines are not producing during the changeover.

Group technology offers substantial benefits to companies that have the perseverance to implement it. The benefits include:

- GT promotes standardization of tooling, fixturing, and setups.
- Material handling is reduced because parts are moved within a machine cell rather than within the entire factory.
- Process planning and production scheduling are simplified.
- Setup times are reduced, resulting in lower manufacturing lead times.
- Work-in-process is reduced.
- Worker satisfaction usually improves when workers collaborate in a GT cell.
- Higher quality work is accomplished using group technology.

In this chapter, we discuss group technology, cellular manufacturing, and several related topics. Let us begin by defining an underlying concept of group technology: part families.

## 15.1 PART FAMILIES

A ***part family*** is a collection of parts that are similar either because of geometric shape and size or because similar processing steps are required in their manufacture. The parts within a family are different, but their similarities are close enough to merit their inclusion as members of the part family. Figures 15.1 and 15.2 show two different part families. The two parts in Figure 15.1 are very similar in terms of geometric design, but quite different in terms of manufacturing because of differences in tolerances, production quantities, and material. The ten parts shown in Figure 15.2 constitute a part family in manufacturing, but their different geometries make them appear quite different from a design viewpoint.

One of the important manufacturing advantages of grouping workparts into families can be explained with reference to Figures 15.3 and 15.4. Figure 15.3 shows a process

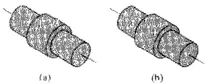



**Figure 15.1** Two parts of identical shape and size but different manufacturing requirements: (a) 1,000,000 pc/yr, tolerance = ±0.010 in, material = 1015 CR steel, nickel plate; and (b) 100 pc/yr, tolerance = ±0.001 in, material = 18 − 8 stainless steel.

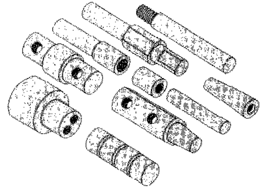


**Figure 15.2** A family of parts with similar manufacturing process requirements but different design attributes. All parts are machined from cylindrical stock by turning; some parts require drilling and/or milling.

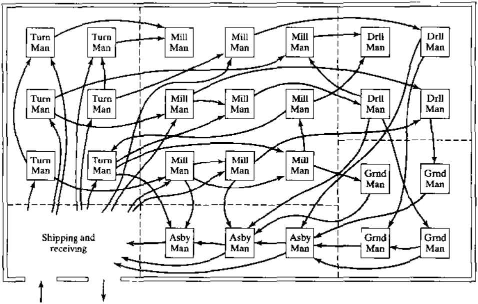



**Figure 15.3** Process type plant layout. (Key: "Turn" = turning, "Mill" = milling, "Drll" = drilling, "Grnd" = grinding, "Asby" = assembly, "Man" = manual operation; arrows indicate work flow through plant, dashed lines indicate separation of machines into departments.)

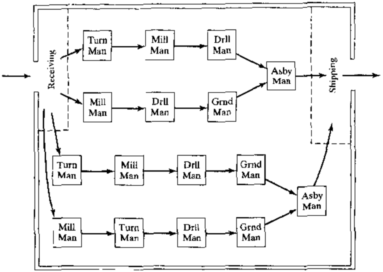



**Figure 15.4** Group technology layout. (Key: "Turn" = turning, "Mill" = milling, "Drll" = drilling, "Grnd" = grinding, "Asby" = assembly, "Man" = manual operation; arrows indicate work flow in machine cells.)

type plant layout for batch production in a machine shop. The various machine tools are arranged by function. There is a lathe department, milling machine department, drill press department, and so on. To machine a given part, the workpiece must be transported between departments, with perhaps the same department being visited several times. This results in a significant amount of material handling, large in-process inventory, many machine setups, long manufacturing lead times, and high cost. Figure 15.4 shows a production shop of equivalent capacity, but the machines are arranged into cells. Each cell is organized to specialize in the production of a particular part family. Advantages of reduced workpiece handling yield lower setup times, fewer setups (in some cases, no setup changes are necessary), less in-process inventory, and shorter lead times.

The biggest single obstacle in changing over to group technology from a conventional production shop is the problem of grouping the parts into families. There are three general methods for solving this problem. All three are time consuming and involve the analysis of much data by properly trained personnel. The three methods are: (1) visual inspection, (2) parts classification and coding, and (3) production flow analysis. Let us provide a brief description of the visual inspection method and then examine the second and third methods in more detail.

The ***visual inspection*** method is the least sophisticated and least expensive method. It involves the classification of parts into families by looking at either the physical parts or their photographs and arranging them into groups having similar features. Although this method is generally considered to be the least accurate of the three, one of the first major success stories of GT in the United States made the changeover using the visual inspection method. This was the Langston Division of Harris Intertype in Cherry Hill, New Jersey [18] (Historical Note 15.1).

## 15.2 PARTS CLASSIFICATION AND CODING

This is the most time consuming of the three methods. In ***parts classification and coding***, similarities among parts are identified, and these similarities are related in a coding system. Two categories of part similarities can be distinguished: (1) ***design attributes***, which are concerned with part characteristics such as geometry, size, and material; and (2) ***manufacturing attributes***, which consider the sequence of processing steps required to make a part. While the design and manufacturing attributes of a part are usually correlated, the correlation is less than perfect. Accordingly, classification and coding systems are devised to include both a part's design attributes and its manufacturing attributes. Reasons for using a coding scheme include:

- ***Design retrieval.*** A designer faced with the task of developing a new part can use a design retrieval system to determine if a similar part already exists. A simple change in an existing part would take much less time than designing a whole new part from scratch.
- ***Automated process planning.*** The part code for a new part can be used to search for process plans for existing parts with identical or similar codes.
- ***Machine cell design.*** The part codes can be used to design machine cells capable of producing all members of a particular part family, using the composite part concept (Section 15.4.1).

To accomplish parts classification and coding requires examination and analysis of the design and/or manufacturing attributes of each part. The examination is sometimes done by looking in tables to match the subject part against the features described and diagrammed in the tables. An alternative and more-productive approach involves interaction with a computerized classification and coding system, in which the user responds to questions asked by the computer. On the basis of the responses, the computer assigns the code number to the part. Whichever method is used, the classification results in a code number that uniquely identifies the part's attributes.

The classification and coding procedure may be carried out on the entire list of active parts produced by the firm, or some sort of sampling procedure may be used to establish part families. For example, parts produced in the shop during a certain time period could be examined to identify part family categories. The trouble with any sampling procedure is the risk that the sample may be unrepresentative of the population.

A number of classification and coding systems are described in the literature [13], [16], [31], and there are a number of commercially available coding packages. However, none of the systems has been universally adopted. One of the reasons for this is that a classification and coding system should be customized for a given company or industry. A system that is best for one company may not be best for another company.

### 15.2.1 Features of Parts Classification and Coding Systems

The principal functional areas that utilize a parts classification and coding system are design and manufacturing. Accordingly, parts classification systems fall into one of three categories:

1. systems based on part ***design attributes***
2. systems based on part ***manufacturing attributes***
3. systems based on ***both design and manufacturing attributes***

Table 15.1 presents a list of the common design and manufacturing attributes typically included in classification schemes. A certain amount of overlap exists between design and manufacturing attributes, since a part's geometry is largely determined by the sequence of manufacturing processes performed on it.

In terms of the meaning of the symbols in the code, there are three structures used in classification and coding schemes:

1. ***hierarchical structure***, also known as a ***monocode***, in which the interpretation of each successive symbol depends on the value of the preceding symbols
2. ***chain-type structure***, also known as a ***polycode***, in which the interpretation of each symbol in the sequence is always the same; it does not depend on the value of preceding symbols
3. ***mixed-mode structure***, which is a hybrid of the two previous codes

To distinguish the hierarchical and chain-type structures, consider a two-digit code number for a part, such as 15 or 25. Suppose the first digit stands for the general shape of the part: 1 means the part is cylindrical (rotational), and 2 means the geometry is rectangular. In a hierarchical structure, the interpretation of the second digit depends on the value of the first digit. If preceded by 1, the 5 might indicate a length-to-diameter ratio; and if preceded by 2, the 5 indicates an aspect ratio between the length and width dimensions of the part. In the chain-type structure, the symbol 5 would have the same meaning whether preceded by 1 or 2. For example, it might indicate the overall length of the part. The advantage of the hierarchical structure is that in general, more information can be included in a

**TABLE 15.1** Design and Manufacturing Attributes Typically Included in a Group Technology Classification and Coding System

| *Part Design Attributes* | *Part Manufacturing Attributes* |
|---|---|
| Basic external shape | Major processes |
| Basic internal shape | Minor operations |
| Rotational or rectangular shape | Operation sequence |
| Length-to-diameter ratio (rotational parts) | Major dimension |
| Aspect ratio (rectangular parts) | Surface finish |
| Material type | Machine tool |
| Part function | Production cycle time |
| Major dimensions | Batch size |
| Minor dimensions | Annual production |
| Tolerances | Fixtures required |
| Surface finish | Cutting tools |

code of a given number of digits. The mixed-mode classification and coding systems use a combination of hierarchical and chain-type structures. It is the most common structure found in GT parts classification and coding systems.

The number of digits in the code can range from 6 to 30. Coding schemes that contain only design data require fewer digits, perhaps 12 or fewer. Most modern classification and coding systems include both design and manufacturing data, and this usually requires 20–30 digits. This might seem like too many digits for a human reader to easily comprehend, but it must be remembered that most of the data processing of the codes is accomplished by computer, for which a large number of digits is of minor concern.

### 15.2.2 Examples of Parts Classification and Coding Systems

Some of the important systems (with emphasis on those in the United States) include: the Opitz classification system, which is nonproprietary; the Brisch System (Brisch–Birn, Inc.); CODE (Manufacturing Data Systems, Inc.); CUTPLAN (Metcut Associates); DCLASS (Brigham Young University); MultiClass (OIR: Organization for Industrial Research); and Part Analog System (Lovelace, Lawrence & Co., Inc.). Reviews of these systems and others can be found in [16] and [23].

In the following, we discuss two classification and coding systems: the Opitz System and MultiClass. The Opitz system is of interest because it was one of the first published classification and coding schemes for mechanical parts [31] (Historical Note 15.1) and is still widely used. MultiClass is a commercial product offered by the Organization for Industrial Research (OIR).

*Opitz Classification System.* This system was developed by H. Opitz of the University of Aachen in Germany. It represents one of the pioneering efforts in group technology and is probably the best known, if not the most frequently used, of the parts classification and coding systems. It is intended for machined parts. The Opitz coding scheme uses the following digit sequence:

12345  6789  ABCD

The basic code consists of nine digits, which can be extended by adding four more digits. The first nine are intended to convey both design and manufacturing data. The interpretation of the first nine digits is defined in Figure 15.5. The first five digits, 12345, are called the ***form code***. It describes the primary design attributes of the part, such as external shape (e.g., rotational vs. rectangular) and machined features (e.g., holes, threads, gear teeth, etc.). The next four digits, 6789, constitute the ***supplementary code***, which indicates some of the attributes that would be of use in manufacturing (e.g., dimensions, work material, starting shape, and accuracy). The extra four digits, ABCD, are referred to as the ***secondary code*** and are intended to identify the production operation type and sequence. The secondary code can be designed by the user firm to serve its own particular needs.

The complete coding system is too complex to provide a comprehensive description here. Opitz wrote an entire book on his system [31]. However, to obtain a general idea of how it works, let us examine the form code consisting of the first five digits, defined generally in Figure 15.5. The first digit identifies whether the part is rotational or nonrotational. It also describes the general shape and proportions of the part. We limit our survey here to rotational parts possessing no unusual features, those with first digit values of 0, 1,

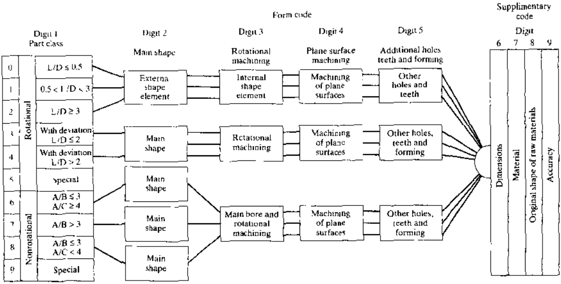



**Figure 15.5** Basic structure of the Opitz system of parts classification and coding.

or 2. For this class of workparts, the coding of the first five digits is defined in Figure 15.6. Consider the following example to demonstrate the coding of a given part.

### EXAMPLE 15.1 Opitz Part Coding System

Given the rotational part design in Figure 15.7, determine the form code in the Opitz parts classification and coding system.

***Solution:*** With reference to Figure 15.6, the five-digit code is developed as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Length-to-diameter ratio, $L/D = 1.5$ | Digit 1 = 1 |
| External shape: stepped on both ends with screw thread on one end | Digit 2 = 5 |
| Internal shape: part contains a through-hole | Digit 3 = 1 |
| Plane surface machining: none | Digit 4 = 0 |
| Auxiliary holes, gear teeth, etc.: none | Digit 5 = 0 |

The form code in the Opitz system is 15100.

---

*MultiClass.* MultiClass is a classification and coding system developed by the Organization for Industrial Research (OIR). The system is relatively flexible, allowing the user company to customize the classification and coding scheme to a large extent to fit its own products and applications. MultiClass can be used for a variety of different types of manufactured items, including machined and sheet metal parts, tooling, electronics, pur-

| | Digit 1 | Digit 2 | Digit 3 | Digit 4 | Digit 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Part class | External shape, external shape elements | Internal shape, internal shape elements | Plane surface machining | Auxiliary holes and gear teeth |
| 0 | L/D ≤ 0.5 | Smooth, no shape elements | No hole, no breakthrough | No surface machining | No auxiliary hole |
| 1 | Rotational parts: 0.5 < L/D < 3 | Stepped to one end or smooth: No shape elements | Smooth or stepped to one end: No shape elements | Surface plane and/or curved in one direction, external | No gear teeth: Axial, not on pitch circle diameter |
| 2 | Rotational parts: L/D ≥ 3 | Stepped to one end or smooth: Thread | Smooth or stepped to one end: Thread | External plane surface related by graduation around the circle | No gear teeth: Axial on pitch circle diameter |
| 3 | Rotational parts | Stepped to one end or smooth: Functional groove | Smooth or stepped to one end: Functional groove | External groove and/or slot | No gear teeth: Radial, not on pitch circle diameter |
| 4 | | Stepped to both ends: No shape elements | Stepped to both ends: No shape elements | External spline (polygon) | No gear teeth: Axial and/or radial and/or other direction |
| 5 | | Stepped to both ends: Thread | Stepped to both ends: Thread | External plane surface and/or slot, external spline | No gear teeth: Axial and/or radial on PCD and/or other directions |
| 6 | | Stepped to both ends: Functional groove | Stepped to both ends: Functional groove | Internal plane surface and/or slot | With gear teeth: Spur gear teeth |
| 7 | Nonrotational parts | Functional cone | Functional cone | Internal spline (polygon) | With gear teeth: Bevel gear teeth |
| 8 | Nonrotational parts | Operating thread | Operating thread | Internal and external polygon, groove and/or slot | With gear teeth: Other gear teeth |
| 9 | Nonrotational parts | All others | All others | All others | With gear teeth: All others |

**Figure 15.6** Form code (digits 1–5) for rotational parts in the Opitz coding system. The first digit of the code is limited to the value 0, 1, or 2.

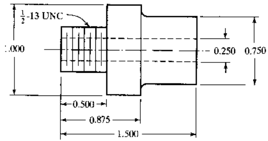



**Figure 15.7** Part design for Example 15.1.

chased parts, assemblies and subassemblies, machine tools, and other elements. Up to nine different types of components can be included within a single MultiClass software structure.

MultiClass uses a hierarchical or decision-tree coding structure in which the succeeding digits depend on values of the previous digits. In the application of the system, a series of menus, pick lists, tables, and other interactive prompting routines are used to code the part. This helps to organize and provide discipline to the coding procedure.

The coding structure consists of up to 30 digits. These are divided into two regions, one provided by OIR, and the second designed by the user to meet specific needs and requirements. A prefix precedes the code number and is used to identify the type of part (e.g., a prefix value of 1 indicates machined and sheet metal parts). For a machined part, the coding for the first 18 digit positions (after the prefix) is summarized in Table 15.2.

**TABLE 15.2** First 18 digits of the Multiclass Classification and Coding System

| *Digit* | *Function* |
|---|---|
| 0 | Code system prefix |
| 1 | Main shape category |
| 2, 3 | External and internal configuration |
| 4 | Machined secondary elements |
| 5, 6 | Functional descriptors |
| 7–12 | Dimensional data (length, diameter, etc.) |
| 13 | Tolerances |
| 14, 15 | Material chemistry |
| 16 | Raw material shape |
| 17 | Production quantity |
| 18 | Machined element orientation |

**EXAMPLE 15.2 MultiClass Coding System**

Given the rotational part design in Figure 15.8, determine the 18-digit code in the MultiClass parts coding system.

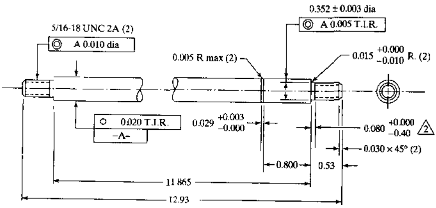



**Figure 15.8** Workpart of Example 15.2. (Courtesy of OIR, Organization for Industrial Research.)

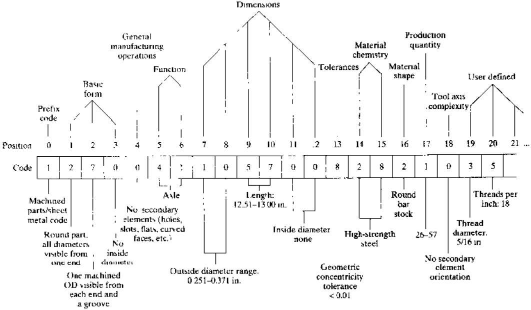


**Figure 15.9** MultiClass code number determined for part in Example 15.2. (Courtesy of OIR, Organization for Industrial Research.)

***Solution:*** The MultiClass code number for the given part is developed in Figure 15.9.

## 15.3 PRODUCTION FLOW ANALYSIS

This is an approach to part family identification and machine cell formation that was pioneered by J. Burbidge [6]–[8]. ***Production flow analysis*** (PFA) is a method for identifying part families and associated machine groupings that uses the information contained on production route sheets rather than on part drawings. Workparts with identical or similar routings are classified into part families. These families can then be used to form logical machine cells in a group technology layout. Since PFA uses manufacturing data rather than design data to identify part families, it can overcome two possible anomalies that can occur in parts classification and coding. First, parts whose basic geometries are quite different may nevertheless require similar or even identical process routings. Second, parts whose geometries are quite similar may nevertheless require process routings that are quite different.

The procedure in production flow analysis must begin by defining the scope of the study, which means deciding on the population of parts to be analyzed. Should all of the parts in the shop be included in the study, or should a representative sample be selected for analysis? Once this decision is made, then the procedure in PFA consists of the following steps:

1. ***Data collection.*** The minimum data needed in the analysis are the part number and operation sequence, which is contained in shop documents called route sheets or operation sheets or some similar name. Each operation is usually associated with a particular machine, so determining the operation sequence also determines the machine sequence. Additional data, such as lot size, time standards, and annual demand might be useful for designing machine cells of the required production capacity.
2. ***Sortation of process routings.*** In this step, the parts are arranged into groups according to the similarity of their process routings. To facilitate this step, all operations or machines included in the shop are reduced to code numbers, such as those shown in Table 15.3. For each part, the operation codes are listed in the order in which they are performed. A sortation procedure is then used to arrange parts into "packs," which are groups of parts with identical routings. Some packs may contain only one part number, indicating the uniqueness of the processing of that part. Other packs will contain many parts, and these will constitute a part family.
3. ***PFA chart.*** The processes used for each pack are then displayed in a PFA chart, a simplified example of which is illustrated in Table 15.4.[1] The chart is a tabulation of the process or machine code numbers for all of the part packs. In recent GT literature [30], the PFA chart has been referred to as ***part-machine incidence matrix***. In this matrix, the entries have a value $x_{ij} = 1$ or 0: a value of $x_{ij} = 1$ indicates that the corresponding part $i$ requires processing on machine $j$, and $x_{ij} = 0$ indicates that no processing of component $i$ is accomplished on machine $j$. For clarity of presenting the matrix, the 0's are often indicated as blank (empty) entries, as in our table.
4. ***Cluster analysis.*** From the pattern of data in the PFA chart, related groupings are identified and rearranged into a new pattern that brings together packs with similar machine sequences. One possible rearrangement of the original PFA chart is shown in Table 15.5, where different machine groupings are indicated within blocks. The blocks might be considered as possible machine cells. It is often the case (but not in Table 15.5) that some packs do not fit into logical groupings. These parts might be analyzed to see if a revised process sequence can be developed that fits into one of the groups. If not, these parts must continue to be fabricated through a conventional process layout. In Section 15.6.1, we examine a systematic technique called ***rank order clustering*** that can be used to perform the cluster analysis.

**TABLE 15.3** Possible Code Numbers Indicating Operations and/or Machines for Sortation in Production Flow Analysis (Highly Simplified)

| *Operation or Machine* | *Code* |
|---|---|
| Cutoff | 01 |
| Lathe | 02 |
| Turret lathe | 03 |
| Mill | 04 |
| Drill: manual | 05 |
| NC drill | 06 |
| Grind | 07 |

[1] For clarity in the part-machine incidence matrices and related discussion, we are identifying parts by alphabetic character and machines by number. In practice, numbers would be used for both.

**TABLE 15.4** PFA Chart, Also Known as a Part-Machine Incidence Matrix

| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| 2 | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 4 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | |
| 5 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| 6 | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| 7 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |

**TABLE 15.5** Rearranged PFA Chart, Indicating Possible Machine Groupings

| Machines | C | E | I | A | D | H | F | G | B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 2 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 6 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 5 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 4 | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |

The weakness of production flow analysis is that the data used in the technique are derived from existing production route sheets. In all likelihood, these route sheets have been prepared by different process planners, and the routings may contain operations that are nonoptimal, illogical, or unnecessary. Consequently, the final machine groupings obtained in the analysis may be suboptimal. Notwithstanding this weakness, PFA has the virtue of requiring less time than a complete parts classification and coding procedure. This virtue is attractive to many firms wishing to introduce group technology into their plant operations.

## 15.4 CELLULAR MANUFACTURING

Whether part families have been determined by visual inspection, parts classification and coding, or production flow analysis, there is advantage in producing those parts using group technology machine cells rather than a traditional process-type machine layout. When the machines are grouped, the term cellular manufacturing is used to describe this work organization. ***Cellular manufacturing*** is an application of group technology in which dissimilar machines or processes have been aggregated into cells, each of which is dedicated to the production of a part or product family or a limited group of families. The typical objectives in cellular manufacturing are similar to those of group technology:

- ***To shorten manufacturing lead times***, by reducing setup, workpart handling, waiting times, and batch sizes.
- ***To reduce work-in-process inventory***. Smaller batch sizes and shorter lead times reduce work-in-process.
- ***To improve quality***. This is accomplished by allowing each cell to specialize in producing a smaller number of different parts. This reduces process variations.
- ***To simplify production scheduling***. The similarity among parts in the family reduces the complexity of production scheduling. Instead of scheduling parts through a sequence of machines in a process-type shop layout, the parts are simply scheduled though the cell.
- ***To reduce setup times***. This is accomplished by using ***group tooling*** (cutting tools, jigs, and fixtures) that have been designed to process the part family, rather than part tooling, which is designed for an individual part. This reduces the number of individual tools required as well as the time to change tooling between parts.

Additional reasons for implementing cellular manufacturing are given in Table 15.7. In this section, we consider several aspects of cellular manufacturing and the design of machine cells.

### 15.4.1 Composite Part Concept

Part families are defined by the fact that their members have similar design and/or manufacturing features. The composite part concept takes this part family definition to its logical conclusion. It conceives of a hypothetical part, a ***composite part*** for a given family, which includes all of the design and manufacturing attributes of the family. In general, an individual part in the family will have some of the features that characterize the family but not all of them. The composite part possesses all of the features.

There is always a correlation between part design features and the production operations required to generate those features. Round holes are made by drilling, cylindrical shapes are made by turning, flat surfaces by milling, and so on. A production cell designed for the part family would include those machines required to make the composite part. Such a cell would be capable of producing any member of the family, simply by omitting those operations corresponding to features not possessed by the particular part. The cell would also be designed to allow for size variations within the family as well as feature variations.

To illustrate, consider the composite part in Figure 15.10(a). It represents a family of rotational parts with features defined in Figure 15.10(b). Associated with each feature is a certain machining operation as summarized in Table 15.6. A machine cell to produce this

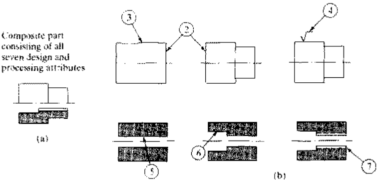



**Figure 15.10** Composite part concept: (a) the composite part for a family of machined rotational parts and (b) the individual features of the composite part. See Table 15.6 for key to individual features and corresponding manufacturing operations.

**TABLE 15.6** Design Features of the Composite Part in Figure 15.10 and the Manufacturing Operations Required to Shape Those Features

| *Label* | *Design Feature* | *Corresponding Manufacturing Operation* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | External cylinder | Turning |
| 2 | Cylinder face | Facing |
| 3 | Cylindrical step | Turning |
| 4 | Smooth surface | External cylindrical grinding |
| 5 | Axial hole | Drilling |
| 6 | Counterbore | Counterboring |
| 7 | Internal threads | Tapping |

part family would be designed with the capability to accomplish all seven operations required to produce the composite part (the last column in the table). To produce a specific member of the family, operations would be included to fabricate the required features of the part. For parts without all seven features, unnecessary operations would simply be omitted. Machines, fixtures, and tools would be organized for efficient flow of workparts through the cell.

In practice, the number of design and manufacturing attributes is greater than seven, and allowances must be made for variations in overall size and shape of the parts in the family. Nevertheless, the composite part concept is useful for visualizing the machine cell design problem.

### 15.4.2 Machine Cell Design

Design of the machine cell is critical in cellular manufacturing. The cell design determines to a great degree the performance of the cell. In this subsection, we discuss types of machine cells, cell layouts, and the key machine concept.

*Types of Machine Cells and Layouts.* GT manufacturing cells can be classified according to the number of machines and the degree to which the material flow is mechanized between machines. In our classification scheme for manufacturing systems (Section 13.2), all GT cells are classified as type X in terms of part or product variety (Section 13.2.4, Table 13.3). Here we identify four common GT cell configurations (with system type identified in parenthesis from Section 13.2):

1. single machine cell (type I M)
2. group machine cell with manual handling (type II M generally, type III M less common)
3. group machine cell with semi-integrated handling (type II M generally, type III M less common)
4. flexible manufacturing cell or flexible manufacturing system (type II A generally, type III A less common)

As its name indicates, the ***single machine cell*** consists of one machine plus supporting fixtures and tooling. This type of cell can be applied to workparts whose attributes allow them to be made on one basic type of process, such as turning or milling. For example, the composite part of Figure 15.10 could be produced on a conventional turret lathe, with the possible exception of the cylindrical grinding operation (step 4).

The ***group machine cell with manual handling*** is an arrangement of more than one machine used collectively to produce one or more part families. There is no provision for mechanized parts movement between the machines in the cell. Instead, the human operators who run the cell perform the material handling function. The cell is often organized into a U-shaped layout, as shown in Figure 15.11. This layout is considered appropriate when there is variation in the work flow among the parts made in the cell. It also allows the multifunctional workers in the cell to move easily between machines [29].

The group machine cell with manual handling is sometimes achieved in a conventional process type layout without rearranging the equipment. This is done simply by assigning certain machines to be included in the machine group and restricting their work to specified part families. This allows many of the benefits of cellular manufacturing to be achieved without the expense of rearranging equipment in the shop. Obviously, the material handling benefits of GT are minimized with this organization.

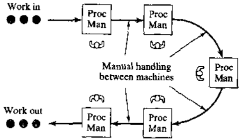



**Figure 15.11** Machine cell with manual handling between machines. Shown is a U-shaped machine layout. (Key: "Proc" = processing operation (e.g., mill, turn, etc.), "Man" = manual operation; arrows indicate work flow.)

The ***group machine cell with semi-integrated handling*** uses a mechanized handling system, such as a conveyor, to move parts between machines in the cell. The ***flexible manufacturing system*** (FMS) combines a fully integrated material handling system with automated processing stations. The FMS is the most highly automated of the group technology machine cells. The following chapter is devoted to this form of automation, and we defer discussion till then.

A variety of layouts are used in GT cells. The U-shape, as in Figure 15.11, is a popular configuration in cellular manufacturing. Other GT layouts include in-line, loop, and rectangular, shown in Figure 15.12 for the case of semi-integrated handling.

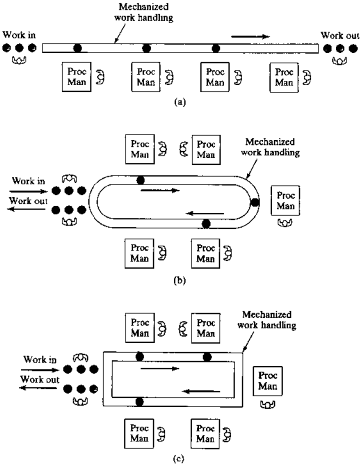



**Figure 15.12** Machine cells with semi-integrated handling: (a) in-line layout, (b) loop layout, and (c) rectangular layout. (Key: "Proc" = processing operation (e.g., mill, turn, etc.), "Man" = manual operation; arrows indicate work flow.)

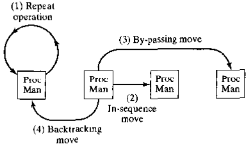



**Figure 15.13** Four types of part moves in a mixed model production system. The forward flow of work is from left to right.

Determining the most appropriate cell layout depends on the routings of parts produced in the cell. Four types of part movement can be distinguished in a mixed model part production system. They are illustrated in Figure 15.13 and are defined as follows, where the forward direction of work flow is defined as being from left to right in the figure: (1) ***repeat operation***, in which a consecutive operation is carried out on the same machine, so that the part does not actually move; (2) ***in-sequence move***, in which the part moves from the current machine to an immediate neighbor in the forward direction; (3) ***by-passing move***, in which the part moves forward from the current machine to another machine that is two or more machines ahead; and (4) ***backtracking move***, in which the part moves from the current machine in the backward direction to another machine.

When the application consists exclusively of in-sequence moves, then an in-line layout is appropriate. A U-shaped layout also works well here and has the advantage of closer interaction among the workers in the cell. When the application includes repeated operations, then multiple stations (machines) are often required. For cells requiring by-passing moves, the U-shape layout is appropriate. When backtracking moves are needed, a loop or rectangular layout is appropriate to accommodate recirculation of parts within the cell. Additional factors that must be accounted for in the cell design include:

- ***Quantity of work to be done by the cell.*** This includes the number of parts per year and the processing (or assembly) time per part at each station. These factors determine the workload that must be accomplished by the cell and therefore the number of machines that must be included, as well as total operating cost of the cell and the investment that can be justified.
- ***Part size, shape, weight, and other physical attributes.*** These factors determine the size and type of material handling and processing equipment that must be used.

*Key Machine Concept.* In some respects, a GT machine cell operates like a manual assembly line (Chapter 17), and it is desirable to spread the workload evenly among the machines in the cell as much as possible. On the other hand, there is typically a certain machine in a cell (or perhaps more than one machine in a large cell) that is more expensive to operate than the other machines or that performs certain critical operations in the plant. This machine is referred to as the ***key machine***. It is important that the utilization of this key machine be high, even if it means that the other machines in the cell have relatively low utilization. The other machines are referred to as ***supporting machines***, and they should be organized in the cell to keep the key machine busy. In a sense, the cell is designed so that the key machine becomes the bottleneck in the system.

The key machine concept is sometimes used to plan the GT machine cell. The approach is to decide what parts should be processed through the key machine and then determine what supporting machines are required to complete the processing of those parts.

There are generally two measures of utilization that are of interest in a GT cell: the utilization of the key machine and the utilization of the overall cell. The utilization of the key machine can be measured using the usual definition (Section 2.4.3). The utilization of each of the other machines can also be evaluated similarly. The cell utilization is obtained by taking a simple arithmetic average of all the machines in the cell. One of the exercise problems at the end of the chapter serves to illustrate the key machine concept and the determination of utilization.

## 15.5 APPLICATION CONSIDERATIONS IN GROUP TECHNOLOGY

In this section, we consider how and where group technology is applied, and we report on the results of a survey of industry about cellular manufacturing in the United States [38].

### 15.5.1 Applications of Group Technology

In our introduction to this chapter, we defined group technology as a "manufacturing philosophy." GT is not a particular technique, although various tools and techniques, such as parts classification and coding and production flow analysis, have been developed to help implement it. The group technology philosophy can be applied in a number of areas. Our discussion focuses on the two main areas of manufacturing and product design.

*Manufacturing Applications.* The most common applications of GT are in manufacturing. And the most common application in manufacturing involves the formation of cells of one kind or another. Not all companies rearrange machines to form cells. There are three ways in which group technology principles can be applied in manufacturing [24]:

1. ***Informal scheduling and routing of similar parts through selected machines.*** This approach achieves setup advantages, but no formal part families are defined, and no physical rearrangement of equipment is undertaken.
2. ***Virtual machine cells.*** This approach involves the creation of part families and dedication of equipment to the manufacture of these part families, but without the physical rearrangement of machines into formal cells. The machines in the virtual cell remain in their original locations in the factory. Use of virtual cells seems to facilitate the sharing of machines with other virtual cells producing other part families [25].
3. ***Formal machine cells.*** This is the conventional GT approach in which a group of dissimilar machines are physically relocated into a cell that is dedicated to the production of one or a limited set of part families (Section 15.4.2). The machines in a formal machine cell are located in close proximity to minimize part handling, throughput time, setup time, and work-in-process.

Other GT applications in manufacturing include process planning (Chapter 25), family tooling, and numerical control (NC) part programs. Process planning of new parts can be facilitated through the identification of part families. The new part is associated with an existing part family, and generation of the process plan for the new part follows the routing of the other members of the part family. This is done in a formalized way through the use of parts classification and coding. The approach is discussed in the context of automated process planning (Section 25.2.1).

In the ideal, all members of the same part family require similar setups, tooling, and fixturing. This generally results in a reduction in the amount of tooling and fixturing needed. Instead of determining a special tool kit for each part, a tool kit is developed for each part family. The concept of a ***modular fixture*** can often be exploited, in which a common base fixture is designed and adaptations are made to switch between different parts in the family.

A similar approach can be applied in NC part programming. Called ***parametric programming***, [28], it involves the preparation of a common NC program that covers the entire part family. The program is then adapted for individual members of the family by inserting dimensions and other parameters applicable to the particular part. Parametric programming reduces both programming time and setup time.

*Product Design Applications.* The application of group technology in product design is found principally in the use of design retrieval systems that reduce part proliferation in the firm. It has been estimated that a company's cost to release a new part design ranges between $2000 and $12,000 [37]. In a survey of industry reported in [36], it was concluded that in about 20% of new part situations, an existing part design could be used. In about 40% of the cases, an existing part design could be used with modifications. The remaining cases required new part designs. If the cost savings for a company generating 1000 new part designs per year were 75% when an existing part design could be used (assuming that there would still be some cost of time associated with the new part for engineering analysis and design retrieval) and 50% when an existing design could be modified, then the total annual savings to the company would lie between $700,000 and $4,200,000, or 35% of the company's total design expense due to part releases. The kinds of design savings described here require an efficient design retrieval procedure. Most part design retrieval procedures are based on parts classification and coding systems (Section 15.2).

Other design applications of group technology involve simplification and standardization of design parameters, such as tolerances, inside radii on corners, chamfer sizes on outside edges, hole sizes, thread sizes, and so forth. These measures simplify design procedures and reduce part proliferation. Design standardization also pays dividends in manufacturing by reducing the required number of distinct lathe tool nose radii, drill sizes, and fastener sizes. There is also a benefit in terms of reducing the amount of data and information that the company must deal with. Fewer part designs, design attributes, tools, fasteners, and so on mean fewer and simpler design documents, process plans, and other data records.

### 15.5.2 Survey of Industry Practice

A number of surveys have been conducted to learn how industry implements cellular manufacturing [24], [36], [38]. The surveyed companies represent manufacturing industries, such as machinery, machine tools, agricultural and construction equipment, medical equip-

**TABLE 15.7** Benefits of Cellular Manufacturing Reported by Companies in Survey

| *Rank* | *Reason for Installing Manufacturing Cells* | *Average Improvement (%)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Reduce throughput time (Manufacturing lead time) | 61 |
| 2 | Reduce work-in-process | 48 |
| 3 | Improve part and/or product quality | 28 |
| 4 | Reduce response time for customer orders | 50 |
| 5 | Reduce move distances | 61 |
| 6 | Increase manufacturing flexibility | |
| 7 | Reduce unit costs | 16 |
| 8 | Simplify production planning and control | |
| 9 | Facilitate employee involvement | |
| 10 | Reduce setup times | 44 |
| 11 | Reduce finished goods inventory | 39 |

*Source:* Wemmerlov and Johnson [38].

ment, weapons systems, diesel engines, and piece parts. Processes grouped into cells in the companies included machining, joining and assembly, finishing, testing, and metal forming.

Companies in the survey were asked to report their reasons for establishing machine cells and the benefits they enjoyed from implementing cellular manufacturing in the operations. Results are listed in Table 15.7. The reasons are listed in the relative order of importance as indicated by the companies participating in the survey. We also list the average percentage improvement reported by the companies, rounded to the nearest whole percentage point. Reasons 6, 8, and 9 are difficult to evaluate quantitatively, and no percentage improvements are listed in these cases.

One of the questions considered in the 1989 survey [36] was: What are the approaches used by companies to form machine cells? The results are listed in Table 15.8. The most common approach consisted of visually grouping similar parts with no consideration given to existing routing information and no parts classification and coding. The use of a part-machine incidence matrix was not widely reported, perhaps because the formal algorithms for reducing this matrix, such as rank order clustering (Section 15.6.1) were not widely known at the time of the survey.

Companies also reported costs associated with implementing cellular manufacturing [36]. The reported cost categories are listed in Table 15.9 together with the number of companies reporting the cost. No numerical estimates of actual costs are provided in the report.

**TABLE 15.8** Approaches to Cell Formation Used in Industry

| *Approach to Cell Formation* | *Number of Companies Employing the Approach* | *Text Reference* |
|---|---|---|
| Visual inspection to identify family of similar parts | 19 | Section 15.1 |
| Key machine concept | 11 | Section 15.4.2 |
| Use of part-machine incidence matrix | 9 | Section 15.3, Section 15.6.1 |
| Other methods (e.g., From-to diagrams, simple sorting of routings) | 7 | |

*Source:* Wemmerlov and Hyer [36].

**TABLE 15.9** Costs of Introducing Cellular Manufacturing Reported by Companies in Survey

| Cost | *Number of Companies Reporting* |
|---|---|
| 1. Relocation and installation of machines | 16 |
| 2. Feasibility studies, planning and design, and related costs | 8 |
| 3. New equipment and duplication of equipment | 6 |
| 4. Training | 6 |
| 5. New tooling and fixtures | 5 |
| 6. Programmable controllers, computers, and software | 4 |
| 7. Material handling equipment | 2 |
| 8. Lost production time during installation | 2 |
| 9. Higher operator wages | 1 |

*Source:* Wemmerlov and Hyer [36].

Topping the list was the expense of equipment relocation and installation. Most of the companies responding to the survey had implemented cellular manufacturing by moving equipment in the factory rather than by installing new equipment to form the cell.

## 15.6 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS IN CELLULAR MANUFACTURING

A number of quantitative techniques have been developed to deal with problem areas in group technology and cellular manufacturing. In this section, we consider two problem areas: (1) grouping parts and machines into families, and (2) arranging machines in a GT cell. The first problem area has been and still is an active research area, and several of the more significant research publications are listed in our references [2], [3], [11], [12], [26], [27]. The technique we describe in the current section for solving the part and machine grouping problem is rank order clustering [26]. The second problem area has also been the subject of research, and several reports are listed in the references [1], [6], [8], [17]. In Section 15.6.2, we describe two heuristic approaches introduced by Hollier [17].

### 15.6.1 Grouping Parts and Machines by Rank Order Clustering

The problem addressed here is to determine how machines in an existing plant should be grouped into machine cells. The problem is the same whether the cells are virtual or formal (Section 15.5.1). It is basically the problem of identifying part families. By identifying part families, the machines required in the cell to produce the part family can be properly selected. As previously discussed, the three basic methods to identify part families are (1) visual inspection, (2) parts classification and coding, and (3) production flow analysis.

The ***rank order clustering*** technique, first proposed by King [26], is specifically applicable in production flow analysis. It is an efficient and easy-to-use algorithm for grouping machines into cells. In a starting part-machine incidence matrix that might be compiled to document the part routings in a machine shop (or other job shop), the occupied locations in the matrix are organized in a seemingly random fashion. Rank order clustering works by reducing the part-machine incidence matrix to a set of diagonalized blocks that represent part families and associated machine groups. Starting with the initial part-machine incidence matrix, the algorithm consists of the following steps:

1. In each row of the matrix, read the series of 1's and 0's (blank entries = 0's) from left to right as a binary number. Rank the rows in order of decreasing value. In case of a tie, rank the rows in the same order as they appear in the current matrix.
2. Numbering from top to bottom, is the current order of rows the same as the rank order determined in the previous step? If yes, go to step 7. If no, go to the following step.
3. Reorder the rows in the part-machine incidence matrix by listing them in decreasing rank order, starting from the top.
4. In each column of the matrix, read the series of 1's and 0's (blank entries = 0's) from top to bottom as a binary number. Rank the columns in order of decreasing value. In case of a tie, rank the columns in the same order as they appear in the current matrix.
5. Numbering from left to right, is the current order of columns the same as the rank order determined in the previous step? If yes, go to step 7. If no, go to the following step.
6. Reorder the columns in the part-machine incidence matrix by listing them in decreasing rank order, starting with the left column. Go to step 1.
7. Stop.

For readers unaccustomed to evaluating binary numbers in steps 1 and 4, it might be helpful to convert each binary value into its decimal equivalent (e.g., the entries in the first row of the matrix in Table 15.4 are read as 100100010). This is converted into its decimal equivalent as follows: $1x2^8 + 0x2^7 + 0x2^6 + 1x2^5 + 0x2^4 + 0x2^3 + 0x2^2 + 1x2^1 + 0x2^0 = 256 + 32 + 2 = 290$. It should be mentioned that decimal conversion becomes impractical for the large numbers of parts found in practice, and comparison of the binary numbers is preferred.

**EXAMPLE 15.3 Rank Order Clustering Technique**

Apply the rank order clustering technique to the part-machine incidence matrix in Table 15.4.

***Solution:*** Step 1 consists of reading the series of 1's and 0's in each row as a binary number. We have done this in Table 15.10(a), converting the binary value for each row to its decimal equivalent. The values are then rank ordered in the far right-hand column. In step 2, we see that the row order is different from the starting matrix. We therefore reorder the rows in step 3. In step 4, we read the series of 1's and 0's in each column from top to bottom as a binary number (again we have converted to the decimal equivalent), and the columns are ranked in order of decreasing value, as shown in Table 15.10(b). In step 5, we see that the column order is different from the preceding matrix. Proceeding from step 6 back to steps 1 and 2, we see that a reordering of the columns provides a row order that is in descending value, and the algorithm is concluded (step 7). The final solution is shown in Table 15.10(c). A close comparison of this solution with Table 15.5 reveals that they are the same part-machine groupings.

**TABLE 15.10(a)** First Iteration (Step 1) in the Rank Order Clustering Technique Applied to Example 15.3

| Binary Values | $2^8$ | $2^7$ | $2^6$ | $2^5$ | $2^4$ | $2^3$ | $2^2$ | $2^1$ | $2^0$ | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Parts | | | | | Decimal | |
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | Equivalent | Rank |
| 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 290 | 1 |
| 2 | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 17 | 7 |
| 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 81 | 5 |
| 4 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | 136 | 4 |
| 5 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | 258 | 2 |
| 6 | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 65 | 6 |
| 7 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 140 | 3 |

**TABLE 15.10(b)** Second Iteration (Steps 3 and 4) in the Rank Order Clustering Technique Applied to Example 15.3

| | | | | | Parts | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | Binary Values |
| 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | $2^6$ |
| 5 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | $2^5$ |
| 7 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | $2^4$ |
| 4 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | $2^3$ |
| 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | $2^2$ |
| 6 | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | $2^1$ |
| | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | $2^0$ |
| Decimal Equivalent | 96 | 24 | 6 | 64 | 5 | 24 | 16 | 96 | 7 | |
| Rank | 1 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 7 | |

**TABLE 15.10(c)** Solution of Example 15.3

| | Parts | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | H | D | B | F | G | I | C | E |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 4 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |

In the example problem, it was possible to divide the parts and machines into three mutually exclusive part-machine groups. This represents the ideal case because the part families and associated machine cells are completely segregated. However, it is not uncommon for there to be an overlap in processing requirements between machine groups. That is, a given part type needs to be processed by more than one machine group. Let us illustrate this case and how the rank order clustering technique deals with it in the following example.

## EXAMPLE 15.4 Overlapping Machine Requirements

Consider the part-machine incidence matrix in Table 15.11. This is the same as the original part-machine incidence matrix in Table 15.4 except that part B requires

**TABLE 15.11** Part-Machine Incidence Matrix for Example 15.4

| | Parts | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| 2 | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 4 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| 5 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| 6 | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| 7 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |

processing on machines 1, 4, and 7 (1 is the additional machine) and part D now requires processing on machines 1 and 4 (4 is the additional machine). Use the rank order clustering technique to arrange parts and machine into groups.

***Solution:*** The rank order clustering technique converges to a solution in two iterations, shown in Tables 15.12(a) and 15.12(b), with the final solution shown in Table15.12(c).

**TABLE 15.12(a)** First Iteration of Rank Order Clustering Applied to Example 15.4

| Binary Values | $2^8$ | $2^7$ | $2^6$ | $2^5$ | $2^4$ | $2^3$ | $2^2$ | $2^1$ | $2^0$ | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Parts | | | | | Decimal | |
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | Equivalent | Rank |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 418 | 1 |
| 2 | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 17 | 7 |
| 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 81 | 5 |
| 4 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 168 | 3 |
| 5 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | 258 | 2 |
| 6 | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 65 | 6 |
| 7 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 140 | 4 |

**TABLE 15.12(b)** Second Iteration of Rank Order Clustering Applied to Example 15.4

| | | | | | Parts | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | Binary Values |
| 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | $2^6$ |
| 5 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | $2^5$ |
| 4 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | | | $2^4$ |
| 7 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | $2^3$ |
| 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | $2^2$ |
| 6 | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | $2^1$ |
| 2 | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | $2^0$ |
| Decimal Equivalent | 96 | 88 | 6 | 80 | 5 | 24 | 8 | 96 | 7 | |
| Rank | 1 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 7 | |

**TABLE 15.12(c)** Solution of Example 15.4

| | Parts | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | H | B | D | F | G | I | C | E |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 7 | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |

Parts B and D could be included in either of two machine groups. Our solution includes them in machine group (4, 7); however, they must also be processed in machine group (1, 5).

King [26] refers to the matrix elements B1 and D1 (parts B and D processed on machine 1) in Table 15.12(c) as ***exceptional elements***. He recommends that they each be replaced with an asterisk (*) and treated as zeros when applying the rank order clustering technique. The effect of this approach in our example problem would be to organize the machines exactly as we have done in our final solution in Table 15.12(c). Another way of dealing with the overlap is simply to duplicate the machine that is used by more than one part family. In Example 15.4, this would mean that two machines of type 1 would be used in the two cells. The result of this duplication is shown in the matrix of Table 15.13, where the two machines are identified as 1a and 1b. Of course, there may be economic considerations that would inhibit the machine redundancy.

Other approaches to the problem of overlapping machines, attributed to Burbidge [26], include: (1) change the routing so that all processing can be accomplished in the primary machine group, (2) redesign the part to eliminate the processing requirement outside the primary machine group, and (3) purchase the part from an outside supplier.

### 15.6.2 Arranging Machines in a GT Cell

After part-machine groupings have been identified by rank order clustering or other method, the next problem is to organize the machines into the most logical arrangement. Let us describe two simple yet effective methods suggested by Hollier [17].[2] Both methods use data contained in From–To charts (Section 10.6.1) and are intended to arrange the machines in an order that maximizes the proportion of in-sequence moves within the cell.

[2] Hollier [Hollier] introduces six heuristic approaches to solving the machine arrangement problem, of which we describe the first two

**TABLE 15.13** Solution to Example 15.4 Using Duplicate Machines of Type 1 (Shown as Machines 1a and 1b in the Matrix)

| Machines | A | H | B | D | F | G | I | C | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Parts | | | | |
| 1a | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 1b | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| 7 | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |

*Hollier Method 1.* The first method uses the sums of flow "From" and "To" each machine in the cell. The method can be outlined as follows:

1. ***Develop the From–To chart from part routing data.*** The data contained in the chart indicates numbers of part moves between the machines (or workstations) in the cell. Moves into and out of the cell are not included in the chart.
2. ***Determine the "From" and "To" sums for each machine.*** This is accomplished by summing all of the "From" trips and "To" trips for each machine (or operation). The "From" sum for a machine is determined by adding the entries in the corresponding row, and the "To" sum is found by adding the entries in the corresponding column.
3. ***Assign machines to the cell based on minimum "From" or "To" sums.*** The machine having the smallest sum is selected. If the minimum value is a "To" sum, then the machine is placed at the beginning of the sequence. If the minimum value is a "From" sum, then the machine is placed at the end of the sequence. Tie breaker rules:
   (a) If a tie occurs between minimum "To" sums or minimum "From" sums, then the machine with the minimum "From/To" ratio is selected.
   (b) If both "To" and "From" sums are equal for a selected machine, it is passed over and the machine with the next lowest sum is selected.
   (c) If a minimum "To" sum is equal to a minimum "From" sum, then both machines are selected and placed at the beginning and end of the sequence, respectively.
4. ***Reformat the From-To chart.*** After each machine has been selected, restructure the From-To chart by eliminating the row and column corresponding to the selected machine and recalculate the "From" and "To" sums. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until all machines have been assigned.

**EXAMPLE 15.5 Group Technology Machine Sequence using Hollier Method 1**

Suppose that four machines, 1, 2, 3, and 4 have been identified as belonging in a GT machine cell. An analysis of 50 parts processed on these machines has been summarized in the From-To chart of Table 15.14. Additional information is that 50 parts enter the machine grouping at machine 3, 20 parts leave after processing at machine 1, and 30 parts leave after machine 4. Determine a logical machine arrangement using Hollier Method 1.

***Solution:*** Summing the From trips and To trips for each machine yields the "From" and "To" sums in Table 15.15(a). The minimum sum value is the "To" sum for machine 3. Machine 3 is therefore placed at the beginning of the sequence. Eliminating the row and column corresponding to machine 3 yields the revised From-To chart in Table 15.15(b). The minimum sum in this chart is the "To"

**TABLE 15.14** From-To Chart for Example 15.5

| | *To:* *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *From:* *1* | 0 | 5 | 0 | 25 |
| *2* | 30 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| *3* | 10 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| *4* | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**TABLE 15.15(a)** From and To Sums for Example 15.5: First Iteration

| | *To:* *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | ***"From" Sums*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *From:* *1* | 0 | 5 | 0 | 25 | **30** |
| *2* | 30 | 0 | 0 | 15 | **45** |
| *3* | 10 | 40 | 0 | 0 | **50** |
| *4* | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **10** |
| ***"To" sums*** | **50** | **45** | **0** | **40** | **135** |

**TABLE 15.15(b)** From and To Sums for Example 15.5: Second Iteration with Machine 3 Removed

| | *To:* *1* | *2* | *4* | ***"From" Sums*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *From:* *1* | 0 | 5 | 25 | **30** |
| *2* | 30 | 0 | 15 | **45** |
| *4* | 10 | 0 | 0 | **10** |
| ***"To" sums*** | **40** | **5** | **40** | |

**TABLE 15.15(c)** From and To Sums for Example 15.5: Third Iteration with Machine 2 Removed

| | To: | 1 | 4 | "From" Sums |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| From: | 1 | 0 | 25 | 25 |
| | 4 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| "To" sums | | 10 | 25 | |

sum corresponding to machine 2, which is placed at the front of the sequence, immediately following machine 3. Eliminating machine 2 produces the revised From-To chart in Table 15.15(c). The minimum sum in this chart is the "To" sum for machine 1. Machine 1 is placed after machine 2 and finally machine 4 is placed at the end of the sequence. Thus, the resulting machine sequence is

$$3 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 1 \rightarrow 4$$

*Hollier Method 2.* This approach is based on the use of From/To ratios formed by summing the total flow from and to each machine in the cell. The method can be reduced to three steps:

1. ***Develop the From–To chart.*** This is the same step as in Hollier Method 1.
2. ***Determine the From/To ratio for each machine.*** This is accomplished by summing up all of the "From" trips and "To" trips for each machine (or operation). The "From" sum for a machine is determined by adding the entries in the corresponding row, and the "To" sum is determined by adding the entries in the corresponding column. For each machine, the From/To ratio is calculated by taking the "From" sum for each machine and dividing by the respective "To" sum.
3. ***Arrange machines in order of decreasing From/To ratio.*** Machines with a high From/To ratio distribute work to many machines in the cell but receive work from few machines. Conversely, machines with a low From/To ratio receive more work than they distribute. Therefore, machines are arranged in order of descending From/To ratio. That is, machines with high ratios are placed at the beginning of the work flow, and machines with low ratios are placed at the end of the work flow. In case of a tie, the machine with the higher "From" value is placed ahead of the machine with a lower value.

**EXAMPLE 15.6 Group Technology Machine Sequence using Hollier Method 2**

Solve Example 15.5 using Hollier Method 2.

***Solution:*** Table 15.15(a), containing the "From" and "To" sums, is repeated in Table 15.16, along with the From/To ratios given in the last column on the right. Arranging the machines in order of descending From/To ratio, the machines in the cell should be sequenced as follows:

$$3 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 1 \rightarrow 4$$

**TABLE 15.16** From–To Sums and From/To Ratios for Example 15.6

| | To: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | "From" Sums | From/To Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| From: 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 25 | **30** | **0.60** |
| 2 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 15 | **45** | **1.0** |
| 3 | 10 | 40 | 0 | 0 | **50** | $\infty$ |
| 4 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **10** | **0.25** |
| **"To" sums** | **50** | **45** | **0** | **40** | **135** | |

This is the same solution provided by Hollier Method 1.

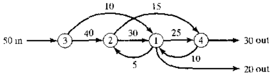



**Figure 15.14** Flow diagram for machine cell in Examples 15.5 and 15.6. Flow of parts into and out of the cells has also been included.

It is helpful to use one of the available graphical techniques, such as the flow diagram (Section 10.6.1), to conceptualize the work flow in the cell. The flow diagram for the machine arrangement in Examples 15.5 and 15.6 is presented in Figure 15.14. The work flow is mostly in-line; however, there is some back flow of parts that must be considered in the design of any material handling system that might be used in the cell. A powered conveyor would be appropriate for the forward flow between machines, with manual handling for the back flow.

For our example data in Table 15.14, Hollier Methods 1 and 2 provide the same solution. This is not always the case. The relative performance of the two methods depends on the given problem. In some problems, Method 1 will outperform Method 2, and in other problems the opposite will happen. In many problems, the two methods yield identical solutions, as in Examples 15.5 and 15.6. Hollier presents a comparison of these and his other proposed methods with a variety of problems in [17].

Two performance measures can be defined to compare solutions to the machine sequencing problem: (1) percentage of in-sequence moves and (2) percentage of backtracking moves. The ***percentage of in-sequence moves*** is computed by adding all of the values representing in-sequence moves and dividing by the total number of moves. The ***percentage of backtracking moves*** is determined by summing all of the values representing backtracking moves and dividing by the total number of moves.

**EXAMPLE 15.7 Performance Measures for Alternative Machine Sequences in a GT cell**

Compute (a) the percentage of in-sequence moves and (b) the percentage of backtracking moves for the solution in Examples 15.5 and 15.6.

***Solution:*** From Figure 15.14, the number of in-sequence moves = 40 + 30 + 25 = 95, and the number of backtracking moves = 5 + 10 = 15. The total number of moves = 135 (totaling either the "From" sums or the "To" sums). Thus,

(a) Percentage of in-sequence moves = 95/135 = 0.704 = ***70.4%***

(b) Percentage of backtracking moves = 15/135 = 0.111 = ***11.1%***

## REFERENCES


[1] ANEKE, N. A. G., and A. S. CARRIE, "A Design Technique for the Layout of Multi-Product Flowlines," *International Journal of Production Research*, Volume 24, 1986, pp 471–481.

[2] ASKIN, R. G., H. M. SELIM, and A. J. VAKHARIA, "A Methodology for Designing Flexible Cellular Manufacturing Systems," *IIE Transactions*, Vol. 29, 1997, pp. 599–610.

[3] BEAULIEU, A., A. GHARBI, and AIT-KADI, "An Algorithm for the Cell Formation and The Machine Selection Problems in the Design of a Cellular Manufacturing System," *International Journal of Production Research*, Volume 35, 1997, pp 1857–1874.

[4] BLACK, J. T., "An Overview of Cellular Manufacturing Systems and Comparison to Conventional Systems," *Industrial Engineering*, November 1983, pp 36–48.

[5] BLACK, J. T., *The Design of the Factory With A Future*, McGraw–Hill Book Company, New York, 1990.

[6] BURBIDGE, J. L., "Production Flow Analysis," *Production Engineer*, Vol. 41, 1963, p 742.

[7] BURBIDGE, J. L., *The Introduction of Group Technology*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1975.

[8] BURBIDGE, J. L., "A Manual Method of Production Flow Analysis," *Production Engineer*, Vol. 56, 1977, p 34.

[9] BURBIDGE, J. L., *Group Technology in the Engineering Industry*, Mechanical Engineering Publications Ltd., London, U.K., 1979.

[10] BURBIDGE, J. L., "Change to Group Technology: Process Organization is Obsolete," *International Journal of Production Research*, Volume 30, 1992, pp 1209–1219.

[11] CANTAMESSA, M., and A. TURRONI, "A Pragmatic Approach to Machine and Part Grouping in Cellular Manufacturing Systems Design," *International Journal of Production Research*, Volume 35, 1997, pp 1031–1050.

[12] CHANDRASEKHARAN, M. P., and R. RAJAGOPALAN, "ZODIAC: An Algorithm for Concurrent Formation of Part Families and Machine Cells," *International Journal of Production Research*, Volume 25, 1987, pp 835–850.

[13] GALLAGHER, C. C., and W. A. KNIGHT, *Group Technology*, Butterworth & Co. Ltd., London, 1973.

[14] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Chapter 38, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[15] HAM, I., "Introduction to Group Technology," *Technical Report MMR76–03*, Soc. Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1976.

[16] HAM, I., K. HITOMI, and T. YOSHIDA, *Group Technology: Applications to Production Management*, Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing, Boston, Mass., 1985.

[17] HOLLIER, R. H., "The Layout of Multi–product lines," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 2, 1963, pp 47–57.

[18] HOLTZ, R. D., "GT and CAPP Cut Work-in-process Time 80%," *Assembly Engineering*, Part 1: June 1978, pp 24–27; Part 2: July 1978, pp 16–19.

[19] HOUTZEEL, A., "The Many Faces of Group Technology," *American Machinist*, January 1979, pp 115–120.

[20] HOUTZEEL, A., "A Management Overview of Group Technology," *SME Technical Paper MS82-167*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1982.

[21] HOUTZEEL, A., *Classification and Coding*, Organization for Industrial Research, Inc., Waltham, Mass.

[22] HOUTZEEL, A., "Classification and Coding, Group Technology, Design Retrieval, and Computer Assisted Process Planning," Organization for Industrial Research, Waltham, Mass.

[23] HYER, N. L., and U. WEMMERLOV, "Group Technology Oriented Coding Systems: Structures, Applications, and Implementations," *Production and Inventory Management*, 2nd quarter, 1985, pp 55–78.

[24] HYER, N. L., and U. WEMMERLOV, "Group Technology in the U.S. Manufacturing Industry: A Survey of Current Practices," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 27, 1989, pp 1287–1304.

[25] IRANI, S. A., T. M. CAVALIER, and P. H. COHEN, "Virtual Manufacturing Cells: Exploiting Layout Design and Intercell Flows for the Machine Sharing Problem," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 31, 1993, pp 791–810.

[26] KING, J. R., "Machine-Component Grouping in Production Flow Analysis: an Approach Using a Rank Order Clustering Algorithm," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 18, 1980, pp 213–222.

[27] KUSIAK, A., "EXGT-S: A Knowledge Based System for Group Technology," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 26, 1988, pp 1353–1367.

[28] LYNCH, M., *Computer Numerical Control for Machining*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1992.

[29] MONDEN, Y., *Toyota Production System*, Industrial Engineering and Management Press, Inst. Industrial Engineers, Norcross, Georgia, 1983.

[30] MOODIE, C., R. UZSOY, and Y. YIH, *Manufacturing Cells: A Systems Engineering View*, Taylor & Francis Ltd., London, U.K., 1995.

[31] OPITZ, H., *A Classification System to Describe Workpieces*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, England, 1970.

[32] OPITZ, H., and H. P. WIENDAHL, "Group Technology and Manufacturing Systems for Medium Quantity Production," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1971, pp 181–203.

[33] SINGH, N., and D. RAJAMANI, *Cellular Manufacturing Systems: Design, Planning, and Control*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1996.

[34] SNEAD, C. S., *Group Technology: Foundation for Competitive Manufacturing*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1989.

[35] VAKHARIA, A. J., and H. M. Selim, "Group Technology," *Handbook of Design, Manufacturing and Automation*, R. C. Dorf and A. Kusiak (Editors), John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1992, pp 435–460.

[36] WEMMERLOV, U., and N. L. HYER, "Cellular Manufacturing in U.S. Industry: A Survey of Users," *International Journal of Production Research*, Volume 27, 1989, pp 1511–1530.

[37] WEMMERLOV, U., and N. L. HYER, "Group Technology," *Handbook of Industrial Engineering*, G. Salvendy (Editor), John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1992, pp 464–488.

[38] WEMMERLOV, U., and D. J. JOHNSON, "Cellular Manufacturing at 46 User Plants: Implementation Experiences and Performance Improvements," *International Journal of Production Research*, Volume 35, 1997, pp 29–49.

[39] WILD, R., *Mass Production Management*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., London, 1972, Chapter 8.

## PROBLEMS

### Parts Classification and Coding

**15.1** Develop the form code (first five digits) in the Opitz System for the part illustrated in Figure P15.1.

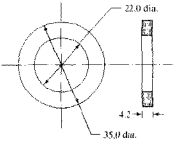



**Figure P15.1** Part for Problem 15.1. Dimensions are in millimeters.

**15.2** Develop the form code (first five digits) in the Opitz System for the part illustrated in Figure P15.2.

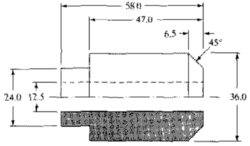



**Figure P15.2** Part for Problem 15.2. Dimensions are in millimeters.

**15.3** Develop the form code (first five digits) in the Opitz System for the part illustrated in Figure P15.3.

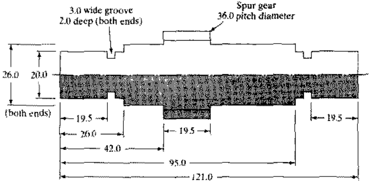



**Figure P15.3** Part for Problem 15.3. Dimensions are in millimeters.

## Rank Order Clustering

**15.4** Apply the rank order clustering technique to the part-machine incidence matrix in the following table to identify logical part families and machine groups. Parts are identified by letters, and machines are identified numerically

| | Parts | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E |
| 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | 1 | | | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 4 | | 1 | 1 | | |
| 5 | | | | 1 | |

**15.5** Apply the rank order clustering technique to the part-machine incidence matrix in the following table to identify logical part families and machine groups. Parts are identified by letters, and machines are identified numerically.

| | Parts | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| 2 | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 4 | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| 5 | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 6 | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |

**15.6** Apply the rank order clustering technique to the part-machine incidence matrix in the following table to identify logical part families and machine groups. Parts are identified by letters, and machines are identified numerically.

| | Parts | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
| 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | |
| 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| 4 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| 5 | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | |
| 6 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| 7 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | |
| 8 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | |

**15.7** Apply the rank order clustering technique to the part-machine incidence matrix in the following table to identify logical part families and machine groups. Parts are identified by letters, and machines are identified numerically.

| | Parts | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machines | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I |
| 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 3 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | |
| 6 | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| 8 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 |

**15.8** The following table lists the weekly quantities and routings of ten parts that are being considered for cellular manufacturing in a machine shop. Parts are identified by letters, and machines are identified numerically. For the data given, (a) develop the part-machine incidence matrix, and (b) apply the rank order clustering technique to the part-machine incidence matrix to identify logical part families and machine groups.

| Part | Weekly Quantity | Machine Routing |
|---|---|---|
| A | 50 | 3 → 2 → 7 |
| B | 20 | 6 → 1 |
| C | 75 | 6 → 5 |
| D | 10 | 6 → 5 → 1 |
| E | 12 | 3 → 2 → 7 → 4 |

| Part | Weekly Quantity | Machine Routing |
|---|---|---|
| F | 60 | 5 → 1 |
| G | 5 | 3 → 2 → 4 |
| H | 100 | 3 → 2 → 4 → 7 |
| I | 40 | 2 → 4 → 7 |
| J | 15 | 5 → 6 → 1 |

## Machine Cell Organization and Design

**15.9** Four machines used to produce a family of parts are to be arranged into a GT cell. The From–To data for the parts processed by the machines are shown in the table below. (a) Determine the most logical sequence of machines for this data using Hollier Method 1. (b) Construct the flow diagram for the data, showing where and how many parts enter and exit the system. (c) Compute the percentage of in-sequence moves and the percentage of backtracking moves in the solution. (d) Develop a feasible layout plan for the cell.

| | To: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| From: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 40 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 4 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 |

**15.10** Solve Problem 15.9 except using Hollier Method 2.

**15.11** In Problem 15.8, two logical machine groups are identified by rank order clustering. For each machine group, (a) determine the most logical sequence of machines for this data using Hollier Method 1. (b) Construct the flow diagram for the data. (c) Compute the percentage of in-sequence moves and the percentage of backtracking moves in the solution.

**15.12** Solve Problem 15.11 only using Hollier Method 2.

**15.13** Five machines will constitute a GT cell. The From–To data for the machines are shown in the table below. (a) Determine the most logical sequence of machines for this data, according to Hollier Method 1, and construct the flow diagram for the data, showing where and how many parts enter and exit the system. (b) Repeat step (a) only using Hollier Method 2. (c) Compute the percentage of in-sequence moves and the percentage of backtracking moves in the solution for the two methods. Which method is better, according to these measures? (d) Develop a feasible layout plan for the cell based on the better of the two Hollier methods.

| | To: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| From: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 0 | 10 | 80 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 85 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | 70 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | 0 | 75 | 0 | 20 | 0 |

**15.14** A GT machine cell contains three machines. Machine 1 feeds machine 2, which is the key machine in the cell. Machine 2 feeds machine 3. The cell is set up to produce a family of five parts (A, B, C, D, and E). The operation times for each part at each machine are given in the table below. The products are to be produced in the ratios 4:3:2:2:1, respectively. (a) If 35 hrs/wk are worked, determine how many of each product will be made by the cell. (b) What is the utilization of each machine in the cell?

| | Operation Time (min) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Part* | *Machine 1* | *Machine 2* | *Machine 3* |
| A | 4.0 | 15.0 | 10.0 |
| B | 15.0 | 18.0 | 7.0 |
| C | 26.0 | 20.0 | 15.0 |
| D | 15.0 | 20.0 | 10.0 |
| E | 8.0 | 16.0 | 10.0 |

**15.15** This problem is concerned with the design of a GT cell to machine the components for a family of parts. The parts come in several different sizes, and the cell will be designed to quickly change over from one size to the next. This will be accomplished using fast-change fixtures and distributed numerical control (DNC) to download the NC programs from the plant computer to the CNC machines in the cell. The parts are rotational type, so the cell must be able to perform turning, boring, facing, drilling, and cylindrical grinding operations. Accordingly, there will be several machine tools in the cell, of types and numbers to be specified by the designer. To transfer parts between machines in the cell, the designer may elect to use a belt or similar conveyor system. Any conveyor equipment of this type will be 0.4 m wide. The arrangement of the various pieces of equipment in the cell is the principal problem to be considered. The raw workparts will be delivered into the machine cell on a belt conveyor. The finished parts must be deposited onto a conveyor that delivers them to the assembly department. The input and output conveyors are 0.4 m wide, and the designer must specify where they enter and exit the cell. The parts are currently machined by conventional methods in a process-type layout. In the current production method, there are seven machines involved, but two of the machines are duplicates. From-To data have been collected for the jobs that are relevant to this problem.

| | To: | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *From:* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* | *7* | *Parts Out* |
| 1 | 0 | 112 | 0 | 61 | 59 | 53 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 226 | 0 | 45 |
| 3 | 74 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 31 | 0 | 180 | 0 |
| 4 | 0 | 82 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 5 | 16 |
| 5 | 0 | 73 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 14 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | C | 0 | 0 | 325 |
| 7 | 174 | 16 | 20 | 30 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Parts in | 25 | 0 | 300 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 75 | |

The From-To data indicate the number of workparts moved between machines during a typical 40-hr week. The data refer to the parts considered in the case. The two categories "parts in" and "parts out" indicate parts entering and exiting the seven-machine group. A total of 400 parts on average are processed through the seven machines each week. However, as indicated by the data, not all 400 parts are processed by every machine. Machines 4 and 5 are identical, and assignment of parts to these machines is arbitrary. Average production rate capacity on each of the machines for the particular distribution of this parts family is given in the table below. Also given are the floor space dimensions of each machine in meters. Assume that all loading and unloading operations take place in the center of the machine.

| *Machine* | *Operation* | *Production Rate (pc/hr)* | *Machine Dimensions* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Turn outside diameter | 9 | 3.5 m × 1.5 m |
| 2 | Bore inside diameter | 15 | 3.0 m × 1.6 m |
| 3 | Face ends | 10 | 2.5 m × 1.5 m |
| 4 | Grind outside diameter | 12 | 3.0 m × 1.5 m |
| 5 | Grind outside diameter | 12 | 3.0 m × 1.5 m |
| 6 | Inspect | 5 | Bench 1.5 m × 1.5 m |
| 7 | Drill | 9 | 1.5 m × 2.5 m |

Operation 6 is currently a manual inspection operation. It is anticipated that this manual station will be replaced by a coordinate measuring machine (CMM). This automated inspection machine will triple throughput rate to 15 parts/hr from 5 parts/hr for the manual method. The floor space dimensions of the CMM are 2.0 m × 1.6 m. All other machines currently listed are to be candidates for inclusion in the new machine cell. (a) Analyze the problem and determine the most appropriate sequence of machines in the cell using the data contained in the From-To chart. (b) Construct the flow diagram for the cell, showing where and how many parts enter and exit the cell. (c) Determine the utilization and production capacity of the machines in the cell as you have designed it. (d) Prepare a layout (top view) drawing of the GT cell, showing the machines, the robot(s), and any other pieces of equipment in the cell. (e) Write a one-page (or less) description of the cell, explaining the basis of your design and why the cell is arranged as it is.

# chapter 16

# Flexible Manufacturing Systems

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



The flexible manufacturing system (FMS) was identified in the last chapter as one of the machine cell types used to implement group technology. It is the most automated and technologically sophisticated of the GT cells. In our classification scheme for manufacturing systems (Section 13.2), an FMS typically possesses multiple automated stations and is capable of variable routings among stations (type II A).[1] Its flexibility allows it to operate as a mixed model system (case X for part or product variety). An FMS integrates into one highly automated manufacturing system many of the concepts and technologies discussed in previous chapters, including: flexible automation (Section 1.3.1), CNC machines (Chapters 6 and 14), distributed computer control (Section 6.3), automated material handling and storage (Chapters 10 and 11), and group technology (Chapter 15). The concept for FMSs originated in Britain in the early 1960s (Historical Note 16.1). The first FMS installations in the United States were made starting around 1967. These initial systems performed machining operations on families of parts using NC machine tools.

### Historical Note 16.1 Flexible manufacturing systems [23]–[25]

The flexible manufacturing system was first conceptualized for machining, and it required the prior development of NC. The concept is credited to David Williamson, a British engineer employed by Molins during the mid-1960s. Molins patented the invention (granted in 1965). The concept was called ***System 24*** because it was believed that the group of machine tools comprising the system could operate 24 hr/day, 16 hr of which would be unattended by human workers. The original concept included computer control of the NC machines, a variety of parts being produced, and tool magazines capable of holding various tools for different machining operations.

One of the first FMSs to be installed in the United States was a machining system at Ingersoll–Rand Company in Roanoke, Virginia, in the late 1960s by Sundstrand (see Example 16.1). Other systems introduced soon after included a Kearney & Trecker FMS at Caterpillar Tractor and Cincinnati Milacron's "Variable Mission System." Most of the early FMS installations in the United States were in large companies, such as Ingersoll-Rand, Caterpillar, John Deere, and General Electric Co. These large companies had the financial resources to make the major investments necessary, and they also possessed the prerequisite experience in NC machine tools, computer systems, and manufacturing systems to pioneer the new FMS technology.

FMSs were also installed in other countries around the world. In the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany, now Germany), a manufacturing system was developed in 1969 by Heidleberger Druckmaschinen in cooperation with the University of Stuttgart. In the (former) U.S.S.R (now Russia) an FMS was demonstrated at the 1972 Stanki Exhibition in Moscow. The first Japanese FMS was installed around the same time by Fuji Xerox.

By around 1985, the number of FMS installations throughout the world had increased to about 300. About 20–25% of these were located in the United States. As the importance of flexibility in manufacturing grows, the number of FMSs is expected to increase. In recent years, there has been an emphasis on smaller, less expensive flexible manufacturing cells.

FMS technology can be applied in situations similar to those identified for group technology and cellular manufacturing; specifically,

- Presently, the plant either (1) produces parts in ***batches*** or (2) uses ***manned GT cells*** and management wants to automate.
- It must be possible to group a portion of the parts made in the plant into ***part families***, whose similarities permit them to be processed on the machines in the FMS.

[1] Although most flexible manufacturing systems are type II A, other types are also possible, such as type I A and type III A. We shall discuss these alternatives later in the chapter.

Part similarities can be interpreted to mean that (1) the parts belong to a common product, and/or (2) the parts possess similar geometries. In either case, the processing requirements of the parts must be sufficiently similar to allow them to be made on the FMS.

- The parts or products made by the facility are in the ***mid-volume, mid-variety production range***. The appropriate production volume range is 5000–75,000 parts/yr [18]. If annual production is below this range, an FMS is likely to be an expensive alternative. If production volume is above this range, then a more specialized production system should probably be considered.

The differences between implementing a manually operated machine cell and installing an FMS are: (1) the FMS requires a significantly greater capital investment because new equipment is being installed rather than existing equipment being rearranged, and (2) the FMS is technologically more sophisticated for the human resources who must make it work. However, the potential benefits are substantial. The benefits that can be expected from an FMS include:

- increased machine utilization
- fewer machines required
- reduction in factory floor space required
- greater responsiveness to change
- reduced inventory requirements
- lower manufacturing lead times
- reduced direct labor requirements and higher labor productivity
- opportunity for unattended production

We elaborate on these benefits in Section 16.3.2.

In this chapter, we define and discuss flexible FMSs: what makes them flexible, their components, their applications, and considerations for implementing the technology. In the final section, we present a mathematical model for assessing the performance of FMSs.

## 16.1 WHAT IS AN FMS?

A ***flexible manufacturing system*** (FMS) is a highly automated GT machine cell, consisting of a group of processing workstations (usually CNC machine tools), interconnected by an automated material handling and storage system, and controlled by a distributed computer system. The reason the FMS is called ***flexible*** is that it is capable of processing a variety of different part styles simultaneously at the various workstations, and the mix of part styles and quantities of production can be adjusted in response to changing demand patterns. The FMS is most suited for the mid-variety, mid-volume production range (refer to Figure 1.7).

The initials FMS are sometimes used to denote the term ***flexible machining system***. The machining process is presently the largest application area for FMS technology. However, it seems appropriate to interpret FMS in its broader meaning, allowing for a wide range of possible applications beyond machining.

An FMS relies on the principles of group technology. No manufacturing system can be completely flexible. There are limits to the range of parts or products that can be made in an FMS. Accordingly, an FMS is designed to produce parts (or products) within a defined range of styles, sizes, and processes. In other words, an FMS is capable of producing a single part family or a limited range of part families.

A more appropriate term for an FMS would be ***flexible automated manufacturing system***. The use of the word "automated" would distinguish this type of production technology from other manufacturing systems that are flexible but not automated, such as a manned GT machine cell. On the other hand, the word "flexible" would distinguish it from other manufacturing systems that are highly automated but not flexible, such as a conventional transfer line. However, the existing terminology is well established.

### 16.1.1 What Makes It Flexible?

The issue of manufacturing system flexibility was discussed previously in Section 13.2.4. In that discussion, we identified three capabilities that a manufacturing system must possess to be flexible: (1) the ablility to identify and distinguish among the different part or product styles processed by the system, (2) quick changeover of operating instructions, and (3) quick changeover of physical setup. Flexibility is an attribute that applies to both manual and automated systems. In manual systems, the human workers are often the enablers of the system's flexibility.

To develop the concept of flexibility in an automated manufacturing system, consider a machine cell consisting of two CNC machine tools that are loaded and unloaded by an industrial robot from a parts carousel, perhaps in the arrangement depicted in Figure 16.1. The cell operates unattended for extended periods of time. Periodically, a worker must unload completed parts from the carousel and replace them with new workparts. By any definition, this is an automated manufacturing cell, but is it a flexible manufacturing cell? One might argue that yes, it is flexible, since the cell consists of CNC machine tools, and CNC machines are flexible because they can be programmed to machine different

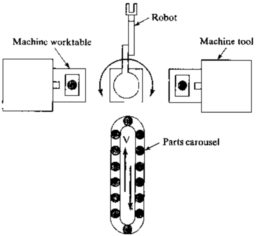



**Figure 16.1** Automated manufacturing cell with two machine tools and robot. Is it a flexible cell?

part configurations. However, if the cell only operates in a batch mode, in which the same part style is produced by both machines in lots of several dozen (or several hundred) units, then this does not qualify as flexible manufacturing.

To qualify as being flexible, a manufacturing system should satisfy several criteria. The following are four reasonable tests of flexibility in an automated manufacturing system:

1. ***Part variety test.*** Can the system process different part styles in a nonbatch mode?
2. ***Schedule change test.*** Can the system readily accept changes in production schedule, and changes in either part mix or production quantities?
3. ***Error recovery test.*** Can the system recover gracefully from equipment malfunctions and breakdowns, so that production is not completely disrupted?
4. ***New part test.*** Can new part designs be introduced into the existing product mix with relative ease?

If the answer to all of these questions is "yes" for a given manufacturing system, then the system can be considered flexible. The most important criteria are (1) and (2). Criteria (3) and (4) are softer and can be implemented at various levels. In fact, introduction of new part designs is not a consideration in some FMSs; such systems are designed to produce a part family whose members are all known in advance.

If the automated system does not meet at least the first three tests, it should not be classified as an FMS. Getting back to our illustration, the robotic work cell satisfies the criteria if it: (1) can machine different part configurations in a mix rather than in batches; (2) permits changes in production schedule and part mix; (3) is capable of continuing to operate even though one machine experiences a breakdown (e.g., while repairs are being made on the broken machine, its work is temporarily reassigned to the other machine); and (4) as new part designs are developed, NC part programs are written off-line and then downloaded to the system for execution. This fourth capability requires that the new part is within the part family intended for the FMS, so that the tooling used by the CNC machines as well as the end effector of the robot are suited to the new part design.

Over the years, researchers and practitioners have attempted to define manufacturing flexibility. These attempts are documented in several of our references [3], [7], [23], and [26]. The result of these efforts is the conclusion that flexibility in manufacturing has multiple dimensions; there are various types of flexibility. Table 16.1 defines these flexibility types and lists the kinds of factors on which they depend.

To a significant degree, the types of flexibility in Table 16.1 are alternative ways of stating our preceding list of flexibility tests for a manufacturing system. The correlations are indicated in Table 16.2.

### 16.1.2 Types of FMS

Having considered the issue of flexibility and the different types of flexibility that are exhibited by manufacturing systems, let us now consider the various types of FMSs. Each FMS is designed for a specific application, that is, a specific family of parts and processes. Therefore, each FMS is custom engineered; each FMS is unique. Given these circumstances, one would expect to find a great variety of system designs to satisfy a wide variety of application requirements.

**TABLE 16.1** Types of Flexibility in Manufacturing. These Concepts of Flexibility Are Not Limited to Flexible Manufacturing Systems. They Apply to Both Manned and Automated Systems. Sources: [3], [7], [23], [26]

| *Flexibility Type* | *Definition* | *Depends on Factors Such As:* |
|---|---|---|
| ***Machine flexibility*** | Capability to adapt a given machine (workstation) in the system to a wide range of production operations and part styles. The greater the range of operations and part styles, the greater the machine flexibility. | Setup or changeover time.<br>Ease of machine reprogramming (ease with which part programs can be downloaded to machines).<br>Tool storage capacity of machines.<br>Skill and versatility of workers in the system. |
| ***Production flexibility*** | The range or universe of part styles that can be produced on the system. | Machine flexibility of individual stations.<br>Range of machine flexibilities of all stations in the system. |
| ***Mix flexibility*** | Ability to change the product mix while maintaining the same total production quantity; that is, producing the same parts only in different proportions. | Similarity of parts in the mix.<br>Relative work content times of parts produced.<br>Machine flexibility. |
| ***Product flexibility*** | Ease with which design changes can be accommodated. Ease with which new products can be introduced. | How closely the new part design matches the existing part family.<br>Off-line part program preparation.<br>Machine flexibility. |
| ***Routing flexibility*** | Capacity to produce parts through alternative workstation sequences in response to equipment breakdowns, tool failures, and other interruptions at individual stations. | Similarity of parts in the mix.<br>Similarity of workstations.<br>Duplication of workstations.<br>Cross-training of manual workers.<br>Common tooling. |
| ***Volume flexibility*** | Ability to economically produce parts in high and low total quantities of production, given the fixed investment in the system. | Level of manual labor performing production.<br>Amount invested in capital equipment. |
| ***Expansion flexibility*** | Ease with which the system can be expanded to increase total production quantities. | Expense of adding workstations.<br>Ease with which layout can be expanded.<br>Type of part handling system used.<br>Ease with which properly trained workers can be added. |

Flexible manufacturing systems can be distinguished according to the kinds of operations they perform: (1) ***processing operations*** or (2) ***assembly operations*** (Section 2.2.1). An FMS is usually designed to perform one or the other but rarely both. A difference that is applicable to machining systems is whether the system will process ***rotational parts*** or ***nonrotational parts*** (Section 13.2.1). Flexible machining systems with multiple stations that process rotational parts are much less common than systems that process nonrotational parts. Two other ways to classify FMSs are by: (1) number of machines and (2) level of flexibility.

**TABLE 16.2** Comparison of Four Criteria of Flexibility in a Manufacturing System and the Seven Types of Flexibility

| *Flexibility Tests or Criteria* | *Type of Flexibility (Table 16.1)* |
|---|---|
| 1. ***Part variety test.*** Can the system process different part styles in a non-batch mode? | Machine flexibility<br>Production flexibility |
| 2. ***Schedule change test.*** Can the system readily accept changes in production schedule, changes in either part mix or production quantities? | Mix flexibility<br>Volume flexibility<br>Expansion flexibility |
| 3. ***Error recovery test.*** Can the system recover gracefully from equipment malfunctions and breakdowns, so that production is not completely disrupted? | Routing flexibility |
| 4. ***New part test.*** Can new part designs be introduced into the existing product mix with relative ease? | Product flexibility |

*Number of Machines.* Flexible manufacturing systems can be distinguished according to the number of machines in the system. The following are typical categories:

- single machine cell (type I A in our classification scheme of Section 13.2)
- flexible manufacturing cell (usually type II A, sometimes type III A, in our classification scheme of Section 13.2)
- flexible manufacturing system (usually type II A, sometimes type III A, in our classification scheme of Section 13.2)

A ***single machine cell*** (SMC) consists of one CNC machining center combined with a parts storage system for unattended operation (Section 14.2), as in Figure 16.2. Completed parts are periodically unloaded from the parts storage unit, and raw workparts are loaded into it. The cell can be designed to operate in either a batch mode or a flexible mode or in combinations of the two. When operated in a batch mode, the machine processes parts of a single style in specified lot sizes and is then changed over to process a batch of the next part style. When operated in a flexible mode, the system satisfies three of the four flexibility tests (Section 16.1.1). It is capable of (1) processing different part styles, (2) responding to changes in production schedule, and (4) accepting new part introductions. Criterion (3), error recovery, cannot be satisfied because if the single machine breaks down, production stops.

A ***flexible manufacturing cell*** (FMC) consists of two or three processing workstations (typically CNC machining centers or turning centers) plus a part handling system. The part handling system is connected to a load/unload station. In addition, the handling system usually includes a limited parts storage capacity. One possible FMC is illustrated in Figure 16.3. A flexible manufacturing cell satisfies the four flexibility tests discussed previously.

A ***flexible manufacturing system*** (FMS) has four or more processing workstations connected mechanically by a common part handling system and electronically by a distributed computer system. Thus, an important distinction between an FMS and an FMC is

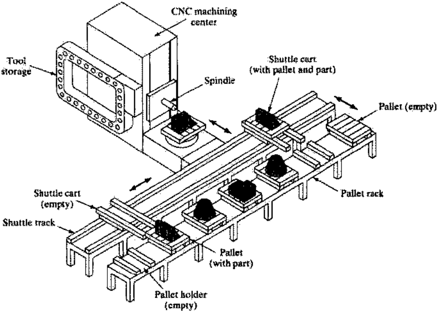



**Figure 16.2** Single machine cell consisting of one CNC machining center and parts storage unit.

the number of machines: an FMC has two or three machines, while an FMS has four or more.[2] A second difference is that the FMS generally includes nonprocessing workstations that support production but do not directly participate in it. These other stations include part/pallet washing stations, coordinate measuring machines, and so on. A third difference is that the computer control system of an FMS is generally larger and more sophisticated, often including functions not always found in a cell, such as diagnostics and tool monitoring. These additional functions are needed more in an FMS than in an FMC because the FMS is more complex.

Some of the distinguishing characteristics of the three categories of flexible manufacturing cells and systems are summarized in Figure 16.4. Table 16.3 compares the three systems in terms of the four flexibility tests.

*Level of Flexibility.* Another classification of FMS is according to the level of flexibility designed into the system. This method of classification can be applied to systems

[2] We have defined the dividing line that separates an FMS from an FMC to be four machines. It should be noted that not all practitioners would agree with that dividing line; some might prefer a higher value while a few would prefer a lower number. Also, the distinction between cell and system seems to apply only to flexible manufacturing systems that are automated. The manned counterparts of these systems discussed in the previous chapter are always referred to as cells, no matter how many workstations are included.

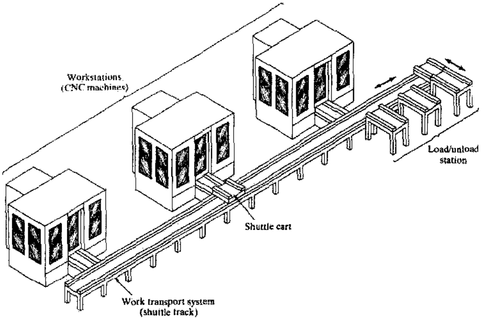



**Figure 16.3** A flexible manufacturing cell consisting of three identical processing stations (CNC machining centers), a load/unload station, and a part handling system.

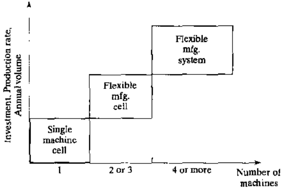



**Figure 16.4** Features of the three categories of flexible cells and systems.

with any number of workstations, but its application seems most common with FMCs and FMSs. Two categories are distinguished here:

- dedicated FMS
- random-order FMS

**TABLE 16.3** Flexibility Criteria Applied to the Three Types of Manufacturing Cells and Systems

| | Flexibility Criteria (Tests of Flexibility) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *System Type* | *1. Part Variety* | *2. Schedule Change* | *3. Error Recovery* | *4. New Part* |
| Single machine cell (SMC) | Yes, but processing is sequential, not simultaneous. | Yes | Limited recovery due to only one machine. | Yes |
| Flexible manufacturing cell (FMC) | Yes, simultaneous production of different parts. | Yes | Error recovery limited by fewer machines than FMS. | Yes |
| Flexible manufacturing system (FMS) | Yes, simultaneous production of different parts. | Yes | Machine redundancy minimizes effect of machine breakdowns. | Yes |

A ***dedicated FMS*** is designed to produce a limited variety of part styles, and the complete universe of parts to be made on the system is known in advance. The term ***special manufacturing system*** has also been used in reference to this FMS type (e.g., [24]). The part family is likely to be based on product commonality rather than geometric similarity. The product design is considered stable, and so the system can be designed with a certain amount of process specialization to make the operations more efficient. Instead of using general-purpose machines, the machines can be designed for the specific processes required to make the limited part family, thus increasing the production rate of the system. In some instances, the machine sequence may be identical or nearly identical for all parts processed, and so a transfer line may be appropriate, in which the workstations possess the necessary flexibility to process the different parts in the mix. Indeed, the term ***flexible transfer line*** is sometimes used for this case [19].

A ***random-order FMS*** is more appropriate when the part family is large, there are substantial variations in part configurations, there will be new part designs introduced into the system and engineering changes in parts currently produced, and the production schedule is subject to change from day-to-day. To accommodate these variations, the random-order FMS must be more flexible than the dedicated FMS. It is equipped with general-purpose machines to deal with the variations in product and is capable of processing parts in various sequences (random-order). A more sophisticated computer control system is required for this FMS type.

We see in these two system types the trade-off between flexibility and productivity. The dedicated FMS is less flexible but more capable of higher production rates. The random-order FMS is more flexible but at the price of lower production rates. A comparison of the features of these two FMS types is presented in Figure 16.5. Table 16.4 presents a comparison of the dedicated FMS and random-order FMS in terms of the four flexibility tests.

## 16.2 FMS COMPONENTS

As indicated in our definition, there are several basic components of an FMS: (1) workstations, (2) material handling and storage system, and (3) computer control system. In addition, even though an FMS is highly automated, (4) people are required to manage and operate the system. We discuss these four FMS components in this section.

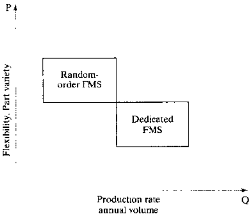



**Figure 16.5** Comparison of dedicated and random-order FMS types.

**TABLE 16.4** Flexibility Criteria Applied to Dedicated FMS and Random-Order FMS

| *System Type* | *Flexibility Criteria (Tests of Flexibility)* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1. Part Variety* | *2. Schedule Change* | *3. Error recovery* | *4. New part* |
| Dedicated FMS | Limited. All parts known in advance. | Limited changes can be tolerated. | Limited by sequential processes. | No. New part introductions difficult. |
| Random-order FMS | Yes. Substantial part variations possible. | Frequent and significant changes possible. | Machine redundancy minimizes effect of machine breakdowns. | Yes. System designed for new part introductions. |

### 16.2.1 Workstations

The processing or assembly equipment used in an FMS depends on the type of work accomplished by the system. In a system designed for machining operations, the principle types of processing station are CNC machine tools. However, the FMS concept is also applicable to various other processes as well. Following are the types of workstations typically found in an FMS.

*Load/Unload Stations.* The load/unload station is the physical interface between the FMS and the rest of the factory. Raw workparts enter the system at this point, and finished parts exit the system from here. Loading and unloading can be accomplished either manually or by automated handling systems. Manual loading and unloading is prevalent in most FMSs today. The load/unload station should be ergonomically designed to permit convenient and safe movement of workparts. For parts that are too heavy to lift by the operator, mechanized cranes and other handling devices are installed to assist the operator. A certain level of cleanliness must be maintained at the workplace, and air hoses or other washing facilities are often required to flush away chips and ensure clean mounting and locating points. The station is often raised slightly above floor level using an open-grid platform to permit chips and cutting fluid to drop through the openings for subsequent recycling or disposal.

The load/unload station should include a data entry unit and monitor for communication between the operator and the computer system. Instructions must be given to the operator regarding which part to load onto the next pallet to adhere to the production schedule. In cases when different pallets are required for different parts, the correct pallet must be supplied to the station. In cases where modular fixturing is used, the correct fixture must be specified, and the required components and tools must be available at the workstation to build it. When the part loading procedure has been completed, the handling system must proceed to launch the pallet into the system; however, the handling system must be prevented from moving the pallet while the operator is still working. All of these circumstances require communication between the computer system and the operator at the load/unload station.

*Machining Stations.* The most common applications of FMSs are machining operations. The workstations used in these systems are therefore predominantly CNC machine tools. Most common is the ***CNC machining center*** (Section 14.3.3); in particular, the horizontal machining center. CNC machining centers possess features that make them compatible with the FMS, including automatic tool changing and tool storage, use of palletized workparts, CNC, and capacity for distributed numerical control (DNC) (Section 6.3). Machining centers can be ordered with automatic pallet changers that can be readily interfaced with the FMS part handling system. Machining centers are generally used for nonrotational parts. For rotational parts, ***turning centers*** are used; and for parts that are mostly rotational but require multitooth rotational cutters (milling and drilling), ***mill-turn centers*** can be used.

In some machining systems, the types of operations performed are concentrated in a certain category, such as milling or turning. For milling, special ***milling machine modules*** can be used to achieve higher production levels than a machining center is capable of. The milling module can be vertical spindle, horizontal spindle, or multiple spindle. For turning operations, special ***turning modules*** can be designed for the FMS. In conventional turning, the workpiece is rotated against a tool that is held in the machine and fed in a direction parallel to the axis of work rotation. Parts made on most FMSs are usually nonrotational; however, they may require some turning in their process sequence. For these cases, the parts are held in a pallet fixture throughout processing on the FMS, and a turning module is designed to rotate the single point tool around the work.

*Other Processing Stations.* The FMS concept has been applied to other processing operations in addition to machining. One such application is sheet metal fabrication processes, reported in [44]. The processing workstations consist of pressworking operations, such as punching, shearing, and certain bending and forming processes. Also, flexible systems are being developed to automate the forging process [41]. Forging is traditionally a very labor-intensive operation. The workstations in the system consist principally of a heating furnace, a forging press, and a trimming station.

*Assembly.* Some FMSs are designed to perform assembly operations. Flexible automated assembly systems are being developed to replace manual labor in the assembly of products typically made in batches. Industrial robots are often used as the automated workstations in these flexible assembly systems. They can be programmed to perform tasks with variations in sequence and motion pattern to accommodate the different product styles assembled in the system. Other examples of flexible assembly workstations are the programmable component placement machines widely used in electronics assembly.

*Other Stations and Equipment.* Inspection can be incorporated into an FMS, either by including an inspection operation at a processing workstation or by including a station specifically designed for inspection. Coordinate measuring machines (Section 23.4), special inspection probes that can be used in a machine tool spindle (Section 23.4.6), and machine vision (Section 23.6) are three possible technologies for performing inspection on an FMS. Inspection has been found to be particularly important in flexible assembly systems to ensure that components have been properly added at the workstations. We examine the topic of automated inspection in more detail in Chapter 22 (Section 22.3).

In addition to the above, other operations and functions are often accomplished on an FMS. These include stations for cleaning parts and/or pallet fixtures, central coolant delivery systems for the entire FMS, and centralized chip removal systems often installed below floor level.

### 16.2.2 Material Handling and Storage System

The second major component of an FMS is its material handling and storage system. In this subsection, we discuss the functions of the handling system, material handling equipment typically used in an FMS, and types of FMS layout.

*Functions of the Handling System.* The material handling and storage system in an FMS performs the following functions:

- ***Random, independent movement of workparts between stations.*** This means that parts must be capable of moving from any one machine in the system to any other machine, to provide various routing alternatives for the different parts and to make machine substitutions when certain stations are busy.
- ***Handle a variety of workpart configurations.*** For prismatic parts, this is usually accomplished by using modular pallet fixtures in the handling system. The fixture is located on the top face of the pallet and is designed to accommodate different part configurations by means of common components, quick–change features, and other devices that permit a rapid build–up of the fixture for a given part. The base of the pallet is designed for the material handling system. For rotational parts, industrial robots are often used to load and unload the turning machines and to move parts between stations.
- ***Temporary storage.*** The number of parts in the FMS will typically exceed the number of parts actually being processed at any moment. Thus, each station has a small queue of parts waiting to be processed, which helps to increase machine utilization.
- ***Convenient access for loading and unloading workparts.*** The handling system must include locations for load/unload stations.
- ***Compatible with computer control.*** The handling system must be capable of being controlled directly by the computer system to direct it to the various workstations, load/unload stations, and storage areas.

*Material Handling Equipment.* The types of material handling systems used to transfer parts between stations in an FMS include a variety of conventional material transport equipment (Chapter 10), in-line transfer mechanisms (Section 18.1.2), and industrial robots (Chapter 7). The material handling function in an FMS is often shared between two systems: (1) a primary handling system and (2) a secondary handling system. The ***primary handling system*** establishes the basic layout of the FMS and is responsible for moving workparts between stations in the system. The types of material handling equipment typically utilized for FMS layouts are summarized in Table 16.5.

The ***secondary handling system*** consists of transfer devices, automatic pallet changers, and similar mechanisms located at the workstations in the FMS. The function of the secondary handling system is to transfer work from the primary system to the machine tool or other processing station and to position the parts with sufficient accuracy and repeatability to perform the processing or assembly operation. Other purposes served by the secondary handling system include: (1) reorientation of the workpart if necessary to present the surface that is to be processed and (2) buffer storage of parts to minimize work change time and maximize station utilization. In some FMS installations, the positioning and registration requirements at the individual workstations are satisfied by the primary work handling system. In these cases, the secondary handling system is not included.

The primary handling system is sometimes supported by an automated storage system (Section 11.4). An example of storage in an FMS is illustrated in Figure 16.6. The FMS is integrated with an automated storage/retrieval system (AS/RS), and the S/R machine serves the work handling function for the workstations as well as delivering parts to and from the storage racks.

*FMS Layout Configurations.* The material handling system establishes the FMS layout. Most layout configurations found in today's FMSs can be divided into five categories: (1) in-line layout, (2) loop layout, (3) ladder layout, (4) open field layout, and (5) robot-centered cell.

In the ***in-line layout***, the machines and handling system are arranged in a straight line, as illustrated in Figures 16.6 and 16.7. In its simplest form, the parts progress from one workstation to the next in a well-defined sequence, with work always moving in one direction and no back flow, as in Figure 16.7(a). The operation of this type of system is similar to a transfer line (Chapter 18), except that a variety of workparts are processed in the

**TABLE 16.5** Material Handling Equipment Typically Used as the Primary Handling System for the Five FMS Layouts *(Chapter or Section Identified in Parentheses)*

| *Layout Configuration* | *Typical Material Handling System (Chapter or Section)* |
|---|---|
| In-line layout | In-line transfer system (Section 18.1.2)<br>Conveyor system (Section 10.4)<br>Rail guided vehicle system (Section 10.3) |
| Loop layout | Conveyor system (Section 10.4)<br>In-floor towline carts (Section 10.4) |
| Ladder layout | Conveyor system (Section 10.4)<br>Automated guided vehicle system (Section 10.2)<br>Rail guided vehicle system (Section 10.3) |
| Open field layout | Automated guided vehicle system (Section 10.2)<br>In-floor towline carts (Section 10.4) |
| Robot-centered layout | Industrial robot (Chapter 7) |

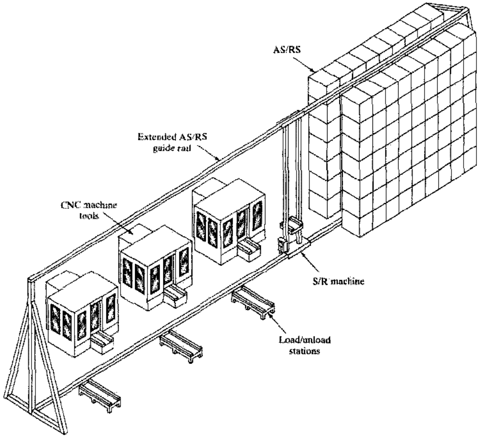
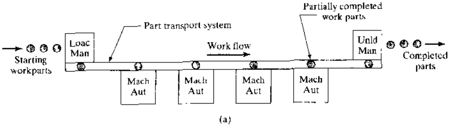



**Figure 16.6** FMS that incorporates an automated storage and retrieval system for handling and storing parts. Key: AS/RS = automated storage/retrieval system, S/R = storage/retrieval machine (also known as a stacker crane), CNC = computer numerical control.

system. Since all work units follow the same routing sequence, even though the processing varies at each station, this system is classified as type III A in our manufacturing systems classification system. For in-line systems requiring greater routing flexibility, a linear transfer system that permits movement in two directions can be installed. One possible arrangement for doing this is shown in Figure 16.7(b), in which a secondary work handling system is provided at each workstation to separate most of the parts from the primary line. Because of the variations in routings, this is a type II A manufacturing system.

In the ***loop layout***, the workstations are organized in a loop that is served by a part handling system in the same shape, as shown in Figure 16.8(a). Parts usually flow in one direction around the loop, with the capability to stop and be transferred to any station. A sec-



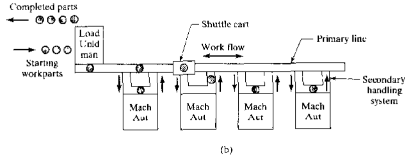




**Figure 16.7** In-line FMS layouts: (a) one direction flow similar to a transfer line and (b) linear transfer system with secondary part handling system at each station to facilitate flow in two directions. Key: Load = parts loading station, UnLd = parts unloading station, Mach = machining station, Man = manual station, Aut = automated station.

ondary handling system is shown at each workstation to permit parts to move without obstruction around the loop. The load/unload station(s) are typically located at one end of the loop. An alternative form of loop layout is the ***rectangular layout***. As shown in Figure 16.8(b), this arrangement might be used to return pallets to the starting position in a straight line machine arrangement.

The ***ladder layout*** consists of a loop with rungs between the straight sections of the loop, on which workstations are located, as shown in Figure 16.9. The rungs increase the possible ways of getting from one machine to the next, and obviate the need for a secondary handling system. This reduces average travel distance and minimizes congestion in the handling system, thereby reducing transport time between workstations.

The ***open field layout*** consists of multiple loops and ladders and may include sidings as well, as illustrated in Figure 16.10. This layout type is generally appropriate for processing a large family of parts. The number of different machine types may be limited, and parts are routed to different workstations depending on which one becomes available first.

The ***robot-centered cell*** (Figure 16.1) uses one or more robots as the material handling system. Industrial robots can be equipped with grippers that make them well suited for the handling of rotational parts, and robot-centered FMS layouts are often used to process cylindrical or disk-shaped parts.

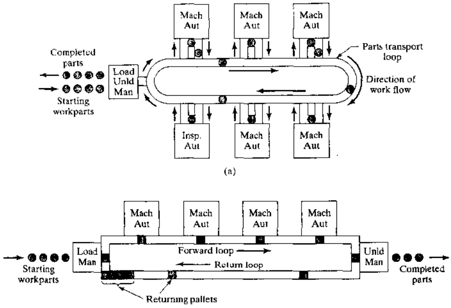



**Figure 16.8** (a) FMS loop layout with secondary part handling system at each station to allow unobstructed flow on loop and (b) rectangular layout for recirculation of pallets to the first workstation in the sequence. Key: Load = parts loading station, UnLd = parts unloading station, Mach = machining station, Man = manual station, Aut = automated station.

### 16.2.3 Computer Control System

The FMS includes a distributed computer system that is interfaced to the workstations, material handling system, and other hardware components. A typical FMS computer system consists of a central computer and microcomputers controlling the individual machines and other components. The central computer coordinates the activities of the components to achieve smooth overall operation of the system. Functions performed by the FMS computer control system can be grouped into the following categories:

1. ***Workstation control.*** In a fully automated FMS, the individual processing or assembly stations generally operate under some form of computer control. For a machining system, CNC is used to control the individual machine tools.
2. ***Distribution of control instructions to workstations.*** Some form of central intelligence is also required to coordinate the processing at individual stations. In a machining FMS, part programs must be downloaded to machines, and DNC is used for this purpose. The DNC system stores the programs, allows submission of new programs and editing of existing programs as needed, and performs other DNC functions (Section 6.3).

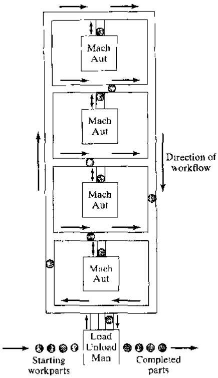



**Figure 16.9** FMS ladder layout. Key: Load = parts loading station, UnLd = parts unloading station, Mach = machining station, Man = manual station, Aut = automated station.

3. ***Production control.*** The part mix and rate at which the various parts are launched into the system must be managed. Input data required for production control includes desired daily production rates per part, numbers of raw workparts available, and number of applicable pallets.[3] The production control function is accomplished by routing an applicable pallet to the load/unload area and providing instructions to the operator for loading the desired workpart.
4. ***Traffic control.*** This refers to the management of the primary material handling system that moves workparts between stations. Traffic control is accomplished by actuating switches at branches and merging points, stopping parts at machine tool transfer locations, and moving pallets to load/unload stations.
5. ***Shuttle control.*** This control function is concerned with the operation and control of the secondary handling system at each workstation. Each shuttle must be coordinated with the primary handling system and synchronized with the operation of the machine tool it serves.

[3] The term ***applicable pallet*** refers to a pallet that is fixtured to accept a workpart of the desired type.

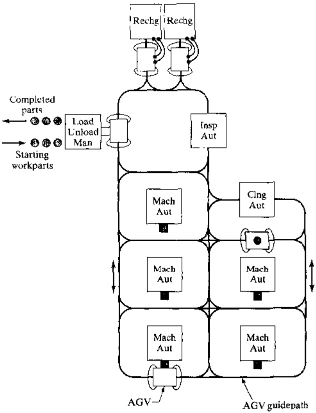



**Figure 16.10** Open field FMS layout. Key: Load = parts loading, UnLd = parts unloading, Mach = machining, Clng = cleaning, Insp = inspection, Man = manual, Aut = automated, AGV = automated guided vehicle. Rechg = battery recharging station for AGVs.

6. ***Workpiece monitoring.*** The computer must monitor the status of each cart and/or pallet in the primary and secondary handling systems as well as the status of each of the various workpiece types.
7. ***Tool control.*** In a machining system, cutting tools are required. Tool control is concerned with managing two aspects of the cutting tools:
   - ***Tool location.*** This involves keeping track of the cutting tools at each workstation. If one or more tools required to process a particular workpiece is not present at the station that is specified in the part's routing, the tool control subsystem takes one or both of the following actions: (a) determines whether an alternative workstation that has the required tool is available and/or (b) notifies the operator responsible for tooling in the system that the tool storage unit at the station must be loaded with the required cutter(s).

- ***Tool life monitoring.*** In this aspect of tool control, a tool life is specified to the computer for each cutting tool in the FMS. A record of the machining time usage is maintained for each of the tools, and when the cumulative machining time reaches the specified life of the tool, the operator is notified that a tool replacement is needed.

8. ***Performance monitoring and reporting.*** The computer control system is programmed to collect data on the operation and performance of the FMS. This data is periodically summarized, and reports are prepared for management on system performance. Some of the important reports that indicate FMS performance are listed in Table 16.6.
9. ***Diagnostics.*** This function is available to a greater or lesser degree on many manufacturing systems to indicate the probable source of the problem when a malfunction occurs. It can also be used to plan preventive maintenance in the system and to identify impending failures. The purpose of the diagnostics function is to reduce breakdowns and downtime and increase availability of the system.

The modular structure of the FMS application software for system control is illustrated in Figure 16.11. It should be noted that an FMS possesses the characteristic architecture of a DNC system. As in other DNC systems, two-way communication is used. Data and commands are sent from the central computer to the individual machines and other hardware components, and data on execution and performance are transmitted from the components back up to the central computer. In addition, an uplink from the FMS to the corporate host computer is provided.

### 16.2.4 Human Resources

One additional component in the FMS is human labor. Humans are needed to manage the operations of the FMS. Functions typically performed by humans include: (1) loading raw workparts into the system, (2) unloading finished parts (or assemblies) from the system, (3) changing and setting tools, (4) equipment maintenance and repair, (5) NC part programming in a machining system, (6) programming and operating the computer system, and (7) overall management of the system.

**TABLE 16.6** Typical FMS Performance Reports

| *Type of Report* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| ***Availability*** | Availability is a reliability measure. This report summarizes the uptime proportion of the workstations. Details such as reasons for downtime are included to identify recurring problem areas. |
| ***Utilization*** | This report summarizes the utilization of each workstation in the system as well as the average utilization of the FMS for specified periods (days, weeks, months). |
| ***Production performance*** | This report summarizes data on daily and weekly quantities of different parts produced by the FMS. The reports compare the actual quantities against the production schedule. |
| ***Tooling*** | Tooling reports provide information on various aspects of tool control, such as a listing of tools at each workstation and tool life status. |
| ***Status*** | The status report provides an instantaneous "snapshot" of the present condition of the FMS. Line supervision can request this report at any time to learn the current status of system operating parameters such as workstation utilization, availability (reliability), cumulative piece counts, pallets, and tooling. |

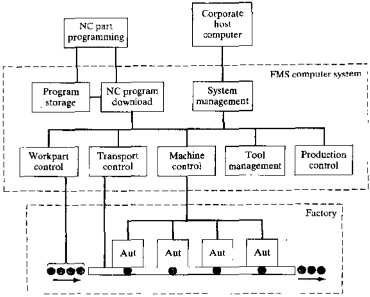



**Figure 16.11** Structure of FMS application software system. Key: NC = numerical control, Aut = automated workstation.

## 16.3 FMS APPLICATIONS AND BENEFITS

In this section, we explore the applications of FMSs and the benefits that result from these applications. Many of the findings from the industrial survey on cellular manufacturing (reported in Section 15.5.2) are pertinent to FMSs, and we refer the reader to that report [43].

### 16.3.1 FMS Applications

The concept of flexible automation is applicable to a variety of manufacturing operations. In this section, some of the important FMS applications are reviewed. FMS technology is most widely applied in machining operations. Other applications include sheet metal pressworking, forging, and assembly. Here some of the applications are examined using case study examples to illustrate.

*Flexible Machining Systems.* Historically, most of the applications of flexible machining systems have been in milling and drilling type operations (nonrotational parts), using NC and subsequently CNC machining centers. FMS applications for turning (rotational parts) were much less common until recently, and the systems that are installed tend to consist of fewer machines. For example, single machine cells consisting of parts storage units, part loading robots, and CNC turning centers are widely used today, although not always in a flexible mode. Let us explore some of the issues behind this anomaly in the development of flexible machining systems.

By contrast with rotational parts, nonrotational parts are often too heavy for a human operator to easily and quickly load into the machine tool. Accordingly, pallet fixtures were developed so that these parts could be loaded onto the pallet off-line and then the part-on-pallet could be moved into position in front of the machine tool spindle. Nonrotational parts also tend to be more expensive than rotational parts, and the manufacturing lead times tend to be longer. These factors provide a strong incentive to produce them as efficiently as possible, using advanced technologies such as FMSs. For these reasons, the technology for FMS milling and drilling applications is more mature today than for FMS turning applications.

**EXAMPLE 16.1 FMS at Ingersoll-Rand in Roanoke, Virginia**

One of the first FMS installations in the United States was at the Roanoke, Virginia, plant of the Tool and Hoist Division of Ingersoll-Rand Corp. The system was installed by Sundstrand in the late 1960s. It consists of two five-axis machining centers, two four-axis machining centers, and two four-axis drilling machines. The machines are each equipped with 60-tool storage drums and automatic tool changers and pallet changers. A powered roller conveyor system is used for the primary and secondary workpart handling systems. Three operators plus one foreman run the system three shifts. Up to 140 part numbers are machined on the system. The parts begin as cast iron and aluminum castings and are machined into motor cases, hoist casings, and so on. Part size capability ranges up to a 0.9 m cube (36.0 in). Production quantities for the various part numbers range from 12 per year to 20,000 per year. The layout of the system is presented in Figure 16.12.

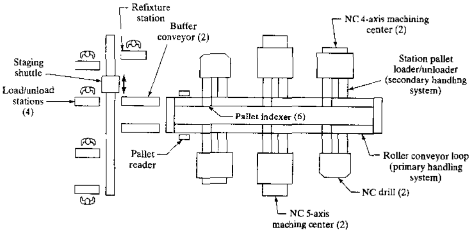



**Figure 16.12** Layout of Ingersoll-Rand FMS in Roanoke, Virginia.

---

**EXAMPLE 16.2 FMS at Avco-Lycoming**

An FMS was designed and installed by Kearney & Trecker Corporation at the Avco-Lycoming plant in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, to manufacture aluminum

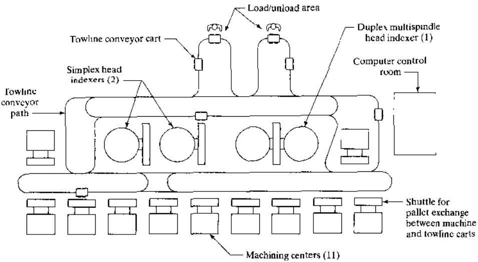



**Figure 16.13** FMS layout at Avco-Lycoming in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

crankcase halves for aircraft engines. The layout is an open field type and is illustrated in Figure 16.13. The handling of workparts between machines is performed by an in-floor towline cart system with a total of 28 pallet carts. The system contains 14 machine tools: one duplex multispindle head indexer, two simplex multispindle head indexers, and 11 machining centers. In a multispindle head indexer, machining heads are attached to an indexing mechanism that indexes (rotates in specified angular amounts) to bring the correct machining head into position to address the work. A simplex unit processes the work on one side only, while a duplex has two indexers on opposite sides of the work. Machining centers are described in Section 14.3.3.

**EXAMPLE 16.3 Vought Aerospace FMS**

An FMS installed at Vought Aerospace in Dallas, Texas, by Cincinnati Milacron is shown in Figure 16.14. The system is used to machine approximately 600 different aircraft components. The FMS consists of eight CNC horizontal machining centers plus inspection modules. Part handling is accomplished by an automated guided vehicle system using four vehicles. Loading and unloading of the system is done at two stations. These load/unload stations consist of storage carousels that permit parts to be stored on pallets for subsequent transfer to the machining stations by the AGVS. The system is capable of processing a sequence of single, one-of-a-kind parts in a continuous mode, permitting a complete set of components for one aircraft to be made efficiently without batching.

*Other FMS Applications.* Pressworking and forging are two other manufacturing processes in which efforts are being made to develop flexible automated systems. Refer-

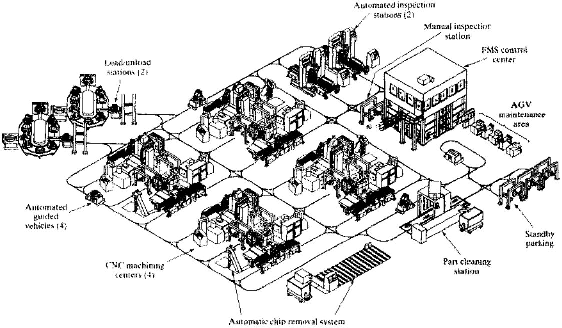



**Figure 16.14** FMS at Vought Aircraft (line drawing courtesy of Cincinnati Milacron).

ences [41] and [44] describe the FMS technologies involved. The following example illustrates the development efforts in the pressworking area.

**EXAMPLE 16.4 Flexible Fabricating System**

The term flexible fabricating system (FFS) is sometimes used in connection with systems that perform sheet metal pressworking operations. One FFS concept by Wiedemann is illustrated in Figure 16.15. The system is designed to unload sheet metal stock from the automated storage/retrieval system (AS/RS), move the stock by rail-guided cart to the CNC punch press operations, and then move the finished parts back to the AS/RS, all under computer control.

Flexible automation concepts can be applied to assembly operations. Although some examples have included industrial robots to perform the assembly tasks, the following example illustrates a flexible assembly system that makes minimal use of industrial robots.

**EXAMPLE 16.5 Assembly FMS at Allen-Bradley**

An FMS for assembly installed by Allen–Bradley Company is reported in [42]. The "flexible automated assembly line" produces motor starters in 125 model styles. The line boasts a 1-day manufacturing lead time on lot sizes as low as

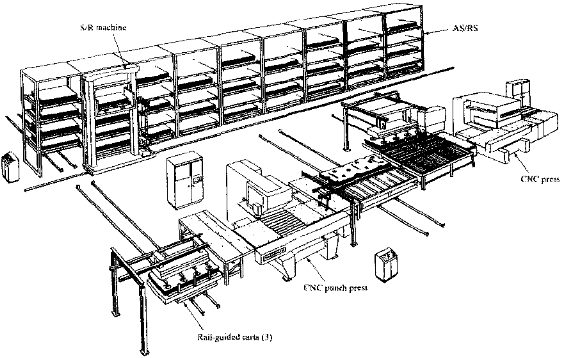



**Figure 16.15** Flexible fabricating system for automated sheet metal processing (based on line drawing provided courtesy of Wiedemann Division, Cross & Trecker Co.)

one and production rates of 600 units/hr. The system consists of 26 workstations that perform all assembly, subassembly, testing, and packaging required to make the product. The stations are linear and rotary indexing assembly machines with pick-and-place robots performing certain handling functions between the machines. 100% automated testing at each step in the process is used to achieve very high quality levels. The flexible assembly line is controlled by a system of Allen-Bradley programmable logic controllers.

### 16.3.2 FMS Benefits

A number of benefits can be expected in successful FMS applications. The principal benefits are the following:

- ***Increased machine utilization.*** FMSs achieve a higher average utilization than machines in a conventional batch production machine shop. Reasons for this include:

(1) 24 hr/day operation, (2) automatic tool changing at machine tools, (3) automatic pallet changing at workstations, (4) queues of parts at stations, and (5) dynamic scheduling of production that takes into account irregularities from normal operations. It should be possible to approach 80–90% asset utilization by implementing FMS technology [23].

- ***Fewer machines required*** Because of higher machine utilization, fewer machines are required.
- ***Reduction in factory floor space required.*** Compared with a job shop of equivalent capacity, an FMS generally requires less floor area. Reductions in floor space requirements are estimated to be 40–50% [23].
- ***Greater responsiveness to change.*** An FMS improves response capability to part design changes, introduction of new parts, changes in production schedule and product mix, machine breakdowns, and cutting tool failures. Adjustments can be made in the production schedule from one day to the next to respond to rush orders and special customer requests.
- ***Reduced inventory requirements.*** Because different parts are processed together rather than separately in batches, work-in-process (WIP) is less than in a batch production mode. The inventory of starting and finished parts can be reduced as well. Inventory reductions of 60–80% are estimated [23].
- ***Lower manufacturing lead times.*** Closely correlated with reduced WIP is the time spent in process by the parts. This means faster customer deliveries.
- ***Reduced direct labor requirements*** and ***higher labor productivity.*** Higher production rates and lower reliance on direct labor translate to greater productivity per labor hour with an FMS than with conventional production methods. Labor savings of 30–50% are estimated [23].
- ***Opportunity for unattended production.*** The high level of automation in an FMS allows it to operate for extended periods of time without human attention. In the most optimistic scenario, parts and tools are loaded into the system at the end of the day shift, and the FMS continues to operate throughout the night so that the finished parts can be unloaded the next morning.

## 16.4 FMS PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Implementation of an FMS represents a major investment and commitment by the user company. It is important that the installation of the system be preceded by thorough planning and design, and that its operation be characterized by good management of all resources: machines, tools, pallets, parts, and people. Our discussion of these issues is organized along these lines: (1) FMS planning and design issues and (2) FMS operational issues.

### 16.4.1 FMS Planning and Design Issues

The initial phase of FMS planning must consider the parts that will be produced by the system. The issues are similar to those in GT machine cell planning (Section 15.4.2). They include:

- ***Part family considerations.*** Any FMS must be designed to process a limited range of part (or product) styles. The boundaries of the range must be decided. In effect, the part family that will be processed on the FMS must be defined. The definition of part families to be processed on the FMS can be based on product commonality as well as on part similarity. The term ***product commonality*** refers to different components used on the same product. Many successful FMS installations are designed to accommodate part families defined by this criterion. This allows all of the components required to assemble a given product unit to be completed just prior to beginning of assembly.

- ***Processing requirements.*** The types of parts and their processing requirements determine the types of processing equipment that will be used in the system. In machining applications, nonrotational parts are produced by machining centers, milling machines, and like machine tools; rotational parts are machined by turning centers and similar equipment.
- ***Physical characteristics of the workparts.*** The size and weight of the parts determine the size of the machines at the workstations and the size of the material handling system that must be used.
- ***Production volume.*** Quantities to be produced by the system determine how many machines will be required. Production volume is also a factor in selecting the most appropriate type of material handling equipment for the system.

After the part family, production volumes, and similar part issues have been decided, design of the system can proceed. Important factors that must be specified in FMS design include:

- ***Types of workstations.*** The types of machines are determined by part processing requirements. Consideration of workstations must also include the load/unload station(s).
- ***Variations in process routings*** and ***FMS layout.*** If variations in process sequence are minimal, then an in-line flow is most appropriate. As product variety increases, a loop is more suitable. If there is significant variation in the processing, a ladder layout or open field layout are the most appropriate.
- ***Material handling system.*** Selection of the material handling equipment and layout are closely related, since the type of handling system limits the layout selection to some extent. The material handling system includes both primary and secondary handling systems (Section 16.2.2).
- ***Work-in-process*** and ***storage capacity.*** The level of WIP allowed in the FMS is an important variable in determining utilization and efficiency of the FMS. If the WIP level is too low, then stations may become starved for work, causing reduced utilization. If the WIP level is too high, then congestion may result. The WIP level should be planned, not just allowed to happen. Storage capacity in the FMS must be compatible with WIP level.
- ***Tooling.*** Tooling decisions include types and numbers of tools at each station. Consideration should also be given to the degree of duplication of tooling at the different stations. Tool duplication tends to increase routing flexibility (Table 16.1).
- ***Pallet fixtures.*** In machining systems for nonrotational parts, the number of pallet fixtures required in the system must be decided. Factors influencing the decision include: levels of WIP allowed in the system and differences in part style and size. Parts that differ too much in configuration and size require different fixturing.

### 16.4.2 FMS Operational Issues

Once the FMS is installed, then the existing resources of the FMS must be optimized to meet production requirements and achieve operational objectives related to profit, quality, and customer satisfaction. The operational problems that must be solved include [24], [26], [35]:

- ***Scheduling and dispatching***. Scheduling of production in the FMS is dictated by the master production schedule (Section 26.1). Dispatching is concerned with launching of parts into the system at the appropriate times. Several of the problem areas below are related to the scheduling issue.
- ***Machine loading***. This problem is concerned with allocating the operations and tooling resources among the machines in the system to accomplish the required production schedule.
- ***Part routing***. Routing decisions involve selecting the routes that should be followed by each part in the production mix to maximize use of workstation resources.
- ***Part grouping***. This is concerned with the selection of groups of part types for simultaneous production, given limitations on available tooling and other resources at workstations.
- ***Tool management***. Managing the available tools includes decisions on when to change tools, allocation of tooling to workstations in the system, and similar issues.
- ***Pallet and fixture allocation***. This problem is concerned with the allocation of pallets and fixtures to the parts being produced in the system.

## 16.5 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF FLEXIBLE MANUFACTURING SYSTEMS

Most of the design and operational problems identified in Section 16.4 can be addressed using quantitative analysis techniques. FMSs have constituted an active area of interest in operations research, and many of the important contributions are included in our list of references. FMS analysis techniques can be classified as follows: (1) deterministic models, (2) queueing models, (3) discrete event simulation, and (4) other approaches, including heuristics.

To obtain starting estimates of system performance, ***deterministic models*** can be used. Later in this section, we present a deterministic modeling approach that is useful in the beginning stages of FMS design to provide rough estimates of system parameters such as production rate, capacity, and utilization. Deterministic models do not permit evaluation of operating characteristics such as the build–up of queues and other dynamics that can impair performance of the production system. Consequently, deterministic models tend to overestimate FMS performance. On the other hand, if actual system performance is much lower than the estimates provided by these models, it may be a sign of either poor system design or poor management of the FMS operation.

***Queueing models*** can be used to describe some of the dynamics not accounted for in deterministic approaches. These models are based on the mathematical theory of queues. They permit the inclusion of queues, but only in a general way and for relatively simple system configurations. The performance measures that are calculated are usually average values for steady–state operation of the system. Examples of queueing models to study FMSs include [4], [33], and [36]. Probably the most well known of the FMS queueing models is CAN-Q [31], [32].

In the later stages of design, ***discrete event simulation*** probably offers the most accurate method for modeling the specific aspects of a given FMS [28], [45]. The computer model can be constructed to closely resemble the details of a complex FMS operation. Characteristics such as layout configuration, number of pallets in the system, and production scheduling rules can be incorporated into the FMS simulation model. Indeed, the simulation can be helpful in determining optimum values for these parameters.

Other techniques that have been applied to analyze FMS design and operational problems include mathematical programming [34] and various heuristic approaches [1], [17]. Several literature reviews on operations research techniques directed at FMS problems are included among our references, specifically [2], [6], [20], and [37].

### 16.5.1 Bottleneck Model

Important aspects of FMS performance can be mathematically described by a deterministic model called the bottleneck model, developed by Solberg [33][4]. Notwithstanding the limitations of a deterministic approach, the value of the bottleneck model is that it is simple and intuitive. It can be used to provide starting estimates of FMS design parameters such as production rate and number of workstations. The term ***bottleneck*** refers to the fact that the output of the production system has an upper limit, given that the product mix flowing through the system is fixed. The model can be applied to any production system that possesses this bottleneck feature, for example, a manually operated machine cell or a production job shop. It is not limited to FMSs.

*Terminology and Symbols.* Let us define the features, terms, and symbols for the bottleneck model as they might be applied to an FMS:

- ***Part mix.*** The mix of the various part or product styles produced by the system is defined by $p_j$, where $p_j$ = the fraction of the total system output that is of style $j$. The subscript $j = 1, 2, \ldots, P$, where $P$ = the total number of different part styles made in the FMS during the time period of interest. The values of $p_j$ must sum to unity; that is.

$$\sum_{j=1}^{P} p_j = 1.0 \tag{16.1}$$

- ***Workstations and servers.*** The flexible production system has a number of distinctly different workstations $n$. In the terminology of the bottleneck model, each workstation may have more than one server, which simply means that it is possible to have two or more machines capable of performing the same operations. Using the terms "stations" and "servers" in the bottleneck model is a precise way of distinguishing between machines that accomplish identical operations from those that accomplish different operations. Let $s_i$ = the number of servers at workstation $i$, where $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$. We include the load/unload station as one of the stations in the FMS.

[4]We have simplified Solberg's model somewhat and adapted the notation and performance measures to be consistent with our discussion in this chapter.

- ***Process routing***. For each part or product, the process routing defines the sequence of operations, the workstations at which they are performed, and the associated processing times. The sequence includes the loading operation at the beginning of processing on the FMS and the unloading operation at the end of processing. Let $t_{ijk}$ = the processing time, which is the total time that a production unit occupies a given workstation server, not counting any waiting time at the station. In the notation for $t_{ijk}$, the subscript $i$ refers to the station, $j$ refers to the part or product, and $k$ refers to the sequence of operations in the process routing. For example, the fourth operation in the process plan for part A is performed on machine 2 and takes 8.5 min; thus, $t_{2A4}$ = 8.5 min. Note that process plan $j$ is unique to part $j$. The bottleneck model does not conveniently allow for alternative process plans for the same part.
- ***Work handling system***. The material handling system used to transport parts or products within the FMS can be considered to be a special case of a workstation. Let us designate it as station $n + 1$, and the number of carriers in the system (e.g., conveyor carts, AGVs, monorail vehicles, etc.) is analogous to the number of servers in a regular workstation. Let $s_{n+1}$ = the number of carriers in the FMS handling system.
- ***Transport time***. Let $t_{n+1}$ = the mean transport time required to move a part from one workstation to the next station in the process routing. This value could be computed for each individual transport based on transport velocity and distances between stations in the FMS, but it is more convenient to simply use an average transport time for all moves in the FMS.
- ***Operation frequency***. The operation frequency is defined as the expected number of times a given operation in the process routing is performed for each work unit. For example, an inspection might be performed on a sampling basis, once every four units; hence, the frequency for this operation would be 0.25. In other cases, the part may have an operation frequency greater than 1.0; for example, for a calibration procedure that may have to be performed more than once on average to be completely effective. Let $f_{ijk}$ = the operation frequency for operation $k$ in process plan $j$ at station $i$.

*FMS Operational Parameters.* Using the above terms, we can next define certain average operational parameters of the production system. The ***average workload*** for a given station is defined as the mean total time spent at the station per part. It is calculated as follows:

$$WL_i = \sum_j \sum_k t_{ijk} f_{ijk} p_j \tag{16.2}$$

where $WL_i$ = average workload for station $i$ (min), $t_{ijk}$ = processing time for operation $k$ in process plan $j$ at station $i$ (min), $f_{ijk}$ = operation frequency for operation $k$ in part $j$ at station $i$, and $p_j$ = part mix fraction for part $j$.

The work handling system (station $n + 1$) is a special case as noted in our terminology above. The workload of the handling system is the mean transport time multiplied by the average number of transports required to complete the processing of a workpart. The average number of transports is equal to the mean number of operations in the process routing minus one. That is,

$$n_t = \sum_i \sum_j \sum_k f_{ijk} p_j - 1 \tag{16.3}$$

where $n_t$ = mean number of transports, and the other terms are defined above. Let us illustrate this with a simple example.

**EXAMPLE 16.6 Determining $n_t$**

Consider a manufacturing system with two stations: (1) a load/unload station and (2) a machining station. There is just one part processed through the production system, part A, so the part mix fraction $p_A = 1.0$. The frequency of all operations is $f_{tAk} = 1.0$. The parts are loaded at station 1, routed to station 2 for machining, and then sent back to station 1 for unloading (three operations in the routing). Using Eq. (16.3),

$$n_t = 1(1.0) + 1(1.0) + 1(1.0) - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2$$

Looking at it another way, the process routing is (1) $\rightarrow$ (2) $\rightarrow$ (1). Counting the number of arrows gives us the number of transports: $n_t = 2$.

---

We are now in a position to compute the workload of the handling system:

$$WL_{n+1} = n_t t_{n+1} \tag{16.4}$$

where $WL_{n+1}$ = workload of the handling system (min), $n_t$ = mean number of transports by Eq. (16.3), and $t_{n+1}$ = mean transport time per move (min).

*System Performance Measures.* Important measures for assessing the performance of an FMS include production rate of all parts, production rate of each part style, utilization of the different workstations, and number of busy servers at each workstation. These measures can be calculated under the assumption that the FMS is producing at its maximum possible rate. This rate is constrained by the bottleneck station in the system, which is the station with the highest workload per server. The workload per server is simply the ratio $WL_i/s_i$ for each station. Thus the bottleneck is identified by finding the maximum value of the ratio among all stations. The comparison must include the handling system, since it might be the bottleneck in the system.

Let $WL^*$, $s^*$, and $t^*$ equal the workload, number of servers, and processing time, respectively, for the bottleneck station. The FMS ***maximum production rate of all parts*** can be determined as the ratio of $s^*$ to $WL^*$. Let us refer to it as the maximum production rate because it is limited by the capacity of the bottleneck station.

$$R_p^* = \frac{s^*}{WL^*} \tag{16.5}$$

where $R_p^*$ = maximum production rate of all part styles produced by the system, which is determined by the capacity of the bottleneck station (pc/min), $s^*$ = number of servers at the bottleneck station, and $WL^*$ = workload at the bottleneck station (min/pc). It is not difficult to grasp the validity of this formula as long as all parts are processed through the bottleneck station. A little more thought is required to appreciate that Eq. (16.5) is also valid, even when not all of the parts pass through the bottleneck station, as long as the product mix ($p_j$ values) remains constant. In other words, if we disallow those parts not passing through the bottleneck from increasing their production rates to reach their respective bottleneck limits, these parts will be limited by the part mix ratios.

The value of $R_p^*$ includes parts of all styles produced in the system. Individual ***part production rates*** can be obtained by multiplying $R_p^*$ by the respective part mix ratios. That is,

$$R_{pj}^* = p_j(R_p^*) = p_j \frac{s^*}{WL^*} \tag{16.6}$$

where $R_{pj}^*$ = maximum production rate of part style $j$ (pc/min), and $p_j$ = part mix fraction for part style $j$.

The mean ***utilization*** of each workstation is the proportion of time that the servers at the station are working and not idle. This can be computed as follows:

$$U_i = \frac{WL_i}{s_i}(R_p^*) = \frac{WL_i}{s_i}\frac{s^*}{WL^*} \tag{16.7}$$

where $U_i$ = utilization of station i, $WL_i$ = workload of station $i$ (min/pc), $s_i$ = number of servers at station $i$, and $R_p^*$ = overall production rate (pc/min). The utilization of the bottleneck station is 100% at $R_p^*$.

To obtain the ***average station utilization***, one simply computes the average value for all stations, including the transport system. This can be calculated as follows:

$$\bar{U} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n+1} U_i}{n+1} \tag{16.8}$$

where $\bar{U}$ is an unweighted average of the workstation utilizations.

A more useful measure of ***overall FMS utilization*** can be obtained using a weighted average, where the weighting is based on the number of servers at each station for the $n$ regular stations in the system, and the transport system is omitted from the average. The argument for omitting the transport system is that the utilization of the processing stations is the important measure of FMS utilization. The purpose of the transport system is to serve the processing stations, and therefore its utilization should not be included in the average. The overall FMS utilization is calculated as follows:

$$\bar{U}_s = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} s_i U_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} s_i} \tag{16.9}$$

where $\bar{U}_s$ = overall FMS utilization, $s_i$ = number of servers at station $i$, and $U_i$ = utilization of station $i$.

Finally, the ***number of busy servers*** at each station is of interest. All of the servers at the bottleneck station are busy at the maximum production rate, but the servers at the other stations are idle some of the time. The values can be calculated as follows:

$$BS_i = WL_i(R_p^*) = WL_i \frac{s^*}{WL^*} \tag{16.10}$$

where $BS_i$ = number of busy servers on average at station $i$, and $WL_i$ = workload at station $i$.

Let us present two example problems to illustrate the bottleneck model, the first a simple example whose answers can be verified intuitively, and the second a more complicated problem.

**EXAMPLE 16.7 Bottleneck model on a simple problem**

A flexible machining system consists of two machining workstations and a load/unload station. Station 1 is the load/unload station. Station 2 performs milling operations and consists of two servers (two identical CNC milling machines). Station 3 has one server that performs drilling (one CNC drill press). The stations are connected by a part handling system that has four work carriers. The mean transport time is 3.0 min. The FMS produces two parts, A and B. The part mix fractions and process routings for the two parts are presented in the table below. The operation frequency $f_{ijk}$ = 1.0 for all operations. Determine: (a) maximum production rate of the FMS, (b) corresponding production rates of each product, (c) utilization of each station, and (d) number of busy servers at each station.

| *Part j* | *Part Mix $p_j$* | *Operation k* | *Description* | *Station i* | *Process Time $t_{ijk}$(min)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.4 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 |
| | | 2 | Mill | 2 | 30 |
| | | 3 | Drill | 3 | 10 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 2 |
| B | 0.6 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 |
| | | 2 | Mill | 2 | 40 |
| | | 3 | Drill | 3 | 15 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 2 |

***Solution:*** (a) To compute the FMS production rate, we first need to compute workloads at each station, so that the bottleneck station can be identified.

$$WL_1 = (4 + 2)(0.4)(1.0) + (4 + 2)(0.6)(1.0) = 6.0 \text{ min.}$$

$$WL_2 = 30(0.4)(1.0) + 40(0.6)(1.0) = 36.0 \text{ min.}$$

$$WL_3 = 10(0.4)(1.0) + 15(0.6)(1.0) = 13.0 \text{ min.}$$

The station routing for both parts is the same: $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 1$. There are three moves, $n_t$ = 3.

$$WL_4 = 3(3.0)(0.4)(1.0) + 3(3.0)(0.6)(1.0) = 9.0 \text{ min.}$$

The bottleneck station is identified by finding the largest $WL_i/s_i$ ratio.

For station 1, $WL_1/s_1 = 6.0/1 = 6.0$ min.

For station 2, $WL_2/s_2 = 36.0/2 = 18.0$ min.

For station 3, $WL_3/s_3 = 13.0/1 = 13.0$ min.

For station 4, the part handling system, $WL_4/s_4 = 9.0/4 = 2.25$ min.

The maximum ratio occurs at station 2, so it is the bottleneck station that determines the maximum production rate of all parts made by the system.

$$R_p^* = 2/36.0 = 0.05555 \text{ pc/min} = 3.333 \text{ pc/hr}$$

(b) To determine production rate of each product, multiply $R_p^*$ by its respective part mix fraction.

$$R_{pA}^* = 3.333(0.4) = 1.333 \text{ pc/hr}$$

$$R_{pB}^* = 3.333(0.6) = 2.00 \text{ pc/hrr}$$

(c) The utilization of each station can be computed using Eq. (16.7):

$$U_1 = (6.0/1)(0.05555) = 0.333 \qquad (33.3\%)$$

$$U_2 = (36.0/2)(0.05555) = 1.0 \qquad (100\%)$$

$$U_3 = (13.0/1)(0.05555) = 0.722 \qquad (72.2\%)$$

$$U_4 = (9.0/4)(0.05555) = 0.125 \qquad (12.5\%)$$

(d) Mean number of busy servers at each station is determined using Eq. (16.10):

$$BS_1 = 6.0(0.05555) = 0.333$$

$$BS_2 = 36.0(0.05555) = 2.0$$

$$BS_3 = 13.0(0.05555) = 0.722$$

$$BS_4 = 9.0(0.05555) = 0.50$$

---

We designed the preceding example so that most of the results could be verified without using the bottleneck model. For example, it is fairly obvious that station 2 is the limiting station, even with two servers. The processing times at this station are more than twice those at station 3. Given that station 2 is the bottleneck, let us try to verify the maximum production rate of the FMS. To do this, the reader should note that the processing times at station 2 are $t_{2A2} = 30$ min and $t_{2B2} = 40$ min. Note also that the part mix fractions are $p_A = 0.4$ and $p_B = 0.6$. This means that for every unit of B produced, there are $0.4/0.6 = \frac{2}{3}$ units of part A. The corresponding time to process 1 unit of B and $\frac{2}{3}$ unit of A at station 1 is

$$\tfrac{2}{3}(30) + 1(40) = 20 + 40 = 60 \text{ min.}$$

Sixty minutes is exactly the amount of processing time each machine has available in an hour. (This is no coincidence; we designed the problem so this would happen.) With two servers (two CNC mills), the FMS can produce parts at the following maximum rate:

$$R_p^* = 2(\tfrac{2}{3} + 1) = 2(1.6666) = 3.333 \text{ pc/hr}$$

This is the same result obtained by the bottleneck model. Given that the bottleneck station is working at 100% utilization, it is easy to determine the utilizations of the other stations. At station 1, the time needed to load and unload the output of the two servers at station 2 is

$$3.333(4 + 2) = 20.0 \text{ min.}$$

As a fraction of 60 min. in an hour, this gives a utilization of $U_1 = 0.333$. At station 3, the processing time required to process the output of the two servers at station 2 is

$$\tfrac{4}{3}(10) + 2(15) = 43.333 \text{ min}$$

As a fraction of the 60 min., we have $U_3 = 43.333/60 = 0.722$. Using the same approach on the part handling system, we have

$$\tfrac{4}{3}(9.0) + 2(9.0) = 30.0 \text{ min}$$

As a fraction of 60 min, this is 0.50. However, since there are four servers (four work carriers), this fraction is divided by 4 to obtain $U_4 = 0.125$. These are the same utilization values as in our example using the bottleneck model.

**EXAMPLE 16.8 Bottleneck Model on a more complicated Problem**

An FMS consists of four stations. Station 1 is a load/unload station with one server. Station 2 performs milling operations with three servers (three identical CNC milling machines). Station 3 performs drilling operations with two servers (two identical CNC drill presses). Station 4 is an inspection station with one server that performs inspections on a sampling of the parts. The stations are connected by a part handling system that has two work carriers and whose mean transport time = 3.5 min. The FMS produces four parts, A, B, C, and D. The part mix fractions and process routings for the four parts are presented in the table below. Note that the operation frequency at the inspection station ($f_{4jk}$) is less than 1.0 to account for the fact that only a fraction of the parts are inspected. Determine: (a) maximum production rate of the FMS, (b) corresponding production rate of each part, (c) utilization of each station in the system, and (d) the overall FMS utilization.

| Part $j$ | Part Mix $p_j$ | Operation $k$ | Description | Station $i$ | Process Time $t_{ijk}$ (min) | Frequency $f_{ijk}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.1 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 | 1.0 |
| | | 2 | Mill | 2 | 20 | 1.0 |
| | | 3 | Drill | 3 | 15 | 1.0 |
| | | 4 | Inspect | 4 | 12 | 0.5 |
| | | 5 | Unload | 1 | 2 | 1.0 |
| B | 0.2 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 | 1.0 |
| | | 2 | Drill | 3 | 16 | 1.0 |
| | | 3 | Mill | 2 | 25 | 1.0 |
| | | 4 | Drill | 3 | 14 | 1.0 |
| | | 5 | Inspect | 4 | 15 | 0.2 |
| | | 6 | Unload | 1 | 2 | 1.0 |
| C | 0.3 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 | 1.0 |
| | | 2 | Drill | 3 | 23 | 1.0 |
| | | 3 | Inspect | 4 | 8 | 0.5 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 2 | 1.0 |
| D | 0.4 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 | 1.0 |
| | | 2 | Mill | 2 | 30 | 1.0 |
| | | 3 | Inspect | 4 | 12 | 0.333 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 2 | 1.0 |

***Solution:*** (a) We first calculate the workloads at the workstations to identify the bottleneck station.

$$WL_1 = (4 + 2)(1.0)(0.1 + 0.2 + 0.3 + 0.4) = 6.0 \text{ min.}$$

$$WL_2 = 20(1.0)(0.1) + 25(1.0)(0.2) + 30(1.0)(0.4) = 19.0 \text{ min.}$$

$$WL_3 = 15(1.0)(0.1) + 16(1.0)(0.2) + 14(1.0)(0.2) + 23(1.0)(0.3) = 14.4 \text{ min.}$$

$$WL_4 = 12(0.5)(0.1) + 15(0.2)(0.2) + 8(0.5)(0.3) + 12(0.333)(0.4) = 4.0 \text{ min.}$$

$$n_t = (3.5)(0.1) + (4.2)(0.2) + (2.5)(0.3) + (2.333)(0.4) = 2.873$$

$$WL_5 = 2.873(3.5) = 10.06 \text{ min.}$$

The bottleneck station is identified by the largest $WL/s$ ratio:

For station 1, $WL_1/s_1 = 6.0/1 = 6.0$

For station 2, $WL_2/s_2 = 19.0/3 = 6.333$

For station 3, $WL_3/s_3 = 14.4/2 = 7.2$

For station 4, $WL_4/s_4 = 4.0/1 = 4.0$

For the part handling system, $WL_5/s_5 = 10.06/2 = 5.03$

The maximum ratio occurs at station 3, so it is the bottleneck station that determines the maximum rate of production of the system.

$$R_p^* = 2/14.4 = 0.1389 \text{ pc/min} = 8.333 \text{ pc/hr}$$

(b) To determine the production rate of each product, multiply $R_p^*$ by its respective part mix fraction.

$$R_{pA}^* = 8.333(0.1) = 0.8333 \text{ pc/hr}$$

$$R_{pB}^* = 8.333(0.2) = 1.667 \text{ pc/hr}$$

$$R_{pC}^* = 8.333(0.3) = 2.500 \text{ pc/hr}$$

$$R_{pD}^* = 8.333(0.4) = 3.333 \text{ pc/hr}$$

(c) Utilization of each station can be computed using Eq. (16.7):

$$U_1 = (6.0/1)(0.1389) = 0.833 \quad (83.3\%)$$

$$U_2 = (19.0/3)(0.1389) = 0.879 \quad (87.9\%)$$

$$U_3 = (14.4/2)(0.1389) = 1.000 \quad (100\%)$$

$$U_4 = (4.0/1)(0.1389) = 0.555 \quad (55.5\%)$$

$$U_5 = (10.06/2)(0.1389) = 0.699 \quad (69.9\%)$$

(d) Overall FMS utilization can be determined using a weighted average of the above values, where the weighting is based on the number of servers per station and the part handling system is excluded from the average, as in Eq. (16.9):

$$\bar{U}_s = \frac{1(0.833) + 3(0.879) + 2(1.0) + 1(0.555)}{7} = 0.861 \ (86.1\%)$$

---

In the preceding example, it should be noted that the production rate of part D is constrained by the part mix fractions rather than the bottleneck station (station 3). Part D is not even processed on the bottleneck station. Instead, it is processed through station 2, which has unutilized capacity. It should therefore be possible to increase the output rate of part D by increasing its part mix fraction and at the same time increasing the utilization of station 2 to 100%. The following example illustrates the method for doing this.

**EXAMPLE 16.9 Increasing Unutilized Station Capacity**

From Example 16.8, $U_2 = 87.9\%$. Determine the production rate of part D that will increase the utilization of station 2 to 100%.

***Solution:*** Utilization of a workstation is calculated using Eq. 16.7. For station 2:

$$U_2 = \frac{WL_2}{3}(0.1389)$$

Setting the utilization of station 2 to 1.0 (100%), we can solve for the corresponding $WL_2$ value.

$$WL_2 = \frac{1.0(3)}{0.1389} = 21.6 \text{ min.}$$

This compares with the previous workload value of 19.0 min computed in Example 16.8. A portion of the workload for both values is accounted for by parts A and B. This portion is

$$WL_2(A + B) = 20(0.1)(1.0) + 25(0.2)(1.0) = 7.0 \text{ min.}$$

The remaining portions of the workloads are due to part D.

For the workload at 100% utilization, $WL_2(D) = 21.6 - 7.0 = 14.6$ min.

For the workload at 87.9% utilization, $WL_2(D) = 19.0 - 7.0 = 12.0$ min.

We can now use the ratio of these values to calculate the new (increased) production rate for part D:

$$R_{pD} = \frac{14.6}{12.0}(3.333) = 1.2167(3.333) = 4.055 \text{ pc/hr}$$

Production rates of the other three products remain the same as before. Accordingly, the production rate of all parts increases to the following:

$$R_p^* = 833 + 1.667 + 2.500 + 4.055 = 9.055 \text{ pc/hr.}$$

Although the production rates of the other three products are unchanged, the increase in production rate for part D alters the relative part mix fractions. The new values are:

$$p_A = \frac{0.833}{9.055} = 0.092$$

$$p_B = \frac{1.667}{9.055} = 0.184$$

$$p_C = \frac{2.500}{9.055} = 0.276$$

$$p_D = \frac{4.055}{9.055} = 0.0.448$$

### 16.5.2 Extended Bottleneck Model

The bottleneck model assumes that the bottleneck station is utilized 100% and that there are no delays in the system due to queues. This implies on the one hand that there are a sufficient number of parts in the system to avoid starving of workstations and on the other hand that there will be no delays due to queueing. Solberg [33] argued that the assumption of 100% utilization makes the bottleneck model overly optimistic and that a queueing model that accounts for process time variations and delays would more realistically and completely describe the performance of an FMS.

An alternative approach, developed by Mejabi [25], addresses some of the weaknesses of the bottleneck model without resorting to queueing computations (which can be difficult, sometimes even worse). He called his approach the ***extended bottleneck model.*** This extended model assumes a closed queueing network in which there are always a certain number of workparts in the FMS. Let $N$ = this number of parts in the system. When one part is completed and exits the FMS, a new raw workpart immediately enters the system, so that $N$ remains constant. The new part may or may not have the same process routing as the one just departed. The process routing of the entering part is determined according to probabilities $p_j$.

$N$ plays a critical role in the operation of the production system. If $N$ is small (say, much smaller than the number of workstations), then some of the stations will be idle due to starving, sometimes even the bottleneck station. In this case, the production rate of the FMS will be less than $R_p^*$ calculated in Eq. (16.5). If $N$ is large (say, much larger than the number of workstations), then the system will be fully loaded, with queues of parts waiting in front of the stations. In this case, $R_p^*$ will provide a good estimate of the production capacity of the system. However, WIP will be high, and manufacturing lead time (MLT) will be long.

In effect, WIP corresponds to $N$, and MLT is the sum of processing times at the workstations, transport times between stations, and any waiting time experienced by the parts in the system. We can express MLT as follows:

$$\text{MLT} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i + WL_{n+1} + T_w \tag{16.11}$$

where $\sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i$ = summation of average workloads over all stations in the FMS (min), $WL_{n+1}$ = workload of the part handling system (min), and $T_w$ = mean waiting time experienced by a part due to queues at the stations (min).

WIP (that is, $N$) and MLT are correlated. If $N$ is small, then MLT will take on its smallest possible value because waiting time will be short (zero). If $N$ is large, then MLT will be long and there will be waiting time in the system. Thus we have two alternative cases that must be distinguished, and adjustments must be made in the bottleneck model to account for them. To do this, Mejabi found the well-known Little's formula[5] from queueing theory to be useful. Little's formula establishes the relationship between the mean expected time a unit spends in the system, the mean processing rate of items in the system, and the mean number of units in the system. It can be mathematically proved for a single-station queueing system, and its general validity is accepted for multistation queueing systems. Using our own symbols, Little's formula can be expressed as follows:

$$N = R_p(\text{MLT}) \tag{16.12}$$

where $N$ = number of parts in the system (pc), $R_p$ = production rate of the system (pc/min), and MLT = manufacturing lead time (time spent in the system by a part) (min). Now, let us examine the two cases:

[5] Little's formula is usually given as $L = \lambda W$ where $L$ = expected number of units in the system, $\lambda$ = processing rate of units in the system, and $W$ = expected time spent by a unit in the system. We are substituting our own symbols that correspond as follows: L becomes N, the number of parts in the FMS; $\lambda$ becomes $R_p$, the production rate of the FMS; and W becomes MLT, the total time in the FMS, which is the sum of processing and transport times plus any waiting time.

***Case 1:*** When $N$ is small, production rate is less than in the bottleneck case because the bottleneck station is not fully utilized. In this case, the waiting time $T_w$ of a unit is (theoretically) zero, and Eq. (16.11) reduces to

$$\text{MLT}_1 = \sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i + WL_{n+1} \tag{16.13}$$

where the subscript in $\text{MLT}_1$ is used to identify case 1. Production rate can be estimated using Little's formula:

$$R_p = \frac{N}{\text{MLT}_1} \tag{16.14}$$

and production rates of the individual parts are given by:

$$R_{pj} = p_j R_p \tag{16.15}$$

As indicated waiting time is assumed to be zero:

$$T_w = 0 \tag{16.16}$$

***Case 2:*** When $N$ is large, the estimate of maximum production rate provided by Eq. (16.5) should be valid. It is restated here:

$$R_p^* = \frac{s^*}{WL^*} \tag{16.5}$$

Where the asterisk (*) denotes that production rate is constrained by the bottleneck station in the system. The production rates of the individual products are given by:

$$R_{pj}^* = p_j R_p^* \tag{16.17}$$

In this case, average manufacturing lead time is evaluated using Little's formula:

$$\text{MLT}_2 = \frac{N}{R_p^*} \tag{16.18}$$

The mean waiting time a part spends in the system can be estimated by rearranging Eq. (16.11) to solve for $T_w$:

$$T_w = \text{MLT}_2 - \left( \sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i + WL_{n+1} \right) \tag{16.19}$$

The decision whether to use case 1 or case 2 depends on the value of $N$. The dividing line between cases 1 and 2 is determined by whether $N$ is greater than or less than a critical value given by the following:

**TABLE 16.7** Equations and Guidelines for the Extended Bottleneck Model

| *Case 1:* $N < N^* = R_p^*\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i + WL_{n+1}\right)$ | *Case 2:* $N \geq N^* = R_p^*\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i + WL_{n+1}\right)$ |
|---|---|
| $\text{MLT}_1 = \sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i + WL_{n+1}$ | $R_p^* = \dfrac{s^*}{WL^*}$ |
| $R_p = \dfrac{N}{\text{MLT}_1}$ | $R_{pj}^* = p_j R_p^*$ |
| $R_{pj} = p_j R_p$ | $\text{MLT}_2 = \dfrac{N}{R_p^*}$ |
| $T_w = 0$ | $T_w = \text{MLT}_2 - \left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i + WL_{n+1}\right)$ |

$$N^* = R_p^*\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} WL_i + WL_{n+1}\right) = R_p^*(MLT_1) \tag{16.20}$$

where $N^*$ = critical value of $N$, the dividing line between the bottleneck and non-bottleneck cases. If $N < N^*$, then case 1 applies. If $N \geq N^*$, then case 2 applies. The applicable equations for the two cases are summarized in Table 16.7.

### EXAMPLE 16.10 Extended bottleneck model

Let us use the extended bottleneck model on the data given in Example 16.7 to compute production rate, manufacturing lead time, and waiting time for three values of $N$: (a) $N = 2$, (b) $N = 3$, and (c) $N = 4$.

***Solution:*** Let us first compute the critical value of $N$. We have $R_p^*$ from Example 16.7: $R_p^* = 0.05555$ pc/min. We also need the value of $\text{MLT}_1$. Again using previously calculated values from Example 16.7.

$$\text{MLT}_1 = 6.0 + 36.0 + 13.0 + 9.0 = 64.0 \text{ min.}$$

The critical value of $N$ is given by Eq. (16.20):

$$N^* = 0.05555(64.0) = 3.555$$

(a) $N = 2$ is less than the critical value, so we apply the equations for case 1.

$$\text{MLT}_1 = 64.0 \text{ min (calculated several lines above)}$$

$$R_p = \frac{N}{\text{MLT}_1} = \frac{2}{64} = 0.03125 \text{ pc/min} = 1.875 \text{ pc/hr}$$

$$T_w = 0 \text{ min.}$$

(b) $N = 3$ is again less than the critical value, so case 1 applies.

$$\text{MLT}_1 = 64.0 \text{ min}$$

$$R_p = \frac{3}{64} = 0.0469 \text{ pc/min} = 2.813 \text{ pc/hr}$$

$$T_w = 0 \text{ min.}$$

(c) For $N = 4$, case 2 applies, since $N > N^*$.

$$R_p^* = \frac{s^*}{WL^*} = 0.05555 \text{ pc/min} = 3.33 \text{ pc/hr from Example 16.2.}$$

$$\text{MLT}_2 = \frac{4}{0.05555} = 72.0 \text{ min.}$$

$$T_w = 72.0 - 64.0 = 8.0 \text{ min.}$$

---

The results of this example typify the behavior of the extended bottleneck model, shown in Figure 16.16. Below $N^*$ (case 1), MLT has a constant value, and $R_p$ decreases proportionally as $N$ decreases. Manufacturing lead time cannot be less than the sum of the processing and transport times, and production rate is adversely affected by low values of $N$ because stations become starved for work. Above $N^*$ (case 2), $R_p$ has a constant value equal to $R_p^*$ and MLT increases. No matter how large $N$ is made, the production rate cannot be greater than the output capacity of the bottleneck station. Manufacturing lead time increases because backlogs build up at the stations.

The preceding observations might tempt us to conclude that the optimum $N$ value occurs at $N^*$, since MLT is at its minimum possible value, and $R_p$ is at its maximum possible value. However, caution must be exercised in the use of the extended bottleneck model (and the same caution applies even more so to the conventional bottleneck model, which disregards the effect of $N$). It is intended to be a rough-cut method to estimate FMS performance in the early phases of FMS design. More reliable estimates of performance can be obtained using computer simulations of detailed models of the FMS—models that include considerations of layout, material handling and storage system, and other system design factors.

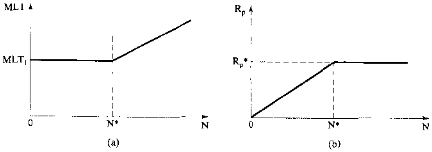



**Figure 16.16** General behavior of the extended bottleneck model: (a) manufacturing lead time MLT as a function of $N$ and (b) production rate $R_p$ as a function of $N$.

Mejabi compared the estimates computed using the extended bottleneck model with estimates obtained from the CAN-Q model [32], [33] for several thousand cases. He developed an ***adequacy factor*** to assess the differences between the extended bottleneck model and CAN-Q. The adequacy factor is computed:

$$AF = \frac{N}{\bar{U}\sum_{i=1}^{n+1} s_i} \tag{16.21}$$

where $AF$ = adequacy factor for the extended bottleneck model; $N$ = number of parts in the system (pc), $\bar{U}$ = average station utilization from Eq. (16.8), which includes the transport system; and $\sum_{i=1}^{n+1} s_i$ total number of servers in the system, including the number of carriers in the transport system. The anticipated discrepancies corresponding to the value of $AF$ are tabulated in Table 16.8. It is likely that an FMS would be scheduled so that the number of parts in the system is somewhat greater than the number of servers. This would result in adequacy factor values greater than 1.5, permitting the extended bottleneck model to provide estimates of production rate and manufacturing lead time that agree fairly closely with those computed by CAN-Q.

### 16.4.3 Sizing the FMS

The bottleneck model can be used to calculate the number of servers required at each workstation to achieve a specified production rate. Such calculations would be useful during the initial stages of FMS design in determining the "size" (number of workstations and servers) of the system. The starting information needed to make the computation consists of part mix, process routings, and processing times so that workloads can be calculated for each of the stations to be included in the FMS. Given the workloads, the number of servers at each station $i$ is determined as follows:

$$s_i = \text{minimum integer} \geq R_p(WL_i) \tag{16.22}$$

**TABLE 16.8** Anticipated Discrepancies Between the Extended Bottleneck Model and CAN-Q [31] as a Function of the Adequacy Factor Given in Eq. (16.21)

| *Adequacy Factor Value* | *Anticipated Discrepancy with CAN-Q* |
|---|---|
| $AF < 0.9$ | Discrepancies < 5% are likely. |
| $0.9 \leq AF \leq 1.5$ | Discrepancies ≥ 5% are likely. User should view computed results of extended bottleneck model with caution. |
| $AF > 1.5$ | Discrepancies < 5% are likely. |

where $s_i$ = number of servers at station $i$, $R_p$ = specified production rate of all parts to be produced by the system (pc/min), and $WL_i$ = workload at station $i$ (min). The following example illustrates the procedure.

**EXAMPLE 16.11 Sizing the FMS**

Suppose the part mix, process routings, and processing times for the family of parts to be machined on a proposed FMS are those given in Example 16.8. Determine how many servers at each station $i$ will be required to achieve an annual production rate of 60,000 parts/yr. The FMS will operate 24 hr/day, 5 day/wk, 50 wk/yr. Anticipated availability of the system is 95%.

***Solution:*** The number of hours of FMS operation per year will be $24 \times 5 \times 50 = 6000$ hr/yr. Taking into account the anticipated system availability, the average hourly production rate is given by:

$$R_p = \frac{60{,}000\text{pc/yr}}{(6000\text{hr/yr})(0.95)} = 10.526 \text{ pc/hr} = 0.1754 \text{ pc/min.}$$

The workloads at each station were previously calculated in Example 16.8: $WL_1 = 6.0$ min, $WL_2 = 19.0$ min, $WL_3 = 14.4$ min, $WL_4 = 4.0$ min, and $WL_5 = 10.06$ min. Using Eq. (16.22), we have the following number of servers required at each station:

$$s_1 = \text{minimum integer} \geq (0.1754(6.0) = 1.053) = 2 \text{ servers}$$

$$s_2 = \text{minimum integer} \geq (0.1754(19.0) = 3.333)) = 4 \text{ servers}$$

$$s_3 = \text{minimum integer} \geq (0.1754(14.4) = 2.526) = 3 \text{ servers}$$

$$s_4 = \text{minimum integer} \geq (0.1754(4.0) = 0.702) = 1 \text{ server}$$

$$s_5 = \text{minimum integer} \geq (0.1754(10.06) = 1.765) = 2 \text{ servers}$$

---

Because the number of servers at each workstation must be an integer, station utilization may be less than 100% for most if not all of the stations. In Example 16.11, all of the stations have utilizations less than 100%. The bottleneck station in the system is identified as the station with the highest utilization, and if that utilization is less than 100%, the maximum production rate of the system can be increased until $U^* = 1.0$. The following example illustrates the reasoning.

**EXAMPLE 16.12 Increasing Utilization and Production Rate at the Bottleneck Station**

For the specified production rate in Example 16.11, determine: (a) the utilizations for each station and (b) the maximum possible production rate at each station if the utilization of the bottleneck station were increased to 100%.

***Solution:*** (a) The utilization at each workstation is determined as the calculated value of $s_i$ divided by the resulting minimum integer value $\geq s_i$.

$$U_1 = 1.053/2 = 0.526 \qquad (52.6\%)$$

$$U_2 = 3.333/4 = 0.833 \qquad (83.3\%)$$

$$U_3 = 2.526/3 = 0.842 \qquad (84.2\%)$$

$$U_4 = 0.702/1 = 0.702 \qquad (70.2\%)$$

$$U_5 = 1.765/2 = 0.883 \qquad (88.3\%)$$

The maximum value is at station 5, the work transport system. This is the bottleneck station.

(b) The maximum production rate of the FMS, as limited by the bottleneck station, is

$$R_p^* = \frac{10.526}{0.883} = 11.93 \text{ pc/hr} = 0.1988 \text{ pc/min.}$$

The corresponding utilization is

$$U^* = U_5 = 0.1988(10.06/2) = 1.0 \qquad (100\%)$$

---

### 16.4.4 What the Equations Tell Us

Notwithstanding its limitations, the bottleneck model and extended bottleneck model provide some practical guidelines for the design and operation of FMSs. These guidelines can be expressed as follows:

- For a given product or part mix, the total production rate of the FMS is ultimately limited by the productive capacity of the bottleneck station, which is the station with the maximum workload per server.
- If the product or part mix ratios can be relaxed, it may be possible to increase total FMS production rate by increasing the utilization of non-bottleneck workstations.
- The number of parts in the FMS at any time should be greater than the number of servers (processing machines) in the system. A ratio of around 2.0 parts/server is probably optimum, assuming that the parts are distributed throughout the FMS to ensure that a part is waiting at every station. This is especially critical at the bottleneck station.
- If WIP (number of parts in the system) is kept at too low a value, production rate of the system is impaired.
- If WIP is allowed to be too high, then manufacturing lead time will be long with no improvement in production rate.
- As a first approximation, the bottleneck model can be used to estimate the number of servers at each station (number of machines of each type) to achieve a specified overall production rate of the system.

## REFERENCES

[1] ASKIN, R. G., H. M. SELIM, and A. J. VAKHARIA, "A Methodology for Designing Flexible Cellular Manufacturing Systems," *IIE Transactions*, Vol. 29, 1997, pp. 599–610.

[2] BASNET, C., and J. H. MIZE, "Scheduling and Control of Flexible Manufacturing Systems: A Critical Review," *International Journal of Computer Integrated Manufacturing*, Vol. 7, 1994, pp. 340–355.

[3] BROWNE, J., D. DUBOIS, K. RATHMILL, S. P. SETHI, and K. E. STECKE, "Classification of Flexible Manufacturing Systems," *FMS Magazine*, Vol. 2, April 1984, pp 114–117.

[4] BUZACOTT, J. A., and J. G. SHANTHIKUMAR, "Models for Understanding Flexible Manufacturing Systems," *AIIE Transactions*, December 1980, pp 339–349.

[5] BUZACOTT, J. A. "Modeling Automated Manufacturing Systems," *Proceedings*, 1983 Annual Industrial Engineering Conference, Louisville, Kentucky, May 1983, pp 341–347.

[6] BUZACOTT, J. A., and D. D. YAO, "Flexible Manufacturing Systems: A Review of Analytical Models," *Management Science*,. Vol. 32, 1986, pp 890–895.

[7] FALKNER, C. H., "Flexibility in Manufacturing Systems," *Proceedings*, Second ORSA/TIMS Conference on Flexible Manufacturing Systems: Operations Research Models and Applications, Edited by K. E Stecke and R. Suri, Elsevier Science Publishers, New York, 1986, pp 95–106.

[8] *Flexible Manufacturing Systems Handbook*, prepared by the staff of The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, published by Noyes Publications, Park Ridge, New Jersey, 1984.

[9] GROOVER, M. P., and O. MEJABI, "Trends in Manufacturing System Design," *Proceedings*, IIE Fall Conference, Nashville, Tennessee, November 1987.

[10] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Chapter 38, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[11] HARTLEY, J., *FMS at Work*, IFS (Publications) Ltd., Bedford, U.K., and North-Holland, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1984.

[12] JABLONSKI, J., "Reexamining FMSs," Special Report 774, *American Machinist*, March 1985, pp 125–140.

[13] JAIN, A. K., and H. A ELMARAGHY, "Production Scheduling/Rescheduling in Flexible Manufacturing," *International Journal of Production Systems*, Vol. 15, 1997, pp 281–309.

[14] JOSHI, S. B., and J. S. SMITH, EDITORS, *Computer Control of Flexible Manufacturing Systems*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1994.

[15] *KT's World of Manufacturing Systems*, Kearney & Trecker Corporation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1980.

[16] KAIGHOBADI, M., *Flexible Manufacturing Islands - Stepping Stones in FMS Implementation*, Garland Publishing, Inc., New York, 1994.

[17] KATTAN, I. A., "Design and Scheduling of Hybrid Multi-Cell Flexible Manufacturing Systems, *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 35, 1997, pp. 1239–1257.

[18] KLAHORST, H. T., "How To Plan Your FMS," *Manufacturing Engineering*, September 1983, pp 52–54.

[19] KOELSCH, J. R., "A New Look to Transfer Lines," *Manufacturing Engineering*, April 1994, pp 73–78.

[20] KOUVELIS, P., "Design and Planning Problems in Flexible Manufacturing Systems: A Critical Review," *Journal of Intelligent Manufacturing*, Vol. 3, 1992, pp. pp 75–99.

[21] KUSIAK, A., and C.-X. FENG, "Flexible Manufacturing," *The Engineering Handbook*, Richard C. Dorf, Editor, CRC Press, 1996, pp 1718–1723.

[22] LENZ, J. E., *Flexible Manufacturing*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1989.

[23] LUGGEN, W. W., *Flexible Manufacturing Cells and Systems*, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1991.

[24] MALEKI, R. A., *Flexible Manufacturing Systems: The Technology and Management*, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1991.

[25] MEJABI, O., "Modeling in Flexible Manufacturing Systems Design," *PhD Dissertation*, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1988.

[26] MOHAMED, Z. M., *Flexible Manufacturing Systems - Planning Issues and Solutions*, Garland Publishing, Inc., New York, 1994.

[27] MOODIE, C., R. UZSOY, and Y. YIH, Editors, *Manufacturing Cells: A Systems Engineering View*, Taylor & Francis, London, 1996.

[28] RAHIMIFARD, S., and S. T. NEWMAN, "Simultaneous Scheduling of Workpieces, Fixtures and Cutting Tools within Flexible Machining Cells," *International Journal of Production Systems*, Vol. 15, 1997, pp 2379–2396.

[29] ROH, H.-K., and Y.-D. KIM, "Due-Date Based Loading and Scheduling Methods for a Flexible Manufacturing System with an Automatic Tool Changer," *International Journal of Production Systems*, Vol. 15, 1997, pp 2989–3003.

[30] "S/R Machine Delivers Directly to Machine Tools," *Modern Materials Handling*, February 1985, pp 56–57.

[31] SOLBERG, J. J., "A Mathematical Model of Computerized Manufacturing Systems," *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Production Research*, Tokyo, Japan, 1977.

[32] SOLBERG, J. J., "CAN-Q User's Guide," Report No. 9 (Revised), NSF Grant No. APR74-15256, Purdue University, School of Industrial Engineering, West Lafayette, Indiana, 1980.

[33] SOLBERG, J. J., "Capacity Planning with a Stochastic Workflow Model," *AIIE Transactions*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1981, pp. 116–122.

[34] STECKE, K. E., "Formulation and Solution of Nonlinear Integer Production Planning Problems for Flexible Manufacturing Systems," *Management Science*, Vol. 29, 1983, pp 273–288.

[35] STECKE, K. E., "Design, Planning, Scheduling and Control Problems of FMS," *Proceedings*, First ORSA/TIMS Special Interest Conference on Flexible Manufacturing Systems, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1984.

[36] STECKE, K. E., and J. J. SOLBERG, "The Optimality of Unbalancing Both Workloads and Machine Group Sizes in Closed Queueing Networks of Multiserver Queues," *Operational Research*, Vol. 33, 1985, pp 822–910.

[37] SURI, R., "An Overview of Evaluative Models for Flexible Manufacturing Systems," *Proceedings*, First ORSA/TIMS Special Interest Conference on Flexible Manufacturing Systems, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, August 1984, pp 8–15.

[38] SURI, R., and R. R. HILDEBRANT, "Modeling Flexible Manufacturing Systems Using Mean Value Analysis," *Journal of Manufacturing Systems*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1984, pp 27–38.

[39] SURI, R., and C. K. WHITNEY, "Decision Support Requirements in Flexible Manufacturing Systems," *Journal of Manufacturing Systems*, Vol. 1, 1984, pp 61–69.

[40] *Understanding Manufacturing Systems* (A Series of Technical Papers), Vol. I, Kearney & Trecker Corporation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

[41] VACCARI, J. A., "Forging in the Age of the FMS," Special Report 782, *American Machinist*, January 1986, pp 101–108.

[42] WATERBURY, R., "FMS Expands into Assembly," *Assembly Engineering*, October 1985, pp 34–37.

[43] WEMMERLOV, U., and D. J. JOHNSON, "Cellular Manufacturing at 46 User Plants: Implementation Experiences and Performance Improvements," *International Journal of Production Research*, Volume 35, 1997, pp 29–49.

[44] WINSHIP, J. T., "Flexible Sheetmetal Fabrication," Special Report 779, *American Machinist*, August 1985, pp 95–106.

[45] WU, S. D., and R. A. WYSK, "An Application of Discrete-Event Simulation to On-line Control and Scheduling in Flexible Manufacturing," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 27, 1989, pp. 247–262.

## PROBLEMS

### Bottleneck Model

**16.1** A flexible manufacturing cell consists of two machining workstations plus a load/unload station. The load/unload station is station 1. Station 2 performs milling operations and consists of one server (one CNC milling machine). Station 3 has one server that performs drilling (one CNC drill press). The three stations are connected by a part handling system that has one work carrier. The mean transport time is 2.5 min. The FMC produces three parts, A, B, and C. The part mix fractions and process routings for the three parts are presented in the table below. The operation frequency $f_{ijk} = 1.0$ for all operations. Determine: (a) maximum production rate of the FMC, (b) corresponding production rates of each product, (c) utilization of each machine in the system, and (d) number of busy servers at each station.

| *Part j* | *Part Mix $p_j$* | *Operation k* | *Description* | *Station i* | *Process Time $t_{ijk}$ (min)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.2 | 1 | Load | 1 | 3 |
| | | 2 | Mill | 2 | 20 |
| | | 3 | Drill | 3 | 12 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 2 |
| B | 0.3 | 1 | Load | 1 | 3 |
| | | 2 | Mill | 2 | 15 |
| | | 3 | Drill | 3 | 30 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 2 |
| C | 0.5 | 1 | Load | 1 | 3 |
| | | 2 | Drill | 3 | 14 |
| | | 3 | Mill | 2 | 22 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 2 |

**16.2** Solve Problem 16.1 except the number of servers at station 2 (CNC milling machines) = 3 and the number of servers at station 3 (CNC drill presses) = 2. Note that with the increase in the number of machines from two to five, the FMC is now an FMS according to our definitions in Section 16.1.2.

**16.3** An FMS consists of three stations plus a load/unload station. Station 1 loads and unloads parts from the FMS using two servers (material handling workers). Station 2 performs horizontal milling operations with two servers (two identical CNC horizontal milling machines).

Station 3 performs vertical milling operations with three servers (three identical CNC vertical milling machines). Station 4 performs drilling operations with two servers (two identical drill presses). The machines are connected by a part handling system that has two work carriers and a mean transport time = 3.5 min. The FMS produces four parts, A, B, C, and D, whose part mix fractions and process routings are presented in the table below. The operation frequency $f_{ijk}$ = 1.0 for all operations. Determine: (a) maximum production rate of the FMS, (b) utilization of each machine in ths system, and (c) average utilization of the system, using the server average $U_s$, Eq. (16.9).

| *Part j* | *Part Mix $p_j$* | *Operation k* | *Description* | *Station i* | *Process Time $t_{ijk}$(min)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.2 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 |
| | | 2 | H. Mill | 2 | 15 |
| | | 3 | V. Mill | 3 | 14 |
| | | 4 | Drill | 4 | 13 |
| | | 5 | Unload | 1 | 3 |
| B | 0.2 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 |
| | | 2 | Drill | 4 | 12 |
| | | 3 | H. Mill | 2 | 16 |
| | | 4 | V. Mill | 3 | 11 |
| | | 5 | Drill | 4 | 17 |
| | | 6 | Unload | 1 | 3 |
| C | 0.25 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 |
| | | 2 | H. Mill | 2 | 10 |
| | | 3 | Drill | 4 | 9 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 3 |
| D | 0.35 | 1 | Load | 1 | 4 |
| | | 2 | V. Mill | 3 | 18 |
| | | 3 | Drill | 4 | 8 |
| | | 4 | Unload | 1 | 3 |

**16.4** Solve Problem 16.3 except the number of carriers in the part handling system = 3.

**16.5** Suppose it is decided to increase the utilization of the two non-bottleneck machining stations in the FMS of Problem 16.4 by introducing a new part, part E, into the part mix. If the new product will be produced at a rate of 2 units/hr, what would be the ideal process routing (sequence and processing times) for part E that would increase the utilization of the two non-bottleneck machining stations to 100% each? The respective production rates of parts A, B, C, and D will remain the same as they are in Problem 16.4. Disregard the utilizations of the load/unload station and the part handling system.

**16.6** A semi-automated flexible manufacturing cell is used to produce three products. The products are made by two automated processing stations followed by an assembly station. There is also a load/unload station. Material handling between stations in the FMC is accomplished by mechanized carts that move tote bins containing the particular components to be processed and then assembled into a given product. The carts transfer tote bins between stations. In this way, the carts are kept busy while the tote bins are queued in front of the workstations. Each tote bin remains with the product throughout processing and assembly. The details of the FMC can be summarized as follows:

| Station | Description | Number of servers |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Load and unload | 2 human workers |
| 2 | Process X | 1 automated server |
| 3 | Process Y | 1 automated server |
| 4 | Assembly | 2 human workers |
| 5 | Transport | Number of carriers to be determined |

The product mix fractions and station processing times for the parts are presented in the table below. The same station sequence is followed by all products: 1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 1.

| Product $j$ | Product Mix $p_j$ | Station 1 (min) | Station 2 (min) | Station 3 (min) | Station 4 (min) | Station 1 (min) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.35 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| B | 0.25 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 2 |
| C | 0.40 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 2 |

The average cart transfer time between stations is 4 min. Use the bottleneck model to determine: (a) What is the bottleneck station in the FMC, assuming that the material handling system is not the bottleneck? (b) At full capacity, what is the overall production rate of the system and the rate for each product? (c) What is the minimum number of carts in the material handling system required to keep up with the production workstations? (d) Compute the overall utilization of the FMC. (e) What recommendations would you make to improve the efficiency and/or reduce the cost of operating the FMC?

**16.7** An FMS is used to produce four parts. The FMS consists of one load/unload station and two automated processing stations (processes X and Y). The number of servers for each station type is to be determined. The FMS also includes an automated conveyor system with individual carts to transport parts between servers. The carts move the parts from one server to the next, drop them off, and proceed to the next delivery task. Average time required per transfer is 3.5 min. The following table summarizes the FMS:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Station 1 | Load and unload | Number of human servers (workers) to be determined |
| Station 2 | Process X | Number of automated servers to be determined |
| Station 3 | Process Y | Number of automated servers to be determined |
| Station 4 | Transport system | Number of carts to be determined |

All parts follow the same routing, which is 1 → 2 → 3 → 1. The product mix and processing times at each station are presented in the table below:

| Product $j$ | Product Mix $p_j$ | Station 1 (min) | Station 2 (min) | Station 3 (min) | Station 1 (min) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.1 | 3 | 15 | 25 | 2 |
| B | 0.3 | 3 | 40 | 20 | 2 |
| C | 0.4 | 3 | 20 | 10 | 2 |
| D | 0.2 | 3 | 30 | 5 | 2 |

Required production is 10 parts/hr, distributed according to the product mix indicated. Use the bottleneck model to determine: (a) the minimum number of servers at each station and the minimum number of carts in the transport system that are required to satisfy production demand and (b) the utilization of each station for the answers above.

### Extended Bottleneck Model

**16.8** Use the extended bottleneck model to solve Problem 16.1 with the following number of parts in the system: (a) $N = 2$ parts and (b) $N = 4$ parts. Also determine the manufacturing lead time for the two cases of $N$ in (a) and (b).

**16.9** Use the extended bottleneck model to solve Problem 16.2 with the following number of parts in the system: (a) $N = 3$ parts and (b) $N = 6$ parts. Also determine the manufacturing lead time for the two cases of $N$ in (a) and (b).

**16.10** Use the extended bottleneck model to solve Problem 16.3 with the following number of parts in the system: (a) $N = 5$ parts, (b) $N = 8$ parts, and (c) $N = 12$ parts. Also determine the manufacturing lead time for the three cases of $N$ in (a), (b), and (c).

**16.11** Use the extended bottleneck model to solve Problem 16.4 with the following number of parts in the system: (a) $N = 5$ parts, (b) $N = 8$ parts, and (c) $N = 12$ parts. Also determine the manufacturing lead time for the three cases of $N$ in (a), (b), and (c).

**16.12** For the data given in Problem 16.6, use the extended bottleneck model to develop the relationships for production rate $R_p$ and manufacturing lead time MLT each as a function of the number of parts in the system $N$. Plot the relationships as in Figure 16.16.

**16.13** An FMS is used to produce three products. The FMS consists of a load/unload station, two automated processing stations, an inspection station, and an automated conveyor system with an individual cart for each product. The conveyor carts remain with the parts during their time in the system, and therefore the mean transport time includes not only the move time, but also the average total processing time per part. The number of servers at each station is given in the following table:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Station 1 | Load and unload | 2 workers |
| Station 2 | Process X | 3 servers |
| Station 3 | Process Y | 4 servers |
| Station 4 | Inspection | 1 server |
| Transport system | Conveyor | 8 carriers |

All parts follow either of two routings, which are $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 1$ or $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 1$, the difference being that inspections at station 4 are performed on only one part in four for each product ($f_{4jk} = 0.25$). The product mix and process times for the parts are presented in the table below:

| *Product j* | *Part Mix $p_j$* | *Station 1 (min)* | *Station 2 (min)* | *Station 3 (min)* | *Station 4 (min)* | *Station 1 (min)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.2 | 5 | 15 | 25 | 20 | 4 |
| B | 0.3 | 5 | 10 | 30 | 20 | 4 |
| C | 0.5 | 5 | 20 | 10 | 20 | 4 |

The move time between stations is 4 min. (a) Using the bottleneck model, show that the conveyor system is the bottleneck in the present FMS configuration, and determine the overall production rate of the system. (b) Determine how many carts are required to eliminate the conveyor system as the bottleneck. (c) With the number of carts determined in (b), use the extended bottleneck model to determine the production rate for the case when $N = 8$; that is, only eight parts are allowed in the system even though the conveyor system has a sufficient number of carriers to handle more than eight. (d) How close are your answers in (a) and (c)? Why?

**16.14** A group technology cell is organized to produce a particular family of products. The cell consists of three processing stations, each with one server; an assembly station with three servers; and a load/unload station with two servers. A mechanized transfer system moves the products between stations. The transfer system has a total of six transfer carts. Each cart includes a workholder that holds the products during their processing and assembly, and therefore each cart must remain with the product throughout processing and assembly. The cell resources can be summarized as follows:

| *Station* | *Description* | *Number of servers* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Load and unload | 2 workers |
| 2 | Process X | 1 server |
| 3 | Process Y | 1 server |
| 4 | Process Z | 1 server |
| 5 | Assembly | 3 workers |
| 6 | Transport system | 6 carriers |

The GT cell is currently used to produce four products. All products follow the same routing, which is $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 5 \rightarrow 1$. The product mix and station times for the parts are presented in the table below:

| *Product j* | *Product Mix $p_j$* | *Station 1 (min)* | *Station 2 (min)* | *Station 3 (min)* | *Station 4 (min)* | *Station 5 (min)* | *Station 1 (min)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.35 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 2.5 |
| B | 0.25 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 14 | 2.5 |
| C | 0.10 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 2.5 |
| D | 0.30 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 12 | 2.5 |

The average transfer time between stations takes 2 min in addition to the time spent at the workstation. Determine: (a) the bottleneck station in the GT cell and the critical value of $N$. Compute the overall production rate and manufacturing lead time of the cell, given that the number of parts in the system $= N^*$. If $N^*$ is not an integer, use the integer that is closest to $N^*$. (b) Compute the overall production rate and manufacturing lead time of the cell, given that the number of parts in the system $= N^* + 10$. If $N^*$ is not an integer, use the integer that is closest to $N^* + 10$. (c) Comment on the likely accuracies of the answers in (a) and (b) in light of Table 16.8 in the text.

**16.15** In Problem 16.14, compute the average manufacturing lead time for the two cases: (a) $N = N^*$, and (b) $N = N^* + 10$. If $N^*$ is not an integer, use the integers that are closest to $N^*$ and $N^* + 10$, respectively. (c) Also compute the manufacturing lead times for each product for the two cases.

**16.16** In Problem 16.14, what could be done to (a) increase the production rate and/or (b) reduce the operating costs of the cell in light of your analysis? Support your answers with calculations.

**16.17** A flexible manufacturing cell consists of a manual load/unload station, three CNC machines, and an automated guided vehicle system (AGVS) with two vehicles. The vehicles deliver parts to the individual machines, drop off the parts, then go perform other work. The workstations are listed in the table below, where the AGVS is listed as station 5.

| Station | Description | Servers |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Load and unload | 1 worker |
| 2 | Milling | 1 CNC milling machine |
| 3 | Drilling | 1 CNC drill press |
| 4 | Grinding | 1 CNC grinding machine |
| 5 | AGVS | 2 vehicles |

The FMC is used to machine four workparts. The product mix, routings, and processing times for the parts are presented in the table below:

| Part j | Part Mix $p_j$ | Station Routing | Station 1 (min) | Station 2 (min) | Station 3 (min) | Station 4 (min) | Station 1 (min) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0.25 | $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 1$ | 4 | 8 | 7 | 18 | 2 |
| B | 0.33 | $1 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 1$ | 4 | 9 | 10 | 0 | 2 |
| C | 0.12 | $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 1$ | 4 | 10 | 0 | 14 | 2 |
| D | 0.30 | $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 1$ | 4 | 6 | 12 | 16 | 2 |

The mean travel time of the AGVS between any two stations in the FMC is 3 min, which includes the time required to transfer loads to and from the stations. Given that the loading on the system is maintained at 10 parts (10 workparts in the system at all times), use the extended bottleneck model to determine: (a) the bottleneck station, (b) the production rate of the system and the average time to complete a unit of production, and (c) the overall utilization of the system, not including the AGVS.

## Sizing the FMS

**16.18** A flexible machining system is being planned that will consist of four workstations plus a part handling system. Station 1 will be a load/unload station. Station 2 will consist of horizontal machining centers. Station 3 will consist of vertical machining centers. Station 4 will be an inspection station. For the part mix that will be processed by the FMS, the workloads at the four stations are: $WL_1$ = 7.5 min, $WL_2$ = 22.0 min, $WL_3$ = 18.0 min, and $WL_4$ = 10.2 min. The workload of the part handling system $WL_5$ = 8.0 min. The FMS will be operated 16 hr/day, 250 day/yr. Maintenance will be performed during nonproduction hours, so uptime proportion (availability) is expected to be 97%. Annual production of the system will be 50,000 parts. Determine the number of machines (servers) of each type (station) required to satisfy production requirements.

**16.19** In Problem 16.18, determine (a) the utilizations of each station in the system for the specified production requirements and (b) the maximum possible production rate of the system if the bottleneck station were to operate at 100% utilization.

**16.20** Given the part mix, process routings, and processing times for the three parts in Problem 16.1. The FMS planned for this part family will operate 250 day/yr and the anticipated availability of the system is 90%. Determine how many servers at each station will be required to achieve an annual production rate of 40,000 parts/yr if (a) the FMS operates 8 hr/day, (b) 16 hr/day, and (c) 24 hr/day. (d) Which system configuration is preferred, and why?

**16.21** Given the part mix, process routings, and processing times for the four parts in Problem 16.3. The FMS proposed to machine these parts will operate 20 hr/day, 250 day/yr. Assume system availability = 95%. Determine: (a) how many servers at each station will be required to achieve an annual production rate of 75,000 parts/yr and (b) the utilization of each workstation. (c) What is the maximum possible annual production rate of the system if the bottleneck station were to operate at 100% utilization?

# chapter 17

# Manual Assembly Lines

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



Most manufactured consumer products are assembled. Each product consists of multiple components joined together by various assembly processes (Section 2.2.1). These kinds of products are usually made on a manual assembly line, which is a type III M manufacturing system in our classification scheme (Section 13.2). Factors favoring the use of manual assembly lines include the following:

- Demand for the product is high or medium.
- The products made on the line are identical or similar.
- The total work required to assemble the product can be divided into small work elements.
- It is technologically impossible or economically infeasible to automate the assembly operations.

Products characterized by these factors that are usually made on a manual assembly line are listed in Table 17.1.

Several reasons can be given to explain why manual assembly lines are so productive compared with alternative methods in which multiple workers each perform all of the tasks to assemble the products:

- ***Specialization of labor***. Called "division of labor" by Adam Smith (Historical Note 17.1), this principle asserts that when a large job is divided into small tasks and each task is assigned to one worker, the worker becomes highly proficient at performing the single task. Each worker becomes a specialist. One of the major explanations of specialization of labor is the ***learning curve*** (Section 13.4).
- ***Interchangeable parts***, in which each component is manufactured to sufficiently close tolerances that any part of a certain type can be selected for assembly with its mating component. Without interchangeable parts, assembly would require filing and fitting of mating components, rendering assembly line methods impractical.
- ***Work principle*** in material handling (Table 9.3, principle 3), which provides that each work unit flows smoothly through the production line, traveling minimum distances between stations.
- ***Line pacing***. Workers on an assembly line are usually required to complete their assigned tasks on each product unit within a certain cycle time, which paces the line to maintain a specified production rate. Pacing is generally implemented by means of a mechanized conveyor.

In the present chapter, we discuss the engineering and technology of manual assembly lines. Automated assembly systems are covered in Chapter 19.

**TABLE 17.1** Products Usually Made on Manual Assembly Lines

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Audio equipment | Lamps | Refrigerators |
| Automobiles | Luggage | Stoves |
| Cameras | Microwave ovens | Telephones |
| Cooking ranges | Personal computers and peripherals (printers, monitors, etc.) | Toasters |
| Dishwashers | | Toaster ovens |
| Dryers (laundry) | | Trucks, light and heavy |
| Electric motors | Power tools (drills, saws, etc.) | Video cassette players |
| Furniture | Pumps | Washing machines (laundry) |

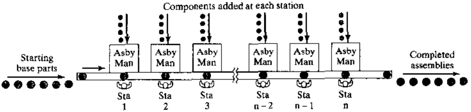



**Figure 17.1** Configuration of a production line. Key: Asby = assembly, Man = manual, Sta = workstation, $n$ = number of stations on the line.

## 17.1 FUNDAMENTALS OF MANUAL ASSEMBLY LINES

A ***manual assembly line*** is a production line that consists of a sequence of workstations where assembly tasks are performed by human workers, as depicted in Figure 17.1. Products are assembled as they move along the line. At each station, a portion of the total work is performed on each unit. The common practice is to "launch" base parts onto the beginning of the line at regular intervals. Each base part travels through successive stations and workers add components that progressively build the product. A mechanized material transport system is typically used to move the base part along the line as it is gradually transformed into the final product. However, in some manual lines, the product is simply moved manually from station-to-station. The production rate of an assembly line is determined by its slowest station. Stations capable of working faster are ultimately limited by the slowest station.

Manual assembly line technology has made a significant contribution to the development of American industry in the twentieth century, as indicated in our Historical Note 17.1. It remains an important production system throughout the world in the manufacture of automobiles, consumer appliances, and other assembled products made in large quantities listed in Table 17.1.

### Historical Note 17.1 Origins of the manual assembly line

Manual assembly lines are based largely on two fundamental principles. The first is ***division of labor***, argued by Adam Smith (1723–1790) in his book ***The Wealth of Nations***, published in England in 1776. Using a pin factory to illustrate the division of labor, the book describes how 10 workers, specializing in the various distinct tasks required to make a pin, produce 48,000 pins/day, compared with only a few pins that could be made by each worker performing all of the tasks on each pin. Smith did not invent division of labor; there had been other examples of its use in Europe for centuries, but he was the first to note its significance in production.

The second principle is ***interchangeable parts***, based on the efforts of Eli Whitney (1765–1825) and others at the beginning of the nineteenth century [16]. In 1797, Whitney contracted with the U.S. government to produce 10,000 muskets. At that time, guns were traditionally made by fabricating each part individually and then hand-fitting the parts together by filing. Each gun was therefore unique. Whitney believed that parts could be made with greater precision and then assembled without the need for fitting. After working for several years in his Connecticut factory, he traveled to Washington in 1801 to demonstrate the principle. Before President Thomas Jefferson and other government officials, Whitney picked components at random for 10 muskets and proceeded to assemble the guns. No special filing or fitting was required, and all of the guns worked perfectly. His achievement was made possible by the use of special machines, fixtures, and gages that he had developed in his factory. The principle of interchangeable parts took many years of refinement before becoming a practical reality, but it revolutionized methods of manufacturing. It is a prerequisite for mass production of assembled products.

The origins of modern production lines can be traced to the meat industry in Chicago, Illinois, and Cincinnati, Ohio. In the mid- and late-1800s, meat packing plants used unpowered overhead conveyors to move slaughtered stock from one worker to the next. These unpowered conveyors were later replaced by power-driven chain conveyors to create "disassembly lines," which were the predecessor of the assembly line. The work organization permitted meat cutters to concentrate on single tasks (division of labor).

American automotive industrialist Henry Ford had observed these meat-packing operations. In 1913, he and his engineering colleagues designed an assembly line in Highland Park, Michigan to produce magneto flywheels. Productivity increased fourfold. Flushed by success, Ford applied assembly line techniques to chassis fabrication. Using chain-driven conveyors and workstations arranged for the convenience and comfort of his assembly line workers, productivity was increased by a factor of eight, compared with previous single-station assembly methods. These and other improvements resulted in dramatic reductions in the price of the Model T Ford, which was the main product of the Ford Motor Company at the time. Masses of Americans could now afford an automobile because of Ford's achievement in cost reduction. This stimulated further development and use of production line techniques, including automated transport lines. It also forced Ford's competitors and suppliers to imitate his methods, and the manual assembly line became intrinsic to American industry.

### 17.1.1 Assembly Workstations

A ***workstation*** on a manual assembly line is a designated location along the work flow path at which one or more work elements are performed by one or more workers. The work elements represent small portions of the total work that must be accomplished to assemble the product. Typical assembly operations performed at stations on a manual assembly line are listed in Table 17.2. A given workstation also includes the tools (hand tools or powered tools) required to perform the task assigned to the station.

Some workstations are designed for workers to stand, while others allow the workers to sit. When the workers stand, they can move about the station area to perform their assigned task. This is common for assembly of large products, such as cars, trucks, and major appliances. The typical case is when the product is moved by a conveyor at constant velocity through the station. The worker begins the assembly task near the upstream side of the station and moves along with the work unit until the task is completed, then walks back to the

**TABLE 17.2** Typical Assembly Operations Performed on a Manual Assembly Line

| | |
|---|---|
| Application of adhesive | Riveting |
| Application of sealants | Shrink fitting applications |
| Arc welding | Snap fitting of two parts |
| Brazing | Soldering |
| Cotter pin applications | Spotwelding |
| Expansion fitting applications | Stapling |
| Insertion of components | Stitching |
| Press fitting | Threaded fastener applications |

*Source:* See Groover [13] for definitions.

next work unit and repeats the cycle. For smaller assembled products (such as small appliances, electronic devices, and subassemblies used on larger products), the workstations are usually designed to allow the workers to sit while they perform their tasks. This is more comfortable and less fatiguing for the worker and is generally more conducive to precision and accuracy in the assembly task.

We have previously defined manning level in Chapter 13 (Section 13.2.3) for various types of manufacturing systems. For a manual assembly line, the ***manning level*** of workstation $i$, symbolized $M_i$, is the number of workers assigned to that station; where $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$; and $n$ = number of workstations on the line. The generic case is one worker: $M_i = 1$. In cases where the product is large, such as a car or a truck, multiple workers are often assigned to one station, so that $M_i > 1$. Multiple manning conserves valuable floor space in the factory and reduces line length and throughput time because fewer stations are required. The average manning level of a manual assembly line is simply the total number of workers on the line divided by the number of stations; that is,

$$M = \frac{w}{n} \tag{17.1}$$

where $M$ = average manning level of the line (workers/station), $w$ = number of workers on the line, and $n$ = number of stations on the line. This seemingly simple ratio is complicated by the fact that manual assembly lines often include more workers than those assigned to stations, so that $M$ is not a simple average of $M_i$ values. These additional workers, called ***utility workers***, are not assigned to specific workstations; instead they are responsible for functions such as (1) helping workers who fall behind, (2) relieving workers for personal breaks, and (3) maintenance and repair duties. Including the utility workers in the worker count, we have

$$M = \frac{w_u + \sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i}{n} \tag{17.2}$$

where $w_u$ = number of utility workers assigned to the system; and $w_i$ = number of workers assigned specifically to station i for $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$. The parameter $w_i$ is almost always an integer, except for the unusual case where a worker is shared between two adjacent stations.

### 17.1.2 Work Transport Systems

There are two basic ways to accomplish the movement of work units along a manual assembly line: (1) manually or (2) by a mechanized system. Both methods provide the fixed routing (all work units proceed through the same sequence of stations) that is characteristic of production lines.

*Manual Methods of Work Transport.* In manual work transport, the units of product are passed from station-to-station by hand. Two problems result from this mode of operation: starving and blocking. ***Starving*** is the situation in which the assembly operator has completed the assigned task on the current work unit, but the next unit has not yet arrived at the station. The worker is thus starved for work. When a station is ***blocked***, it means that the operator has completed the assigned task on the current work unit but cannot pass the unit to the downstream station because that worker is not yet ready to receive it. The operator is therefore blocked from working.

To mitigate the effects of these problems, storage buffers are sometimes used between stations. In some cases, the work units made at each station are collected in batches and then moved to the next station. In other cases, work units are moved individually along a flat table or unpowered conveyor. When the task is finished at each station, the worker simply pushes the unit toward the downstream station. Space is often allowed for one or more work units in front of each workstation. This provides an available supply of work for the station as well as room for completed units from the upstream station. Hence, starving and blocking are minimized. The trouble with this method of operation is that it can result in significant work-in-process, which is economically undesirable. Also, workers are unpaced in lines that rely on manual transport methods, and production rates tend to be lower.

*Mechanized Work Transport.* Powered conveyors and other types of mechanized material handling equipment are widely used to move units along a manual assembly line. These systems can be designed to provide paced or unpaced operation of the line. Three major categories of work transport systems in production lines are: (a) continuous transport, (b) synchronous transport, and (c) asynchronous transport. These are illustrated schematically in Figure 17.2. Table 17.3 identifies some of the material transport equipment (Chapter 10) commonly associated with each of the categories.

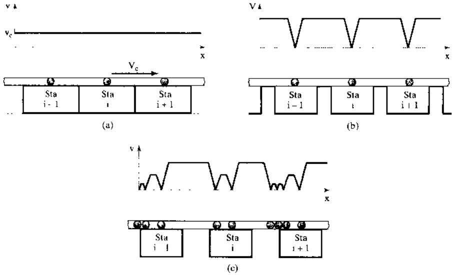



**Figure 17.2** Velocity-distance diagram and physical layout for three types of mechanized transport systems used in production lines: (a) continuous transport, (b) synchronous transport, and (c) asynchronous transport. Key: $v$ = velocity, $v_c$ = constant velocity of continuous transport conveyor, $x$ = distance in conveyor direction, Sta = workstation, $i$ = workstation identifier.

**TABLE 17.3** Material Handling Equipment Used to Obtain the Three Types of Fixed Routing Work Transport Depicted in Figure 17.2

| *Work Transport System* | *Material Handling Equipment (Text Reference)* |
|---|---|
| Continuous transport | Overhead trolley conveyor (Section 10.4)<br>Belt conveyor (Section 10.4)<br>Roller conveyor (Section 10.4)<br>Drag chain conveyor (Section 10.4) |
| Synchronous transport | Walking beam transport equipment (Section 18.1.2)<br>Rotary indexing mechanisms (Section 18.1.2) |
| Asynchronous transport | Power-and-free overhead conveyor (Section 10.4)<br>Cart-on-track conveyor (Section 10.4)<br>Powered roller conveyors (Section 10.4)<br>Automated guided vehicle system (Section 10.2)<br>Monorail systems (Article 10.3)<br>Chain-driven carousel systems (Section 11.4.2) |

*Source:* Text reference given in parentheses.

A ***continuous transport system*** uses a continuously moving conveyor that operates at constant velocity, as in Figure 17.2(a). This method is common on manual assembly lines. The conveyor usually runs the entire length of the line. However, if the line is very long, such as the case of an automobile final assembly plant, it is divided into segments with a separate conveyor for each segment.

Continuous transport can be implemented in two ways: (1) Work units are fixed to the conveyor, and (2) work units are removable from the conveyor. In the first case, the product is large and heavy (e.g., automobile, washing machine) and cannot be removed from the conveyor. The worker must therefore walk along with the product at the speed of the conveyor to accomplish the assigned task.

In the case where work units are small and lightweight, they can be removed from the conveyor for the physical convenience of the operator at each station. Another convenience for the worker is that the assigned task at the station does not need to be completed within a fixed cycle time. Flexibility is allowed each worker to deal with technical problems that may be encountered with a particular work unit. However, on average, each worker must maintain a production rate equal to that of the rest of the line. Otherwise, the line will produce ***incomplete units***, which occurs when parts that were supposed to be added at a station are not added because the worker runs out of time.

In ***synchronous transport systems***, all work units are moved simultaneously between stations with a quick, discontinuous motion, and then positioned at their respective stations. Depicted in Figure 17.2(b), this type of system is also known as ***intermittent transport***, which describes the motion experienced by the work units. Synchronous transport is not common for manual lines, due to the requirement that the task must be completed within a certain time limit. This can result in incomplete units and excessive stress on the assembly workers. Despite its disadvantages for manual assembly lines, synchronous transport is often ideal for automated production lines.

In an ***asynchronous transport system***, a work unit leaves a given station when the assigned task has been completed and the worker releases the unit. Work units move independently rather than synchronously. At any moment, some units are moving between workstations, while others are positioned at stations, as in Figure 17.2(c). With asynchronous transport systems, small queues of work units are permitted to form in front of each station. This tends to be forgiving of variations in worker task times.

### 17.1.3 Line Pacing

A manual assembly line operates at a certain cycle time, which is established to achieve the required production rate of the line. We explain how this cycle time is determined in Section 17.4. On average, each worker must complete the assigned task at his/her station within this cycle time, or else the required production rate will not be achieved. This pacing of the workers is one of the reasons why a manual assembly line is successful. Pacing provides a discipline for the assembly line workers that more or less guarantees a certain production rate. From the viewpoint of management, this is desirable.

Manual assembly lines can be designed with three alternative levels of pacing: (1) rigid pacing, (2) pacing with margin, and (3) no pacing. In ***rigid pacing***, each worker is allowed only a certain fixed time each cycle to complete the assigned task. The allowed time in rigid pacing is (usually) set equal to the cycle time of the line. Rigid pacing occurs when the line uses a synchronous work transport system. Rigid pacing has several undesirable aspects. First, in the performance of any repetitive task by a human worker, there is inherent variability in the time required to complete the task. This is incompatible with a rigid pacing discipline. Second, rigid pacing is emotionally and physically stressful to human workers. Although some level of stress is conducive to improved human performance, fast pacing on an assembly line throughout an 8-hr shift (or longer) can have harmful effects on workers. Third, in a rigidly paced operation, if the task has not been completed within the fixed cycle time, the work unit exits the station incomplete. This may inhibit completion of subsequent tasks at downstream stations. Whatever tasks are left undone on the work unit at the regular workstations must later be completed by some other worker to yield an acceptable product.

In ***pacing with margin***, the worker is allowed to complete the task at the station within a specified time range. The maximum time of the range is longer than the cycle time, so that a worker is permitted to take more time if a problem occurs or if the task time required for a particular work unit is longer than the average. (This occurs when different product styles are produced on the same assembly line.) There are several ways in which pacing with margin can be achieved: (1) allowing queues of work units to form between stations, (2) designing the line so that the time a work unit spends inside each station is longer than the cycle time, and (3) allowing the worker to move beyond the boundaries of his/her own station. In method (1), work units are allowed to form queues in front of each station, thus guaranteeing that the workers are never starved for work, but also providing extra time for some work units as long as other units take less time. Method (2) applies to lines in which work units are fixed to a continuously moving conveyor and cannot be removed. Because the conveyor speed is constant, by designing the station length to be longer than the distance needed by the worker to complete the assigned task, the time spent by the work unit inside the station boundaries (called the ***tolerance time***) is longer than the cycle time. In method (3), the worker is simply allowed to: (a) move upstream beyond the immediate station to get an early start on the next work unit or (b) move downstream past the current station boundary to finish the task on the current work unit. In either case, there are usually practical limits on how far the worker can move upstream or downstream, hence making this a case of pacing with margin. The terms ***upstream allowance*** and ***downstream allowance*** are sometimes used to designate these limits in movement. In all of these methods, as long as the worker maintains an average pace that matches the cycle time, the required cycle rate of the line will be achieved.

The third level of pacing is when there is ***no pacing***, meaning that no time limit exists within which the task at the station must be finished. In effect, each assembly operator works at his/her own pace. This case can occur when (1) manual work transport is used on the line, (2) work units can be removed from the conveyor, thus allowing the worker to take as much time as desired to complete a given unit, or (3) an asynchronous conveyor is used, and the worker controls the release of each work unit from the station. In each of these cases, there is no mechanical means of achieving a pacing discipline on the line. To reach the required production rate, the workers are motivated to achieve a certain pace either by their own collective work ethic or by an incentive system sponsored by the company.

### 17.1.4 Coping with Product Variety

Because of the versatility of human workers, manual assembly lines can be designed to deal with differences in assembled products. In general, the product variety must be relatively soft (Sections 1.1 and 2.3.1). Three types of assembly line can be distinguished: (1) single model, (2) batch model, and (3) mixed model. These assembly line types are consistent with the three cases S, B, and X in our classification of manufacturing systems (Section 13.2.4).

A ***single model line*** is one that produces many units of one product, and there is no variation in the product. Every work unit is identical, and so the task performed at each station is the same for all product units. This line type is intended for products with high demand.

Batch model and mixed model lines are designed to produce two or more models, but different approaches are used to cope with the model variations. A ***batch model line*** produces each model in batches. Workstations are set up to produce the required quantity of the first model, then the stations are reconfigured to produce the next model, and so on. Products are often assembled in batches when demand for each product is medium. It is generally more economical to use one assembly line to produce several products in batches than to build a separate line for each different model.

When we state that the workstations are set up, we are referring to the assignment of tasks to each station on the line, including the special tools needed to perform the tasks, and the physical layout of the station. The models made on the line are usually similar, and the tasks to make them are therefore similar. However, differences exist among models so that a different sequence of tasks is usually required, and tools used at a given workstation for the last model might not be the same as those required for the next model. One model may take more total time than another, requiring the line to be operated at a slower pace. Worker retraining or new equipment may be needed to produce each new model. For these kinds of reasons, changes in the station setup are required before production of the next model can begin. These changeovers result in lost production time on a batch model line.

A ***mixed model line*** also produces more than one model; however, the models are not produced in batches. Instead, they are made simultaneously on the same line. While one model is being worked on at one station, a different model is being made at the next station. Each station is equipped to perform the variety of tasks needed to produce any model that moves through it. Many consumer products are assembled on mixed model lines. Examples are automobiles and major appliances, which are characterized by model variations, differences in available options, and even brand name differences in some cases.

Advantages of a mixed model line over a batch model line include: (1) no lost production time switching between models, (2) high inventories typical of batch production are avoided, and (3) production rates of different models can be adjusted as product demand changes. On the other hand, the problem of assigning tasks to workstations so that they all share an equal workload is more complex on a mixed model line. Scheduling (determin-

| Product variety | Assembly line type |
|---|---|
| Hard variety | Batch model line |
| Soft variety | Mixed model line |
| No variety | Single model line |

**Figure 17.3** Three types of manual assembly line related to product variety.

ing the sequence of models) and logistics (getting the right parts to each workstation for the model currently at that station) are more difficult in this type of line. And in general, a batch model line can accommodate wider variations in model configurations.

As a summary of this discussion, Figure 17.3 indicates the position of each of the three assembly line types on a scale of product variety.

## 17.2 ALTERNATIVE ASSEMBLY SYSTEMS

The well-defined pace of a manual assembly line has merit from the viewpoint of maximizing production rate. However, assembly line workers often complain about the monotony of the repetitive tasks they must perform and the unrelenting pace they must maintain when a moving conveyor is used. Poor quality workmanship, sabotage of the line equipment, and other problems have occurred on high production assembly lines. To address these issues, alternative assembly systems are available in which either the work is made less monotonous and repetitious by enlarging the scope of the tasks performed, or the work is automated. In this section, we identify the following alternative assembly systems: (1) single-station manual assembly cells, (2) assembly cells based on worker teams, and (3) automated assembly systems.

A ***single-station manual assembly cell*** consists of a single workplace in which the assembly work is accomplished on the product or some major subassembly of the product. This method is generally used on products that are complex and produced in small quantities, sometimes one-of-a-kind. The workplace may utilize one or more workers, depending on the size of the product and the required production rate. Custom-engineered products, such as machine tools, industrial equipment, and prototype models of complex products (e.g., aircraft, appliances, and cars) make use of a single manual station to perform the assembly work on the product.

***Assembly by worker teams*** involves the use of multiple workers assigned to a common assembly task. The pace of the work is controlled largely by the workers themselves rather than by a pacing mechanism such as a powered conveyor moving at a constant speed. Team assembly can be implemented in several ways. A single station manual assembly cell in which there are multiple workers is a form of worker team. The assembly tasks performed by each worker are generally far less repetitious and broader in scope than the corresponding work on an assembly line.

Other ways of organizing assembly work by teams include moving the product through multiple workstations, but having the same worker team follow the product from station-to-station. This form of team assembly was pioneered by Volvo, the Swedish car maker. It uses independently operated automated guided vehicles (Section 10.2) that hold major components and/or subassemblies of the automobile and deliver them to manual assembly workstations along the line. At each station, the guided vehicle stops at the station and is not released to proceed until the assembly task at that station has been completed by the worker team. Thus, production rate is determined by the pace of the team, rather than by a moving conveyor. The reason for moving the work unit through multiple stations, rather than performing all the assembly at one station, is because the many component parts assembled to the car must be located at more than one station. As the car moves through each station, parts from that station are added. The difference between this and the conventional assembly line is that all work is done by one worker team moving with the car. Accordingly, the members of the team achieve a greater level of personal satisfaction at having accomplished a major portion of the car assembly. Workers on a conventional line who perform a very small portion of the total car assembly do not usually have this personal satisfaction.

The use of automated guided vehicles allows the assembly system to be configured with parallel paths, queues of parts between stations, and other features not typically found on a conventional assembly line. In addition, these team assembly systems can be designed to be highly flexible, capable of dealing with variations in product and corresponding variations in assembly cycle times at the different workstations. Accordingly, this type of team assembly is generally used when there are many different models to be produced, and the variations in the models result in significant differences in station service times.

Reported benefits of worker team assembly systems compared with conventional assembly line include: greater worker satisfaction, better product quality, increased capability to accommodate model variations, and greater ability to cope with problems that require more time rather than stopping the entire production line. The principal disadvantage is that these team systems are not capable of the high production rates characteristic of a conventional assembly line.

***Automated assembly systems*** use automated methods at workstations rather than humans. In our classification scheme, these can be type I A or type III A manufacturing systems, depending on whether there are one or more workstations in the system. We defer discussion of automated assembly systems until Chapter 19, where we also discuss hybrid assembly systems (type III H manufacturing systems).

## 17.3 DESIGN FOR ASSEMBLY

Design for assembly (DFA) has received much attention in recent years because assembly operations constitute a high labor cost for many manufacturing companies. The key to successful ***design for assembly*** can be simply stated [4]: (1) design the product with as few parts as possible, and (2) design the remaining parts so they are easy to assemble. The cost of assembly is determined largely during product design, because that is when the number of components in the product is determined, and decisions are made about how these components will be assembled. Once these decisions have been made, there is little that can be done in manufacturing to influence assembly costs (except, of course, to manage the operations efficiently).

In this section, we consider a few of the principles that can be applied during product design to facilitate assembly. Most of the principles have been developed in the context of mechanical assembly, although some of them apply to joining processes such as welding, soldering, brazing, and adhesive bonding. Much of the research in design for assembly has been motivated by the increasing use of automated assembly systems in industry. We consider the design guidelines for automated assembly in Section 19.2. In our present discussion, we provide some important general principles of design for assembly, compiled from several sources [1], [4], [5]. They apply to both manual and automated operations, and their goal is to achieve the required design function by the simplest and lowest cost means.

- ***Use the fewest number of parts possible to reduce the amount of assembly required.*** This principle is implemented by combining functions within the same part that might otherwise be accomplished by separate components; for example, using a plastic molded part instead of an assembly consisting of sheet metal parts.
- ***Reduce the number of threaded fasteners required.*** Instead of using separate threaded fasteners, design the components to be assembled using snap fits, retaining rings, integral fasteners, and similar fastening mechanisms that can be accomplished more rapidly. Use threaded fasteners only where justified (e.g., where disassembly or adjustment is required).
- ***Standardize fasteners.*** This is intended to reduce the number of sizes and styles of fasteners required in the product. Ordering and inventory problems are reduced, the assembly worker does not have to distinguish between so many separate fasteners, the workstation is simplified, and the variety of separate fastening tools is reduced.
- ***Reduce parts orientation difficulties.*** Orientation problems are generally reduced by designing parts to be symmetrical or minimizing the number of asymmetric features. This allows easier handling and insertion during assembly.
- ***Avoid parts that tangle.*** Certain part configurations are more likely to become entangled in parts bins, frustrating assembly workers or jamming automatic feeders. Parts with hooks, holes, slots, and curls exhibit more of this tendency than parts without these features.

## 17.4 ANALYSIS OF SINGLE MODEL ASSEMBLY LINES

The relationships developed in this and the following section are applicable to single model assembly lines. With a little modification the same relationships apply to batch model lines. We consider mixed model assembly lines in Section 17.6.

The assembly line must be designed to achieve a production rate $R_p$ sufficient to satisfy demand for the product. Product demand is often expressed as an annual quantity, which can be reduced to an hourly rate. Management must decide how many shifts per week the line will operate and how many hours per shift. Assuming the plant operates 50 wk/yr, then the required hourly production rate is given by

$$R_p = \frac{D_a}{50SH} \tag{17.3}$$

where $R_p$ = average production rate (units/hr), $D_a$ = annual demand for the single product to be made on the line (units/yr), $S$ = number of shifts/wk, and $H$ = number of hr/shift. If the line operates 52 wk rather than 50, then $R_p = D_a/52SH$. If a time period other than a year is used for product demand, then the equation can be adjusted by using consistent time units in the numerator and denominator.

This production rate must be converted to a cycle time $T_c$, which is the time interval at which the line will be operated. The cycle time must take into account the reality that some production time will be lost due to occasional equipment failures, power outages, lack of a certain component needed in assembly, quality problems, labor problems, and other reasons. As a consequence of these losses, the line will be up and operating only a certain proportion of time out of the total shift time available; this uptime proportion is referred to as the ***line efficiency***. The cycle time can be determined as

$$T_c = \frac{60E}{R_p} \tag{17.4}$$

where $T_c$ = cycle time of the line (min/cycle); $R_p$ = required production rate, as determined from Eq. (17.3) (units/hr); the constant 60 converts the hourly production rate to a cycle time in minutes; and $E$ = line efficiency, the proportion of shift time that the line is up and operating. Typical values of E for a manual assembly line are in the range 0.90–0.98. The cycle time $T_c$ establishes the ideal cycle rate for the line:

$$R_c = \frac{60}{T_c} \tag{17.5}$$

where $R_c$ = cycle rate for the line (cycles/hr), and $T_c$ is in min/cycle as in Eq. (17.4). This rate $R_c$ must be greater than the required production rate $R_p$ because the line efficiency E is less than 100%. $R_p$ and $R_c$ are related to E as follows:

$$E = \frac{R_p}{R_c} \tag{17.6}$$

An assembled product requires a certain total amount of time to build, called the ***work content time*** $T_{wc}$. This is the total time of all work elements that must be performed on the line to make one unit of the product. It represents the total amount of work that is accomplished on the product by the assembly line. It is useful to compute a theoretical minimum number of workers that will be required on the assembly line to produce a product with known $T_{wc}$ and specified production rate $R_p$. The approach is basically the same as we used in Section 14.4.1 to compute the number of workstations required to achieve a specified production workload. Let us make use of Eq. (14.6) in that section to determine the number of workers on the production line:

$$w = \frac{WL}{AT} \tag{17.7}$$

where $w$ = number of workers on the line; $WL$ = workload to be accomplished in a given time period; and $AT$ = available time in the period. The time period of interest will be 60 min. The ***workload*** in that period is the hourly production rate multiplied by the work content time of the product; that is,

$$WL = R_pT_{wc} \tag{17.8}$$

where $R_p$ = production rate (pc/hr), and $T_{wc}$ = work content time (min/pc).

Eq. (17.4) can be rearranged to the form $R_p = 60E/T_c$. Substituting this into Eq. (17.8), we have

$$WL = \frac{60ET_{wc}}{T_c}$$

The available time $AT$ = 1 hr (60 min) multiplied by the proportion uptime on the line; that is,

$$AT = 60E$$

Substituting these terms for $WL$ and $AT$ into Eq. (17.7), the equation reduces to the ratio $T_{wc}/T_c$. Since the number of workers must be an integer, we can state:

$$w^* = \text{Minimum Integer} \geq \frac{T_{wc}}{T_c} \tag{17.9}$$

where $w^*$ = theoretical minimum number of workers. If we assume one worker per station ($M_i = 1$ for all $i, i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$; and the number of utility workers $w_u = 0$), then this ratio also gives the theoretical minimum number of workstations on the line.

Achieving this minimum value in practice is very unlikely. Eq. (17.9) ignores several factors that exist in a real assembly line. These factors tend to increase the number of workers above the theoretical minimum value:

- ***Repositioning losses.*** Some time will be lost at each station for repositioning of the work unit or the worker. Thus, the time available per worker to perform assembly is less than $T_c$.
- ***The line balancing problem.*** It is virtually impossible to divide the work content time evenly among all workstations. Some stations are bound to have an amount of work that requires less time than $T_c$. This tends to increase the number of workers.
- ***Task time variability.*** There is inherent and unavoidable variability in the time required by a worker to perform a given assembly task. Extra time must be allowed for this variability.
- ***Quality problems.*** Defective components and other quality problems cause delays and rework that add to the workload.

Let us consider repositioning losses and imperfect balancing in the following discussion. Task time variability and quality problems on manual assembly lines are treated in [20], [22], and [25]. For simplicity, let us limit our discussion to the case where one worker is assigned to each station ($M_i = 1$). Thus, when we refer to a certain station, we are referring to the worker at that station, and when we refer to a certain worker, we are referring to the station where that worker is assigned.

### 17.4.1 Repositioning Losses

***Repositioning losses*** on a production line occur because some time is required each cycle to reposition the worker or the work unit or both. For example, on a continuous transport line with work units attached to the conveyor and moving at a constant speed, time is required for the worker to walk from the unit just completed to the upstream unit entering the station. In other conveyorized systems, time is required to remove the work unit from the conveyor and position it at the station for the worker to perform his or her task on it. In all manual assembly lines, there is some lost time for repositioning. Let us define $T_r$ as the time required each cycle to reposition the worker or the work unit or both. In our subsequent analysis, we assume that $T_r$ is the same for all workers, although repositioning times may actually vary among stations.

The repositioning time $T_r$ must be subtracted from the cycle time $T_c$ to obtain the available time remaining to perform the actual assembly task at each workstation. Let us refer to the time to perform the assigned task at each station as the ***service time***. It is symbolized $T_{si}$, where i is used to identify station $i$, $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$. Service times will vary among stations because the total work content cannot be allocated evenly among stations. Some stations will have more work than others will. There will be at least one station at which $T_{si}$ is maximum. This is sometimes referred to as the ***bottleneck station*** because it establishes the cycle time for the entire line. This maximum service time must be no greater than the difference between the cycle time $T_c$ and the repositioning time $T_r$; that is,

$$\text{Max}\{T_{si}\} \leq T_c - T_r \quad \text{for } i = 1, 2, \ldots, n \tag{17.10}$$

where $\text{Max}\{T_{si}\}$ = maximum service time among all stations (min/cycle), $T_c$ = cycle time for the assembly line from Eq. (17.4) (min/cycle), and $T_r$ = repositioning time (assumed the same for all stations) (min/cycle). For simplicity of notation, let us use $T_s$ to denote this maximum allowable service time; that is,

$$T_s = \text{Max}\{T_{si}\} \leq T_c - T_r \tag{17.11}$$

At all stations where $T_{si}$ is less than $T_s$, workers will be idle for a portion of the cycle, as portrayed in Figure 17.4. When the maximum service time does not consume the entire

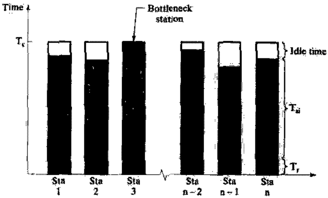



**Figure 17.4** Components of cycle time at several stations on a manual assembly line. At the slowest station, the bottleneck station, idle time = zero; at other stations idle time exists. Key: Sta = workstation, $n$ = number of workstations on the line, $T_r$ = repositioning time, $T_{si}$ = service time, $T_c$ = cycle time.

available time $T_c - T_r$ (that is, when $T_s < T_c - T_r$), then this means that the line could be operated at a faster pace than $T_c$ from Eq. (17.4). In this case, the cycle time $T_c$ is usually reduced so that $T_c = T_s + T_r$; this allows the production rate to be increased slightly.

Repositioning losses reduce the amount of time that can be devoted to productive assembly work on the line. These losses can be expressed in terms of an efficiency factor as follows:

$$E_r = \frac{T_s}{T_c} = \frac{T_c - T_r}{T_c} \tag{17.12}$$

where $E_r$ = ***repositioning efficiency***, and the other terms are defined above.

### 17.4.2 The Line Balancing Problem

The work content performed on an assembly line consists of many separate and distinct work elements. Invariably, the sequence in which these elements can be performed is restricted, at least to some extent. And the line must operate at a specified production rate, which reduces to a required cycle time as defined by Eq. (17.4). Given these conditions, the line balancing problem is concerned with assigning the individual work elements to workstations so that all workers have an equal amount of work. Let us discuss the terminology of the line balancing problem in this section. We present some of the algorithms to solve it in Section 17.5.

Two important concepts in line balancing are the separation of the total work content into minimum rational work elements and the precedence constraints that must be satisfied by these elements. Based on these concepts we can define performance measures for solutions to the line balancing problem.

*Minimum Rational Work Elements.* A ***minimum rational work element*** is a small amount of work having a specific limited objective, such as adding a component to the base part or joining two components or performing some other small portion of the total work content. A minimum rational work element cannot be subdivided any further without loss of practicality. For example, drilling a through-hole in a piece of sheet metal or fastening two machined components together with a bolt and screw would be defined as minimum rational work elements. It makes no sense to divide these tasks into smaller elements of work. The sum of the work element times is equal to the work content time; that is,

$$T_{wc} = \sum_{k=1}^{n_e} T_{ek} \tag{17.13}$$

where $T_{ek}$ = time to perform work element $k$ (min), and $n_e$ = number of work elements into which the work content is divided; that is, $k = 1, 2, \ldots, n_e$.

In line balancing, we make the following assumptions about work element times: (1) Element times are constant values, and (2) $T_{ek}$ values are additive; that is, the time to perform two or more work elements in sequence is the sum of the individual element times. In fact, we know these assumptions are not quite true. Work element times are variable, leading to the problem of task time variability. And there is often motion economy that can be achieved by combining two or more work elements, thus violating the additivity assumption. Nevertheless, these assumptions are made to allow solution of the line balancing problem.

The task time at station $i$, or service time as we are calling it, $T_{si}$, is composed of the work element times that have been assigned to that station; that is,

$$T_{si} = \sum_{k \in i} T_{ek} \tag{17.14}$$

An underlying assumption in this equation is that all $T_{ek}$ are less than the maximum service time $T_s$.

Different work elements require different times, and when the elements are grouped into logical tasks and assigned to workers, the station service times $T_{si}$ are not likely to be equal. Thus, simply because of the variation among work element times, some workers will be assigned more work, while others will be assigned less. Although service times vary from station-to-station, they must add up to the work content time:

$$T_{wc} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} T_{si} \tag{17.15}$$

***Precedence Constraints.*** In addition to the variation in element times that make it difficult to obtain equal service times for all stations, there are restrictions on the order in which the work elements can be performed. Some elements must be done before others. For example, to create a threaded hole, the hole must be drilled before it can be tapped. A machine screw that will use the tapped hole to attach a mating component cannot be fastened before the hole has been drilled and tapped. These technological requirements on the work sequence are called ***precedence constraints***. As we shall see later, they complicate the line balancing problem.

Precedence constraints can be presented graphically in the form of a ***precedence diagram***, which indicates the sequence in which the work elements must be performed. Work elements are symbolized by nodes, and the precedence requirements are indicated by arrows connecting the nodes. The sequence proceeds from left to right. Figure 17.5 presents the precedence diagram for the following example, which illustrates the terminology and some of the equations presented here.

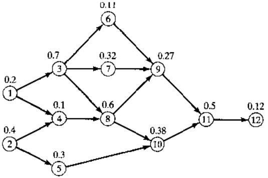



**Figure 17.5** Precedence diagram for Example 17.1. Nodes represent work elements, and arrows indicate the sequence in which the elements must be done. Element times are shown above each node.

**EXAMPLE 17.1 A Problem for Line Balancing**

A sma.l electrical appliance is to be produced on a single model assembly line. The work content of assembling the product has been reduced to the work elements listed in Table 17.4. The table also lists the standard times that have been established for each element as well as the precedence order in which they must be performed. The line is to be balanced for an annual demand of 100,000 unit/yr. The line will operate 50 wk/yr, 5 shifts/wk, and 7.5 hr/shift. Manning level will be one worker per station. Previous experience suggests that the uptime efficiency for the line will be 96%, and repositioning time lost per cycle will be 0.08 min. Determine: (a) total work content time $T_{wc}$, (b) required hourly production rate $R_p$ to achieve the annual demand, (c) cycle time $T_c$, (d) theoretical minimum number of workers required on the line, and (e) service time $T_s$ to which the line must be balanced.

**TABLE 17.4** Work Elements for Example 17.1

| No. | *Work Element Description* | $T_{ek}$ *(min)* | *Must Be Preceded By* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Place frame in workholder and clamp | 0.2 | – |
| 2 | Assemble plug, grommet to power cord | 0.4 | – |
| 3 | Assemble brackets to frame | 0.7 | 1 |
| 4 | Wire power cord to motor | 0.1 | 1,2 |
| 5 | Wire power cord to switch | 0.3 | 2 |
| 6 | Assemble mechanism plate to bracket | 0.11 | 3 |
| 7 | Assemble blade to bracket | 0.32 | 3 |
| 8 | Assemble motor to brackets | 0.6 | 3,4 |
| 9 | Align blade and attach to motor | 0.27 | 6,7,8 |
| 10 | Assemble switch to motor bracket | 0.38 | 5,8 |
| 11 | Attach cover, inspect, and test | 0.5 | 9,10 |
| 12 | Place in tote pan for packing | 0.12 | 11 |

***Solution:*** (a) The total work content time is the sum of the work element times in Table 17.4.

$$T_{wc} = 4.0 \text{ min}$$

(b) Given the annual demand, the hourly production rate is

$$R_p = \frac{100{,}000}{50(5)(7.5)} = 53.33 \text{ units/hr}$$

(c) The corresponding cycle time $T_c$ with an uptime efficiency of 96% is

$$T_c = \frac{60(0.96)}{53.33} = 1.08 \text{ min}$$

(d) The theoretical minimum number of workers is given by Eq. (17.9):

$$w^* = \left(\text{Min Int} \geq \frac{4.0}{1.08} = 3.7\right) = 4 \text{ workers}$$

(e) The available service time against which the line must be balanced is

$$T_s = 1.08 - 0.08 = 1.00 \text{ min.}$$

*Measures of Line Balance Efficiency.* Because of the differences in minimum rational work element times and the precedence constraints among the elements, it is virtually impossible to obtain a perfect line balance. Measures must be defined to indicate how good a given line balancing solution is. One possible measure is ***balance efficiency***, which is the work content time divided by the total available service time on the line:

$$E_b = \frac{T_{wc}}{wT_s} \tag{17.16}$$

where $E_b$ = balance efficiency, often expressed as a percentage; $T_s$ = the maximum available service time on the line $(\text{Max}\{T_{si}\})$ (min/cycle); and $w$ = number of workers. The denominator in Eq. (17.16) gives the total service time available on the line to devote to the assembly of one product unit. The closer the values of $T_{wc}$ and $wT_s$, the less idle time on the line. $E_b$ is therefore a measure of how good the line balancing solution is. A perfect line balance yields a value of $E_b$ = 1.00. Typical line balancing efficiencies in industry range between 0.90 and 0.95.

The complement of balance efficiency is ***balance delay***, which indicates the amount of time lost due to imperfect balancing as a ratio to the total time available; that is,

$$d = \frac{(wT_s - T_{wc})}{wT_s} \tag{17.17}$$

where $d$ = balance delay; and the other terms have the same meaning as before. A balance delay of zero indicates a perfect balance. Note that $E_b + d = 1$.

*Worker Requirements.* In our discussion of the relationships in this section, we have identified three factors that reduce the productivity of a manual assembly line. They can all be expressed as efficiencies:

1. ***line efficiency***, the proportion of uptime on the line $E$, as defined in Eq. (17.6)
2. ***repositioning efficiency***, $E_r$, as defined in Eq. (17.12)
3. ***balancing efficiency***, $E_b$, as defined in Eq. (17.16)

Together, they comprise the overall labor efficiency on the assembly line; defined as:

$$\text{Labor efficiency on the assembly line} = E\,E_r\,E_b \tag{17.18}$$

Using this measure of labor efficiency, we can calculate a more realistic value for the number of workers on the assembly line, based on Eq. (17.9):

$$w = \text{Minimum Integer} \geq \frac{R_p T_{wc}}{60EE_rE_b} = \frac{T_{wc}}{E_rE_bT_c} = \frac{T_{wc}}{E_bT_s} \tag{17.19}$$

where $w$ = number of workers required on the line, $R_p$ = hourly production rate (units/hr), and $T_{wc}$ = work content time per product to be accomplished on the line (min/unit). The trouble with this relationship is that it is difficult to determine values for $E$, $E_r$, and $E_b$ before the line is built and operating. Nevertheless, the equation provides an accurate model of the parameters that affect the number of workers required to accomplish a given workload on a single model assembly line.

### 17.4.3 Workstation Considerations

Let us attach a quantitative definition to some of the assembly line parameters discussed in Section 17.1.1. A workstation is a position along the assembly line, where one or more workers perform assembly tasks. If the manning level is one for all stations ($M_i = 1.0$ for $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$), then the number of stations is equal to the number of workers. In general, for any value of $M$ for the line,

$$n = \frac{w}{M} \tag{17.20}$$

A workstation has a length dimension $L_{si}$, where i denotes station $i$. The total length of the assembly line is the sum of the station lengths:

$$L = \sum_{i=1}^{n} L_{si} \tag{17.21}$$

where $L$ = length of the assembly line (m, ft), and $L_{si}$ = length of station $i$ (m, ft). In the case when all $L_{si}$ are equal,

$$L = nL_s \tag{17.22}$$

where $L_s$ = station length (m, ft).

A common transport system used on manual assembly lines is a constant speed conveyor. Let us consider this case in developing the following relationships. Base parts are launched onto the beginning of the line at constant time intervals equal to the cycle time $T_c$. This provides a constant feed rate of base parts, and if the base parts remain fixed to the conveyor during their assembly, this feed rate will be maintained throughout the line. The feed rate is simply the reciprocal of the cycle time:

$$f_p = \frac{1}{T_c} \tag{17.23}$$

where $f_p$ = feed rate on the line (products/min). A constant feed rate on a constant speed conveyor provides a center-to-center distance between base parts given by

$$s_p = \frac{v_c}{f_p} = v_c T_c \tag{17.24}$$

where $s_p$ = center-to-center spacing between base parts (m/part, ft/part), and $v_c$ = velocity of the conveyor (m/min, ft/min).

As we discussed in Section 17.1.3, pacing with margin is a desirable way to operate the line to achieve the desired production rate and at the same time allow for some product-to-product variation in task times at workstations. One way to achieve pacing with margin in a continuous transport system is to provide a tolerance time that is greater than the cycle time. ***Tolerance time*** is defined as the time a work unit spends inside the boundaries of the workstation. It is determined as the length of the station divided by the conveyor velocity; that is,

$$T_t = \frac{L_s}{v_c} \tag{17.25}$$

where $T_t$ = tolerance time (min/part), assuming that all station lengths are equal. If stations have different lengths, identified by $L_{si}$, then the tolerance times will differ proportionally, since $v_c$ is constant.

The author believes a good rule-of-thumb is for the ratio of tolerance time to cycle time to be around 1.5. This permits the assembly worker to deal with modest variations in unit-to-unit task time. Limitations on floor space do not always permit this rule to be applied. Ratios of $T_t/T_c \cong 1.0$ are often used when the product is large and workers are allowed to travel beyond their own station boundaries upstream and/or downstream.

The total elapsed time a work unit spends on the assembly line can be determined simply as the length of the line divided by the conveyor velocity. It is also equal to the tolerance time multiplied by the number of stations. Expressing these relationships in equation form, we have

$$ET = \frac{L}{v_c} = nT_t \tag{17.26}$$

where $ET$ = elapsed time a work unit (specifically, the base part) spends on the conveyor during its assembly (min).

## 17.5 LINE BALANCING ALGORITHMS

The objective in line balancing is to distribute the total workload on the assembly line as evenly as possible among the workers. This objective can be expressed mathematically in two alternative but equivalent forms:

$$\text{Minimize } (wT_s - T_{wc}) \text{ or Minimize } \sum_{i=1}^{w} (T_s - T_{si}) \tag{17.27}$$

subject to: (1) $\sum_{k\in i} T_{ek} \leq T_s$ and (2) all precedence requirements are obeyed.

In this section, we consider several methods to solve the line balancing problem, using the data of Example 17.1 to illustrate. The algorithms are: (1) largest candidate rule, (2) Kilbridge and Wester method, and (3) ranked positional weights method. These methods are heuristic, meaning they are based on common sense and experimentation rather than on mathematical optimization. In each of the algorithms, we assume that the manning level is one, so when we identify station i, we are also identifying the worker at station $i$.

### 17.5.1 Largest Candidate Rule

In this method, work elements are arranged in descending order according to their $T_{ek}$ values, as in Table 17.5. Given this list, the algorithm consists of the following steps: (1) assign elements to the worker at the first workstation by starting at the top of the list and selecting the first element that satisfies precedence requirements and does not cause the total sum of $T_{ek}$ at that station to exceed the allowable $T_s$; when an element is selected for assignment to the station, start back at the top of the list for subsequent assignments; (2) when no more elements can be assigned without exceeding $T_s$, then proceed to the next station; (3) repeat steps 1 and 2 for the other stations in turn until all elements have been assigned.

**TABLE 17.5** Work Elements Arranged According to $T_{ek}$ Value for the Largest Candidate Rule

| *Work Element* | $T_{ek}$ *(min)* | *Preceded By* |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 0.7 | 1 |
| 8 | 0.6 | 3,4 |
| 11 | 0.5 | 9,10 |
| 2 | 0.4 | – |
| 10 | 0.38 | 5,8 |
| 7 | 0.32 | 3 |
| 5 | 0.3 | 2 |
| 9 | 0.27 | 6,7,8 |
| 1 | 0.2 | – |
| 12 | 0.12 | 11 |
| 6 | 0.11 | 3 |
| 4 | 0.1 | 1,2 |

**EXAMPLE 17.2 Largest Candidate Rule**

Apply the largest candidate rule to Example Problem 17.1.

***Solution:*** Work elements are arranged in descending order in Table 17.5, and the algorithm is carried out as presented in Table 17.6. Five workers and stations are required in the solution. Balance efficiency is computed as:

**TABLE 17.6** Work Elements Assigned to Stations According to the Largest Candidate Rule

| *Station* | *Work Element* | $T_{ek}$ *(min)* | *Station Time (min)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 0.4 | |
| | 5 | 0.3 | |
| | 1 | 0.2 | |
| | 4 | 0.1 | 1.0 |
| 2 | 3 | 0.7 | |
| | 6 | 0.11 | 0.81 |
| 3 | 8 | 0.6 | |
| | 10 | 0.38 | 0.98 |
| 4 | 7 | 0.32 | |
| | 9 | 0.27 | 0.59 |
| 5 | 11 | 0.5 | |
| | 12 | 0.12 | 0.62 |

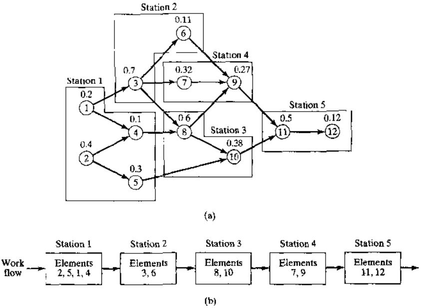



**Figure 17.6** Solution for Example 17.2, which indicates: (a) assignment of elements according to the largest candidate rule and (b) physical sequence of stations with assigned work elements.

$$E_b = \frac{4.0}{5(1.0)} = 0.80$$

Balance delay $d = 0.20$. The line balancing solution is presented in Figure 17.6.

### 17.5.2 Kilbridge and Wester Method

This method has received considerable attention since its introduction in 1961 [18] and has been applied with apparent success to several complicated line balancing problems in industry [22]. It is a heuristic procedure that selects work elements for assignment to stations according to their position in the precedence diagram. This overcomes one of the difficulties with the largest candidate rule in which an element may be selected because of a high $T_e$ value but irrespective of its position in the precedence diagram. In general, the Kilbridge and Wester method provides a superior line balance solution than the largest candidate rule (although this is not the case for our example problem).

In the Kilbridge and Wester method, work elements in the precedence diagram are arranged into columns, as shown in Figure 17.7. The elements can then be organized into a list according to their columns, with the elements in the first column listed first. We have developed such a list of elements for our example problem in Table 17.7. If a given element can be located in more than one column, then list all of the columns for that element, as

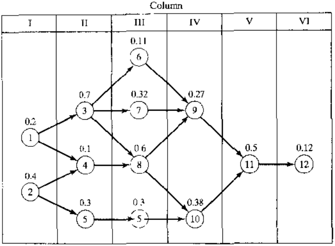



**Figure 17.7** Work elements in example problem arranged into columns for the Kilbridge and Wester method.

**TABLE 17.7** Work Elements Listed According to Columns from Figure 17.7 for the Kilbridge and Wester Method

| *Work Element* | *Column* | *$T_{ek}$ (min)* | *Preceded By* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | I | 0.4 | – |
| 1 | I | 0.2 | – |
| 3 | II | 0.7 | 1 |
| 5 | II, III | 0.3 | 2 |
| 4 | II | 0.1 | 1,2 |
| 8 | III | 0.6 | 3,4 |
| 7 | III | 0.32 | 3 |
| 6 | III | 0.11 | 3 |
| 10 | IV | 0.38 | 5,8 |
| 9 | IV | 0.27 | 6,7,8 |
| 11 | V | 0.5 | 9,10 |
| 12 | VI | 0.12 | 11 |

we have done in the case of element 5. In our list, we have added the feature that elements in a given column are presented in the order of their $T_{ek}$ value; that is, we have applied the largest candidate rule within each column. This is helpful when assigning elements to stations, because it ensures that the larger elements are selected first, thus increasing our chances of making the sum of $T_{ek}$ in each station closer to the allowable $T_s$ limit. Once the list is established, the same three-step procedure is used as before.

**EXAMPLE 17.3 Kilbridge and Wester Method**

Apply the Kilbridge and Wester method to Example Problem 17.1.

**TABLE 17.8** Work Elements Assigned to Stations According to the Kilbridge and Wester Method

| *Station* | *Work Element* | *Column* | $T_{ek}$ *(min)* | *Station Time (min)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | I | 0.4 | |
| | 1 | I | 0.2 | |
| | 5 | II | 0.3 | |
| | 4 | II | 0.1 | 1.0 |
| 2 | 3 | II | 0.7 | |
| | 6 | III | 0.11 | 0.81 |
| 3 | 8 | III | 0.6 | |
| | 7 | III | 0.32 | 0.92 |
| 4 | 10 | IV | 0.38 | |
| | 9 | IV | 0.27 | 0.65 |
| 5 | 11 | V | 0.5 | |
| | 12 | VI | 0.12 | 0.62 |

***Solution:*** Work elements are arranged in order of columns in Table 17.7. The Kilbridge and Wester solution is presented in Table 17.8. Five workers are again required, and the balance efficiency is once more $E_b = 0.80$. Note that although the balance efficiency is the same as in the largest candidate rule, the allocation of work elements to stations is different.

### 17.5.3 Ranked Positional Weights Method

The ranked positional weights method was introduced by Helgeson and Birnie [14]. In this method, a ranked positional weight value (call it RPW for short) is computed for each element. The RPW takes into account both the $T_{ek}$ value and its position in the precedence diagram. Specifically, $\text{RPW}_k$ is calculated by summing $T_{ek}$ and all other times for elements that follow $T_{ek}$ in the arrow chain of the precedence diagram. Elements are compiled into a list according to their RPW value, and the algorithm proceeds using the same three steps as before.

**EXAMPLE 17.4 Ranked Positional Weights Method**

Apply the ranked positional weights method to Example Problem 17.1.

***Solution:*** The RPW must be calculated for each element. To illustrate,

$$\text{RPW}_{11} = 0.5 + 0.12 = 0.62$$

$$\text{RPW}_8 = 0.6 + 0.27 + 0.38 + 0.5 + 0.12 = 1.87$$

Work elements are listed according to RPW value in Table 17.9. Assignment of elements to stations proceeds with the solution presented in Table 17.10. Note that the largest $T_s$ value is 0.92 min. This can be exploited by operating the line

**TABLE 17.9** List of Elements Ranked According to Their Ranked Positional Weights (RPW)

| Work Element | RPW | $T_{ek}$ (min) | Preceded By |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3.30 | 0.2 | – |
| 3 | 3.00 | 0.7 | 1 |
| 2 | 2.67 | 0.4 | – |
| 4 | 1.97 | 0.1 | 1,2 |
| 8 | 1.87 | 0.6 | 3,4 |
| 5 | 1.30 | 0.3 | 2 |
| 7 | 1.21 | 0.32 | 3 |
| 6 | 1.00 | 0.11 | 3 |
| 10 | 1.00 | 0.38 | 5,8 |
| 9 | 0.89 | 0.27 | 6,7,8 |
| 11 | 0.62 | 0.5 | 9,10 |
| 12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 11 |

**TABLE 17.10** Work Elements Assigned to Stations According to the Ranked Positional Weights (RPW) Method

| Station | Work Element | $T_{ek}$ (min) | Station Time (min) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 0.2 | |
| | 3 | 0.7 | 0.90 |
| 2 | 2 | 0.4 | |
| | 4 | 0.1 | |
| | 5 | 0.3 | |
| | 6 | 0.11 | 0.91 |
| 3 | 8 | 0.6 | |
| | 7 | 0.32 | 0.92 |
| 4 | 10 | 0.38 | |
| | 9 | 0.27 | 0.65 |
| 5 | 11 | 0.5 | |
| | 12 | 0.12 | 0.62 |

at this faster rate, with the result that line balance efficiency is improved and production rate is increased.

$$E_b = \frac{4.0}{5(.92)} = 0.87$$

The cycle time is $T_c = T_s + T_r = 0.92 + 0.08 = 1.00$; therefore.

$$R_c = \frac{60}{1.0} = 60 \text{ cycles/hr, and from Eq. (17.6), } R_p = 60 \times 0.96 = 57.6 \text{ units/hr}$$

This is a better solution than the previous line balancing methods provided. It turns out that the performance of a given line balancing algorithm depends on the problem to be solved. Some line balancing methods work better on some problems, while other methods work better on other problems.

### 17.5.4 Computerized Techniques

The three methods described above have all been developed into computer programs to solve large line balancing problems in industry. However, even as rapidly executed computer programs, these algorithms are still heuristic and do not guarantee an optimum solution. Attempts have been made to exploit the high speed of the digital computer by developing algorithms that either (1) perform a more exhaustive search of the set of solutions to a given problem or (2) utilize some mathematical optimization technique to solve it. Examples of the first type are COMSOAL and CALB. Examples of the second type include branch and bound algorithms developed by Villa [24] and Deutsch [10]

COMSOAL (stands for **CO**mputer **M**ethod of **S**equencing **O**perations for **A**ssembly **L**ines) was developed at Chrysler Corp. and reported by Arcus [2]. The basic procedure is to iterate through a large number of alternative solutions by randomly assigning elements to stations in each solution, and on each iteration comparing the current solution with the previous best solution, discarding the current one if it is not better than the previous best, and replacing the previous best if the current solution is better.

During the 1970s, the Advanced Manufacturing Methods Program of the IIT Research Institute was a nucleus for research on line balancing in the United States. Around 1968, the group introduced CALB (**C**omputer-**A**ided **L**ine **B**alancing), which has been widely adopted in a variety of industries that manufacture assembled products, including automotive, appliances, electronic equipment, and military hardware. CALB can be used for both single model and mixed model lines. For single model lines, the data required to use the package are the kind of work element data compiled in Table 17.4, plus other constraints. Also needed are minimum and maximum limits on station service time. Elements are sorted according to their $T_e$ values and precedence constraints; they are then assigned to stations to satisfy the allowable service time limits. Line balancing solutions with less than 2% balance delay have been reported [22]. For mixed model lines, additional data include production requirements per shift for each model to be run on the line. Solutions obtained by CALB for the mixed model case are described as being near optimum.

## 17.6 MIXED MODEL ASSEMBLY LINES

A mixed model assembly line is a manual production line capable of producing a variety of different product models simultaneously and continuously (not in batches). Each workstation specializes in a certain set of assembly work elements, but the stations are sufficiently flexible that they can perform their respective tasks on different models. Mixed model lines are typically used to accomplish the final assembly of automobiles, small and large trucks, and major and small appliances. In this section, we discuss some of the technical issues related to mixed model assembly lines, specifically: (1) determining the number of workers and other operating parameters, (2) line balancing, and (3) model launching.

### 17.6.1 Determining Number of Workers on the Line

To determine the number of workers required for a mixed model assembly line, we again start with Eq. (17.7):

$$w = \frac{WL}{AT}$$

where $w$ = number of workers; $WL$ = workload to be accomplished by the workers in the scheduled time period (min/hr), and $AT$ = available time per worker in the same time period (min/hr/worker). The time period used here is an hour, but units could be minutes per shift or minutes per week, depending on the information available and the analyst's preference.

The ***workload*** consists of the work content time of each model multiplied by its respective production rate during the period; that is,

$$WL = \sum_{j=1}^{P} R_{pj}T_{wcj} \tag{17.28}$$

where $WL$ = workload (min/hr); $R_{pj}$ = production rate of model $j$ (pc/hr); $T_{wcj}$ = work content time of model $j$ (min/pc); $P$ = the number of models to be produced during the period; and $j$ is used to identify the model, $j = 1, 2, \ldots, P$.

Available time per worker is the number of minutes available to accomplish assembly work on the product during the hour. In the ideal case, where repositioning and line balance efficiencies are 100%, then $AT = 60E$, where $E$ = proportion uptime on the line. This allows us to determine the theoretical minimum number of workers:

$$w^* = \text{Minimum Integer} \geq \frac{WL}{60E} \tag{17.29}$$

More realistically, repositioning and balance efficiencies will be less than 100%, and this fact should be factored into the available time:

$$AT = 60EE_rE_b \tag{17.30}$$

where $AT$ = available time per worker (min/hr), 60 = maximum number of minutes in an hour (min/hr), $E$ = line efficiency, $E_r$ = repositioning efficiency, and $E_b$ = balance efficiency.

**EXAMPLE 17.5 Number of Workers Required in a Mixed Model Line**

The hourly production rate and work content time for two models to be produced on a mixed model assembly line are given in the table below:

| *Model j* | *$R_{pj}$ (per hr)* | *$T_{wcj}$ (min)* |
|---|---|---|
| A | 4 | 27.0 |
| B | 6 | 25.0 |

Also given is that line efficiency $E$ = 0.96 and manning level $M$ = 1. Determine the theoretical minimum number of workers required on the assembly line.

***Solution:*** Workload per hour is computed using Eq. (17.28):

$$WL = 4(27) + 6(25) = 258 \text{ min/hr}$$

Available time per hour is 60 min corrected for $E$:

$$AT = 60(0.96) = 57.6 \text{ min.}$$

Using Eq. (17.29), the theoretical minimum number of workers is therefore:

$$w^* = \text{Minimum Integer} \geq \frac{258}{57.6} = 4.48 \rightarrow 5 \text{ workers}$$

### 17.6.2 Mixed Model Line Balancing

The objective in mixed model line balancing is the same as for single model lines: to spread the workload among stations as evenly as possible. Algorithms used to solve the mixed model line balancing problem are usually adaptations of methods developed for single model lines. Our treatment of this topic is admittedly limited. The interested reader can pursue mixed model line balancing and its companion problem, model sequencing, in several of our references, including [8], [22], [23], [25]. A literature review of these topics is presented in [12].

In single model line balancing, work element times are utilized to balance the line, as in Section 17.3. In mixed model assembly line balancing, total work element times per shift or per hour are used. The objective function can be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Minimize}(w\, AT - WL) \text{ or Minimize } \sum_{i=1}^{w} (AT - TT_{si}) \tag{17.31}$$

where $w$ = number of workers or stations (we are again assuming the $M_i = 1$, so that $n = w$), $AT$ = available time in the period of interest (hour, shift) (min), $WL$ = workload to be accomplished during same period (min), and $TT_{si}$ = total service time at station $i$ to perform its assigned portion of the workload (min).

The two statements in Eq. (17.31) are equivalent. Workload can be calculated as before, using Eq. (17.28):

$$WL = \sum_{j=1}^{P} R_{pj} T_{wcj}$$

To determine total service time at station $i$, we must first compute the total time to perform each element in the workload. Let $T_{ejk}$ = time to perform work element $k$ on product $j$. The total time per element is given by:

$$TT_k = \sum_{j=1}^{P} R_{pj} T_{ejk} \tag{17.32}$$

where $TT_k$ = total time within the workload that must be allocated to element $k$ for all products (min). Based on these $TT_k$ values, element assignments can be made to each station according to one of the line balancing algorithms. Total service times at each station are computed:

$$TT_{si} = \sum_{k \in i} TT_k \tag{17.33}$$

where $TT_{si}$ = total service time at station $i$, which equals the sum of the times of the elements that have been assigned to that station (min).

Measures of balance efficiency for mixed model assembly line balancing correspond to those in single model line balancing:

$$E_b = \frac{WL}{w(\text{Max}\{TT_{si}\})} \tag{17.34}$$

where $E_b$ = balance efficiency, $WL$ = workload from Eq. (17.28) (min), $w$ = number of workers (stations), and $\text{Max}\{TT_{si}\}$ = maximum value of total service time among all stations in the solution. It is possible that the line balancing solution will yield a value of $\text{Max}\{TT_{si}\}$ that is less than the available total time $AT$. This situation occurs in the following example.

**EXAMPLE 17.6 Mixed Model Assembly Line Balancing**

This is a continuation of Example 17.5. For the two models A and B, hourly production rates are: 4 units/hr for A and 6 units/hr for B. Most of the work elements are common to the two models, but in some cases the elements take longer for one model than for the other. The elements, times, and precedence requirements are given in Table 17.11. Also given: $E$ = 0.96, repositioning time $T_r$ = 0.15 min, and $M_i$ = 1. (a) Construct the precedence diagram for each model and for both models combined into one diagram. (b) Use the Kilbridge and Wester method to solve the line balancing problem. (c) Determine the balance efficiency for the solution in (b).

***Solution:*** (a) The precedence diagrams are shown in Figure 17.8.

(b) To use the Kilbridge and Wester method, we must do the following: (1) calculate total production time requirements for each work element, $TT_k$, according to Eq. (17.32), which is done in Table 17.12; (2) arrange the elements according to columns in the precedence diagram, as in Table 17.13 (within columns, we have listed the elements according to the largest candidate rule); and (3) allocate elements to workstations using the three-step procedure defined in Section 17.5.1. To accomplish this third step, we need to compute the available time per worker, given proportion uptime $E$ = 0.96

**TABLE 17.11** Work Elements for Models A and B in Example 17.6

| *Work element k* | *$T_{eAk}$ (min)* | *Preceded By* | *$T_{eBk}$ (min)* | *Preceded By* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | – | 3 | – |
| 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| 5 | 3 | 2 | – | – |
| 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 | – | – | 4 | 4 |
| 8 | 5 | 5,6 | 4 | 7 |
| $T_{wc}$ | 27 | | 25 | |

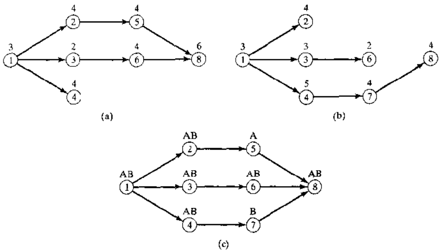



**Figure 17.8** Precedence diagrams for Example 17.6: (a) for model A, (b) for model B, and (c) for both models combined.

**TABLE 17.12** Total Times Required for Each Element in Each Model to Meet Respective Production Rates for Both Models in Example 17.6

| *Element k* | $R_{pA}T_{eAk}$ *(min.)* | $R_{pB}T_{eBk}$ *(min.)* | $\sum_{j=A,B} R_{pj}T_{ejk}$ *(min.)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 12 | 18 | 30 |
| 2 | 16 | 24 | 40 |
| 3 | 8 | 18 | 26 |
| 4 | 24 | 30 | 54 |
| 5 | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| 6 | 16 | 12 | 28 |
| 7 | 0 | 24 | 24 |
| 8 | 20 | 24 | 44 |
| | | | 258 |

**TABLE 17.13** Elements Arranged in Columns in Example 17.6

| *Element* | *Column* | $TT_k$ | *Preceded By* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I | 30 | – |
| 4 | II | 54 | 1 |
| 2 | II | 40 | 1 |
| 3 | II | 26 | 1 |
| 6 | III | 28 | 3 |
| 7 | III | 24 | 4 |
| 5 | III | 12 | 2 |
| 8 | IV | 44 | 5,6,7 |

and repositioning efficiency $E_r$. To determine $E_r$, we note that total production rate is

$$R_p = 4 + 6 = 10 \text{ units/hr}$$

The corresponding cycle time is found by multiplying the reciprocal of this rate by proportion uptime $E$ and accounting for the difference in time units, as follows:

$$T_c = \frac{60(0.96)}{10} = 5.76 \text{ min.}$$

The service time each cycle is the cycle time less the repositioning time $T_r$:

$$T_s = 5.76 - 0.15 = 5.61 \text{ min.}$$

Now repositioning efficiency can be determined as follows:

$$E_r = 5.61/5.76 = 0.974$$

Hence we have the available time against which the line is to be balanced:

$$AT = 60(0.96)(0.974) = 56.1 \text{ min.}$$

Allocating elements to stations against this limit, we have the final solution presented in Table 17.14.

**TABLE 17.14** Allocation of Work Elements to Stations in Example 17.6 Using the Kilbridge and Wester Method

| *Station* | *Element* | *$TT_k$ (min)* | *$TT_{si}$ (min)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 30 | |
| | 3 | 26 | 56 |
| 2 | 4 | 54 | 54 |
| 3 | 2 | 40 | |
| | 5 | 12 | 52 |
| 4 | 6 | 28 | |
| | 7 | 24 | 52 |
| 5 | 8 | 44 | 44 |
| | | | 258 |

(c) Balance efficiency is determined by Eq. (17.34). $\text{Max}\{TT_{si}\} = 56$ min. Note that this is slightly less than the available time of 56.1 min, so our line will operate slightly faster than we originally designed it for.

$$E_b = \frac{258}{5(56)} = 0.921 = 92.1\%$$

### 17.6.3 Model Launching in Mixed Model Lines

We have previously noted that production on a manual assembly line typically involves launching of base parts onto the beginning of the line at regular time intervals. In a single model line, this time interval is constant and set equal to the cycle time $T_c$. The same applies for a batch model line, but $T_c$ is likely to differ for each batch because the models are different and their production requirements are probably different. In a mixed model line, model launching is more complicated because each model is likely to have a different work content time, which translates into different station service times. Thus, the time interval between launches and the selection of which model to launch are interdependent. For example, if a series of models with high work content times are launched at short time intervals, the assembly line will quickly become congested (overwhelmed with too much work). On the other hand, if a series of models with low work content times are launched at long time intervals, then stations will be starved for work (with resulting idleness). Neither congestion nor idleness is desirable.

The model launching and line balancing problems are closely related in mixed model lines. Solution of the model launching problem depends on the solution to the line balancing problem. The model sequence in launching must consist of the same model mix used to solve the line balancing problem. Otherwise, some stations are likely to experience excessive idle time while others endure undue congestion.

Determining the time interval between successive launches is referred to as the ***launching discipline.*** Two alternative launching disciplines are available in mixed model assembly lines: (1) variable rate launching and (2) fixed rate launching.

*Variable Rate Launching.* In ***variable rate launching***, the time interval between the launching of the current base part and the next is set equal to the cycle time of the current unit. Since different models have different work content times and thus different task times per station, their cycle times and launch time intervals vary. The time interval in variable rate launching can be expressed as follows:

$$T_{cv}(j) = \frac{T_{wcj}}{wE_rE_b} \tag{17.35}$$

where $T_{cv}(j)$ = time interval before the next launch in variable rate launching (min), $T_{wcj}$ = work content time of the product just launched (model $j$) (min), $w$ = number of workers on the line, $E_r$ = repositioning efficiency, and $E_b$ = balance efficiency. If manning level $M_i = 1$ for all $i$, then the number of stations $n$ can be substituted for $w$. With variable rate launching, as long as the launching interval is determined by this formula, then models can be launched in any sequence desired.

**EXAMPLE 17.7 Variable Rate Launching in a Mixed Model Assembly Line**

Determine the variable rate launching intervals for models A and B in Examples 17.5 and 17.6. From the results of Example 17.6, we have $E_r = 0.974$ and $E_b = 0.921$.

***Solution:*** Applying Eq. (17.35) for model A, we have

$$T_{cv}(A) = \frac{27.0}{5(.974)(.921)} = 6.020 \text{ min.}$$

And for model B,

$$T_{cv}(B) = \frac{25.0}{5(.974)(.921)} = 5.574 \text{ min.}$$

When a unit of model A is launched onto the front of the line, 6.020 min must elapse before the next launch. When a unit of model B is launched onto the front of the line, 5.574 min must elapse before the next launch.

---

The advantage of variable rate launching is that units can be launched in any order without causing idle time or congestion at workstations. The model mix can be adjusted at a moment's notice to adapt to changes in demand for the various products made on the line. However, there are certain technical and logistical issues that must be addressed when variable rate launching is used. Among the technical issues, the work carriers on a moving conveyor are usually located at constant intervals along its length, and so the work units must be attached only at these positions. This is not compatible with variable rate launching, which presumes that work units can be attached at any location along the conveyor corresponding to the variable rate launching interval $T_{cv}$ for the preceding model. Among the logistical issues in variable rate launching is the problem of supplying the correct components and subassemblies to the individual stations for the models being assembled on the line at any given moment. Because of these kinds of issues, industry seems to prefer fixed rate launching.

*Fixed Rate Launching for Two Models.* In ***fixed rate launching***, the time interval between two consecutive launches is constant. This launching discipline is usually set by the speed of the conveyor and the spacing between work carriers (e.g., hooks on a chain conveyor that occur at regular spacing in the chain). The time interval in fixed rate launching depends on the product mix and production rates of models on the line. Of course, the schedule must be consistent with the available time and manpower on the line, so repositioning efficiency and line balance efficiency must be figured in. Given the hourly production schedule, as well as values of $E_r$ and $E_b$, the launching time interval is determined as:

$$T_{cf} = \frac{\frac{1}{R_p} \sum_{j=1}^{P} R_{pj} T_{wcj}}{w E_r E_b} \tag{17.36}$$

where $T_{cf}$ = time interval between launches in fixed rate launching (min); $R_{pj}$ = production rate of model $j$ (units/hr); $T_{wcj}$ = work content time of model $j$ (min/unit); $R_p$ = total production rate of all models in the schedule, which is simply the sum of $R_{pj}$ values; $P$ = the number of models produced in the scheduled period, $j = 1, 2, \ldots, P$; and $w$, $E_r$, and $E_b$ have the same meaning as before. If manning level $M_i = 1$ for all $i$, then $n$ can be used in place of $w$ in the equation.

In fixed rate launching, the models must be launched in a specific sequence; otherwise, station congestion and/or idle time (starving) will occur. Several algorithms have been developed to select the model sequence [7], [11], [22], [23], [25], each with its advantages and disadvantages. In our present coverage, we attempt to synthesize the findings of this previous research to provide two approaches to the fixed rate launching problem, one that works for the case of two models and another that works for three or more models.

Congestion and idle time can be identified in each successive launch as the difference between the cumulative fixed rate launching interval and the sum of the launching intervals for the individual models that have been launched onto the line. This difference can be expressed mathematically as follows:

$$\text{Congestion time or idle time} = \sum_{h=1}^{m}(T_{cjh} - mT_{cf}) \tag{17.37}$$

where $T_{cf}$ = fixed rate launching interval determined by Eq. (17.36) (min), $m$ = launch sequence during the period of interest, $h$ = launch index number for summation purposes, and $T_{cjh}$ = the cycle time associated with model $j$ in launch position $h$ (min), calculated as follows:

$$T_{cjh} = \frac{T_{wcj}}{wE_rE_b} \tag{17.38}$$

where the symbols on the right hand side of the equation are the same as for Eq. (17.35).

***Congestion*** is recognized when Eq. (17.37) yields a positive difference, indicating that the actual sum of task times for the models thus far launched ($m$) exceeds the planned cumulative task time. ***Idle time*** is identified when Eq. (17.37) yields a negative value, indicating that the actual sum of task times is less than the planned time for the current launch $m$. It is desirable to minimize both congestion and idle time. Accordingly, let us propose the following procedure, in which the model sequence is selected so that the square of the difference between the cumulative fixed rate launching interval and the cumulative individual model launching interval is minimized for each launch. Expressing this procedure in equation form, we have:

$$\text{For each launch m, select j to minimize } \left(\sum_{h=1}^{m} T_{cjh} - mT_{cf}\right)^2 \tag{17.39}$$

where all terms have been defined above.

**EXAMPLE 17.8 Fixed Rate Launching in a Mixed Model Assembly Line for Two Models**

Determine: (a) the fixed rate launching interval for the production schedule in Example 17.5 and (b) the launch sequence of models A and B during the hour. Use $E_r$ and $E_b$ from Example 17.5(b).

***Solution:*** (a) The combined production rate of models A and B is $R_p = 4 + 6 = 10$ units/hr. The fixed time interval is computed using Eq. (17.36):

$$T_{cf} = \frac{\frac{1}{10}(4(27) + 6(25))}{5(.974)(.921)} = 5.752 \text{ min.}$$

(b) To use the sequencing rule in Eq. (17.39), we need to compute $T_{cjh}$ for each model by Eq. (17.38). The values are the same as those computed in previous Example 17.7 for the variable launching case: for model A, $T_{cAh}$ = 6.020 min, and for model B, $T_{cBh}$ = 5.574 min.

To select the first launch, compare

$$\text{For model A, } (6.020 - 1(5.752)^2 = 0.072$$

$$\text{For model B, } (5.574 - 1(5.752)^2 = 0.032$$

**TABLE 17.15** Fixed Rate Launching Sequence Obtained for Example 17.8

| *Launch m* | $mT_{cf}$ | $\left(\sum_{h=1}^{m-1} T_{cjh} + T_{cAm} - mT_{cf}\right)^2$ | $\left(\sum_{h=1}^{m-1} T_{cjh} + T_{cBm} - mT_{cf}\right)^2$ | *Model* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5.752 | 0.072 | **0.032** | B |
| 2 | 11.504 | **0.008** | 0.127 | A |
| 3 | 17.256 | 0.128 | **0.008** | B |
| 4 | 23.008 | **0.032** | 0.071 | A |
| 5 | 28.760 | 0.201 | **0.000** | B |
| 6 | 34.512 | 0.073 | **0.031** | B |
| 7 | 40.264 | **0.008** | 0.125 | A |
| 8 | 46.016 | 0.130 | **0.007** | B |
| 9 | 51.768 | **0.033** | 0.070 | A |
| 10 | 57.520 | 0.202 | **0.000** | B |

The value is minimized for model B; therefore, a base part for model B is launched first ($m = 1$).

To select the second launch, compare

$$\text{For model A, } (5.574 + 6.020 - 2(5.752)^2 = 0.008$$

$$\text{For model B, } (5.574 + 5.574 - 2(5.752)^2 = 0.127$$

The value is minimized for model A: therefore, a base part for model A is launched second ($m = 2$). The procedure continues in this way, with the results displayed in Table 17.15.

*Fixed Rate Launching for Three or More Models.* The reader will note that 4 units of A and 6 units of B are scheduled in the sequence in Table 17.15, which is consistent with the production rate data given in the original example. This schedule is repeated each successive hour. When only two models are being launched in a mixed model assembly line, Eq. (17.39) yields a sequence that matches the desired scheduled used to calculate $T_{cj}$ and $T_{cjh}$. However, when three or more models are being launched onto the line, Eq. (17.39) is likely to yield a schedule that does not provide the desired model mix during the period. What happens is that models whose $T_{cjh}$ values are close to $T_{cj}$ are overproduced, whereas models with $T_{cjh}$ values significantly different from $T_{cj}$ are underproduced or even omitted from the schedule. Our sequencing procedure can be adapted for the case of three or more models by adding a term to the equation that forces the desired schedule to be met. The additional term is the ratio of the quantity of model $j$ to be produced during the period divided by the quantity of model $j$ units that have yet to be launched in the period; that is,

$$\text{Additional term for three or more models} = \frac{R_{pj}}{Q_{jm}}$$

where $R_{pj}$ = quantity of model $j$ to be produced during the period, that is, the production rate of model $j$ (units/hr); and $Q_{jm}$ = quantity of model $j$ units remaining to be launched during the period as $m$ (number of launches) increases (units/hr). Accordingly, the fixed rate launching procedure for three or more models can be expressed as follows:

$$\text{For each launch m, select j to minimize } \left( \sum_{h=1}^{m} T_{cjh} - mT_{cf} \right)^2 + \frac{R_{pj}}{Q_{jm}} \quad (17.40)$$

where all terms have been previously defined. The effect of the additional term is to reduce the chances that a unit of any model $j$ will be selected for launching as the number of units of that model already launched during the period increases. When the last unit of model $j$ scheduled during the period has been launched, the chance of launching another unit of model $j$ becomes zero.

Selecting the sequence in fixed rate launching can sometimes be simplified by dividing all $R_{pj}$ values in the schedule by the largest common denominator (if one exists), which results in a set of new values, all of which are integers. For instance, in Example 17.8, the hourly schedule consists of 4 units of model A and 6 units of model B. The common denominator 2 reduces the schedule to 2 units of A and 3 units of B each half hour. These values can then be used in the ratio in Eq. (17.40). The model sequence obtained from Eq. (17.40) is then repeated as necessary to fill out the hour or shift.

**EXAMPLE 17.9 Fixed Rate Launching in a Mixed Model Assembly Line for Three Models.**

Let us add a third model, C, to the production schedule in previous Example 17.8. Two units of model C will be produced each hour, and its work content time = 30 min. Proportion uptime $E$ = 0.96, as before.

***Solution:*** Let us begin by calculating the total hourly production rate

$$R_p = 4 + 6 + 2 = 12 \text{ units/hr.}$$

Cycle time is determined based on this rate and the given value of proportion uptime $E$:

$$T_c = \frac{60(0.96)}{12} = 4.80 \text{ min.}$$

Then

$$T_s = 4.80 - 0.15 = 4.65 \text{ min.}$$

Using these values we can determine repositioning efficiency.

$$E_r = 4.65/4.80 = 0.96875$$

To determine balance efficiency, we need to divide the workload by the available time on the line, where available time is adjusted for line efficiency E and repositioning efficiency $E_r$. Workload is computed as follows:

$$WL = 4(27) + 6(25) + 2(30) = 318 \text{ min.}$$

Available time to be used in line balancing is thus:

$$AT = 60(.96)(.96875) = 55.80 \text{ min.}$$

The number of workers (and stations, since $M_i = 1$) required is given by

$$w = \text{Minimum Integer} \geq \frac{318}{55.8} = 5.7 \rightarrow 6 \text{ workers}$$

For our example, let us assume that the line can be balanced with six workers, leading to the following balance efficiency:

$$E_b = \frac{318}{6(55.8)} = 0.94982$$

Using the values of $E_t$ and $E_b$ in Eq. (17.36), the fixed rate launching interval is calculated:

$$T_{cf} = \frac{\frac{1}{12}(318)}{6(.96875)(.94982)} = 4.80 \text{ min.}$$

The $T_{cjh}$ values for each model are, respectively,

$$T_{cAh} = \frac{27}{6(.96875)(.94982)} = 4.891 \text{ min.}$$

$$T_{cBh} = \frac{25}{6(.96875)(.94982)} = 4.528 \text{ min.}$$

$$T_{cCh} = \frac{30}{6(.96875)(.94982)} = 5.434 \text{ min.}$$

Let us note that the models A, B, and C are produced at rates of 4, 6, and 2 units/hr. Using the common denominator 2, these rates can be reduced to 2, 3, and 1 per half hour, respectively. These are the values we will use in the additional term of Eq. (17.40). The starting values of $Q_{jm}$ for $m = 1$ are $Q_{A1} = 2$, $Q_{B1} = 3$, and $Q_{C1} = 1$. According to our procedure, we have:

$$\text{For model A, } (4.891 - 4.80)^2 + \frac{2}{2} = 1.008$$

$$\text{For model B, } (4.528 - 4.80)^2 + \frac{3}{3} = 1.074$$

$$\text{For model C, } (5.434 - 4.80)^2 + \frac{1}{1} = 1.402$$

The minimum value occurs if a unit of model A is launched. Thus, the first launch ($m = 1$) is model A. The value of $Q_{A1}$ is decremented by the one unit already launched, so that $Q_{A2} = 1$. For the second launch, we have:

$$\text{For model A, } (4.891 + 4.891 - 2(4.80))^2 + \frac{2}{1} = 2.033$$

$$\text{For model B, } (4.891 + 4.528 - 2(4.80))^2 + \frac{3}{3} = 1.033$$

$$\text{For model C, } (4.891 + 5.434 - 2(4.80))^2 + \frac{1}{1} = 1.526$$

The minimum occurs when a model B unit is launched. Thus, for $m = 2$, a unit of model B is launched, and $Q_{B3} = 2$. The procedure continues in this way, with the results displayed in Table 17.16.

**TABLE 17.16** Fixed Rate Launching Sequence Obtained for Example 17.9

| $m$ | $mT_{cf}$ | $\left(\sum_{h=1}^{m-1} T_{cjh} - T_{cAm} - mT_{cf}\right)^2 - \frac{R_{pA}}{Q_{Am}}$ | $\left(\sum_{h=1}^{m-1} T_{cjh} + T_{cBm} - mT_{cf}\right)^2 + \frac{R_{pB}}{Q_{Bm}}$ | $\left(\sum_{h=1}^{m-1} T_{cjh} + T_{cCm} - mT_{cf}\right)^2 + \frac{R_{pC}}{Q_{Cm}}$ | *Model* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4.80 | **1.008** | 1.074 | 1.402 | A |
| 2 | 9.60 | 2.033 | **1.033** | 1.526 | B |
| 3 | 14.40 | 2.008 | 1.705 | **1.205** | C |
| 4 | 19.20 | 2.296 | **1.526** | $\infty$ | B |
| 5 | 24.00 | **2.074** | 3.008 | $\infty$ | A |
| 6 | 28.80 | $\infty$ | **3.000** | $\infty$ | B |

## 17.7 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS IN ASSEMBLY LINE DESIGN

The line balancing algorithms described in Section 17.5 are precise computational procedures that allocate work elements to stations based on deterministic quantitative data. However, the designer of a manual assembly line should not overlook certain other factors, some of which may improve line performance beyond what the balancing algorithms provide. Following are some of the considerations:

- ***Methods analysis.*** Methods analysis involves the study of human work activity to seek out ways in which the activity can be done with less effort, in less time, and with greater effect. This kind of analysis is an obvious step in the design of a manual assembly line, since the work elements need to be defined to balance the line. In addition, methods analysis can be used after the line is in operation to examine workstations that turn out to be bottlenecks or sources of quality problems. The analysis may result in improved hand and body motions, better workplace layout, design of special tools and/or fixtures to facilitate manual work elements, or even changes in the product design for easier assembly. (We discuss design for assembly in Section 17.3.)
- ***Subdividing work elements.*** Minimum rational work elements are defined by dividing the total work content into small tasks that cannot be subdivided further. It is reasonable to define such tasks in the assembly of a given product, even though in some cases it may be technically possible to further subdivide the element. For example, suppose a hole is to be drilled through a rather thick cross-section in one of the parts to be assembled. It would normally make sense to define this drilling operation as a minimum rational work element. However, what if this drilling process were the bottleneck station? It might then be argued that the drilling operation should be subdivided into two separate steps, which might be performed at two adjacent stations. This would not only relieve the bottleneck, it would probably increase the tool lives of the drill bits.
- ***Sharing work elements between two adjacent stations.*** If a particular work element results in a bottleneck operation at one station, while the adjacent station has ample idle time, it might be possible for the element to be shared between the two stations, perhaps alternating every other cycle.

- ***Utility workers.*** We have previously mentioned utility workers in our discussion of manning levels. Utility workers can be used to relieve congestion at stations that are temporarily overloaded.
- ***Changing workhead speeds at mechanized stations.*** At stations in which a mechanized operation is performed, such as the drilling step in the previous paragraph, the power feed or speed of the process may be increased or decreased to alter the time required to perform the task. Depending on the situation, either an increase or decrease in task time may be beneficial. If the mechanized operation takes too long, then an increase in speed or feed is indicated. On the other hand, if the mechanized process is of relatively short duration, so that idle time is associated with the station, then a reduction in speed and/or feed may be appropriate. The advantage of reducing the speed/feed combination is that tool life is increased. The reverse occurs when speed or feed is increased. Whether speeds and/or feeds are increased or decreased, procedures must be devised for efficiently changing the tools without causing undue downtime on the line.
- ***Preassembly of components.*** To reduce the total amount of work done on the regular assembly line, certain subassemblies can be prepared off-line, either by another assembly cell in the plant or by purchasing them from an outside vendor that specializes in the type of processes required. Although it may seem like simply a means of moving the work from one location to another, there are some good reasons for organizing assembly operations in this manner: (1) The required process may be difficult to implement on the regular assembly line, (2) task time variability (e.g., for adjustments or fitting) for the associated assembly operations may result in a longer overall cycle time if done on the regular line, and (3) an assembly cell set up in the plant or a vendor with certain special capabilities to perform the work may be able to achieve higher quality.
- ***Storage buffers between stations.*** A storage buffer is a location in the production line where work units are temporarily stored. Reasons to include one or more storage buffers in a production line include: (1) to accumulate work units between two stages of the line when their production rates are different, (2) to smooth production between stations with large task time variations, and (3) to permit continued operation of certain sections of the line when other sections are temporarily down for service or repair. The use of storage buffers generally improves the performance of the line operation.
- ***Zoning and other constraints.*** In addition to precedence constraints, there may be other restrictions on the line balancing solution. ***Zoning constraints*** impose limitations on the grouping of work elements and/or their allocation to workstations. Zoning constraints are of two types: positive and negative. A ***positive zoning constraint*** means that certain elements should be grouped together at the same workstation if possible. For example, spray painting elements should all be grouped together due to the need for special enclosures. A ***negative zoning constraint*** indicates that certain work elements might interfere with each other and should therefore not be located near each other. To illustrate, a work element requiring delicate adjustments should not be located near an assembly operation in which loud sudden noises occur, such as hammering. Another limitation on the allocation of work to stations is a ***position constraint.*** This is encountered in the assembly of large products such as trucks and automobiles, which make it difficult for one operator to perform tasks on both sides

of the product. To facilitate the work, operators are positioned on both sides of the assembly line.

- ***Parallel workstations.*** Parallel stations are sometimes used to balance a production line. Their most obvious application is where a particular station has an unusually long task time, which would cause the production rate of the line to be less than that required to satisfy product demand. In this case, two stations operating in parallel and both performing the same long task may eliminate the bottleneck.

**EXAMPLE 17.10 Parallel Stations When One Service Time is Too Long**

In the planning of a certain production line, a six-station line with one worker per station has been designed. Work elements have been allocated to stations with resulting service times as follows:

| Station | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Service time (min) | 0.93 | 0.89 | 0.97 | 0.88 | 0.95 | 1.78 |

Repositioning time at each station = 6 sec ($T_r$ = 0.1 *min*). (a) Determine the production rate and balance efficiency for (a) the current line configuration and (b) a revised line configuration that uses two parallel stations in place of current station 6.

***Solution:*** (a) Station 6 is the bottleneck. The cycle time for the line is the longest service time plus the repositioning time:

$$T_c = 1.78 + 0.1 = 1.88 \text{ min.}$$

In the absence of information on line efficiency (assume $E = 1.0$ for our calculations), the hourly production rate would be the cycle rate of the line:

$$R_p = R_c = 60/1.88 = 31.9 \text{ units/hr}$$

To compute the balance efficiency, the total work content must be determined. This is the sum of the service times at the six stations:

$$T_{wc} = 0.93 + 0.89 + 0.97 + 0.88 + 0.95 + 1.78 = 6.40 \text{ min.}$$

Using Eq. (17.16), we can now calculate balance efficiency:

$$E_b = \frac{6.40}{6(1.78)} = 0.599 = 59.9\%$$

(b) If parallel stations are used at position 6 in the line, the total number of workers increases to seven, but the effective task time at position 6 is reduced to $1.78/2 = 0.89$ min. Station 3 now becomes the limiting station. The cycle time based on station 3 is

$$T_c = 0.97 + 0.1 = 1.07 \text{ min.}$$

Assuming $E = 1.0$ as before, the production rate of the reconfigured line would be:

$$R_p = R_c = 60/1.07 = 56.1 \text{ units/hr}$$

For the balance efficiency, the total work content remains at $T_{wc} = 6.40$ min, but the maximum service time $T_s = 0.97$ min, and the number of workers (stations) $w = 7$.

$$E_b = \frac{6.40}{7(0.97)} = 0.943 = 94.3\%$$

---

In some line balancing problems, a more equal allocation of work elements to stations can be achieved by arranging certain stations in parallel. Conventional line balancing methods, such as the largest candidate rule, Kilbridge and Wester method, and ranked positional weights method, do not consider the use of parallel workstations. It turns out that the only way to achieve a perfect balance in our earlier Example 17.1 is by using parallel stations.

**EXAMPLE 17.11 Parallel Work Stations for Better Line Balance**

Can a perfect line balance be achieved in our Example 17.1 using parallel stations?

***Solution:*** The answer is yes. By using a parallel station configuration to replace positions 1 and 2, and by reallocating the elements as indicated in Table 17.17, a perfect balance can be obtained. The solution is illustrated in Figure 17.9.

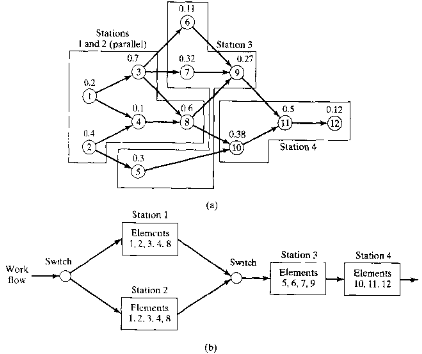



**Figure 17.9** Solution for Example 17.11 using parallel workstations: (a) precedence diagram and (b) workstation layout showing element assignments.

**TABLE 17.17** Assignment of Work Elements to Stations for Example 17.11 Using Parallel Workstations

| *Station* | *Work Element* | $T_{ek}$ *(min)* | *Station Time (min)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1,2* | 1 | 0.2 | |
| | 2 | 0.4 | |
| | 3 | 0.7 | |
| | 4 | 0.1 | |
| | 8 | 0.6 | 2.00/2 = 1.00 |
| 3 | 5 | 0.3 | |
| | 6 | 0.11 | |
| | 7 | 0.32 | |
| | 9 | 0.27 | 1.00 |
| 4 | 10 | 0.38 | |
| | 11 | 0.5 | |
| | 12 | 0.12 | 1.00 |

* Stations 1 and 2 are in parallel.

Work content time $T_{wc} = 4.0$ min as before. To figure the available service time, we note that there are two conventional stations (3 and 4) with $T_s = 1.0$ min each. The parallel stations (1 and 2) each have service times of 2.0 min, but each is working on its own unit of product, so the available service time per unit at the two parallel stations is $(2.0 + 2.0)/2 = 2.0$ min. Using this reasoning, we can compute the balance efficiency as follows:

$$E_b = \frac{4.0}{2(1.0) + 2.0} = 1.00 = 100\%$$

## REFERENCES

[1] ANDREASEN, M., KAHLER, S., and LUND, T., *Design for Assembly*, IFS (Publications) Ltd., U.K., and Springer-Verlag, Berlin, 1983.

[2] ARCUS, A. L., "COMSOAL - A Computer Method of Sequencing Operations for Assembly Lines," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1966, pp 259–277.

[3] BARD, J. F., E. M. DAR-EL, and A. SHTUB, "An Analytical Framework for Sequencing Mixed-Model Assembly Lines," *Int. J. Production Research*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1992, pp 35–48.

[4] BOOTHROYD, G., P. DEWHURST, and W. KNIGHT, *Product Design for Manufacture and Assembly*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1994.

[5] BRALLA, J. G., *Handbook of Product Design for Manufacturing*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1986, Chapter 7.

[6] CHOW, W-M., *Assembly Line Design: Methodology and Applications*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1990.

[7] DAR-EL, E. M. and F. COTHER, "Assembly Line Sequencing for Model Mix," *Int. J. Production Research*, Vol. 13, No. 5, 1975, pp 463–477.

[8] DAR-EL, E. M., "Mixed-Model Assembly Line Sequencing Problems," *OMEGA*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1978, pp 313–323.

[9] DAR-EL, E. M. and A. NAVIDI, "A Mixed-Model Sequencing Application," *Int. J. Production Research*, Vo. 19, No. 1, 1981, pp 69–84.

[10] DEUTSCH, D. F., "A Branch and Bound Technique for Mixed-Model Assembly Line Balancing," *Ph.D. Dissertation*, (Unpublished), Arizona State University, 1971

[11] FERNANDES, C. J. L., "Heuristic Methods for Mixed-Model Assembly Line Balancing and Sequencing," *M.S. Thesis*, (Unpublished), Lehigh University, 1992.

[12] FERNANDES, C. J. L., and M. P. GROOVER, "Mixed Model Assembly Line Balancing and Sequencing: A Survey," *Engineering Design and Automation*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1995, pp. 33–42.

[13] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[14] HELGESON, W. B., and D. P. BIRNIE, "Assembly Line Balancing Using Ranked Positional Weight Technique," *Journal of Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 12, No. 6, 1961, pp 394–398.

[15] HOFFMAN, T., "Assembly Line Balancing: A Set of Challenging Problems," *Int. J. Production Research*, Vol. 28, No. 10, 1990, pp 1807–1815

[16] HOUNSHELL, D. A., *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800–1932*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1984.

[17] IGNALL, E. J., "A Review of Assembly Line Balancing," *Journal of Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1965, pp 244–252.

[18] KILBRIDGE, M. and WESTER, L., "A Heuristic Method of Assembly Line Balancing," *Journal of Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 12, No. 6, 1961, pp 292–298.

[19] MACASKILL, J. L. C., "Production Line Balances for Mixed-Model Lines," *Management Science*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1972, pp. 423–434.

[20] MOODIE, C. L. and Young, H. H., "A Heuristic Method of Assembly Line Balancing for Assumptions of Constant or Variable Work Element Times," *J. Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1965, pp. 23–29.

[21] NOF, S. Y., W. E. WILHELM, and H.-J. WARNECKE, *Industrial Assembly*, Chapman & Hall, London, UK, 1997.

[22] PRENTING, T. O. and THOMOPOULOS, N. T., *Humanism and Technology in Assembly Systems*, Hayden Book Company, Inc., Rochelle Park, New Jersey, 1974.

[23] SUMICHRAST, R. T., RUSSEL, R. R., and TAYLOR, B. W., "A Comparative Analysis of Sequencing for Mixed-Model Assembly Lines in a Just-In-Time Production System," *Int. J. Production Research*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1992, pp. 199–214.

[24] VILLA, C., "Multi Product Assembly Line Balancing," *Ph.D. Dissertation* (Unpublished), University of Florida, 1970.

[25] WILD, R., *Mass Production Management*, John Wiley & Sons, London, 1972.


## PROBLEMS

### Single Model Assembly Lines

**17.1** A product whose work content time = 50 min is to be assembled on a manual production line. The required production rate is 30 units/hr. From previous experience with similar products, it is estimated that the manning level will be 1.25. Assume that the proportion uptime $E = 1.0$ and that the repositioning time $T_r = 0$. Determine: (a) cycle time and (b) ideal minimum number of workers required on the line. (c) If the ideal number in part (b) could be achieved, how many workstations would be needed?

**17.2** A manual assembly line has 15 workstations with one operator per station. Work content time to assemble the product = 22 min. The production rate of the line = 35 units/hr. Assume that the proportion uptime $E = 1.0$ and that repositioning time $T_r = 6$ sec. Determine the balance delay.

**17.3** A manual assembly line must be designed for a product with annual demand = 100,000 units. The line will operate 50 wk/yr, 5 shifts/wk, and 7.5 hr/shift. Work units will be attached to a continuously moving conveyor. Work content time = 42.0 min. Assume line efficiency $E = 0.97$, balancing efficiency $E_b = 0.92$, and repositioning time $T_r = 6$ sec. Determine: (a) hourly production rate to meet demand and (b) number of workers required.

**17.4** A single model assembly line is being planned to produce a consumer appliance at the rate of 200,000 units/yr. The line will be operated 8 hr/shift, 2 shifts/day, 5 day/wk, 50 wk/yr. Work content time = 35.0 min. For planning purposes it is anticipated that the proportion uptime on the line will be 95%. Determine: (a) average hourly production rate $R_p$, (b) cycle time $T_c$, and (c) theoretical minimum number of workers required on the line. (d) If the balance efficiency is 0.93 and the repositioning time = 6 sec, how many workers will be required?

**17.5** The required production rate = 50 units/hr for a certain product whose assembly work content time = 1.2 hr of direct manual labor. It is to be produced on a production line that includes four automated workstations. Because the automated stations are not completely reliable, the line will have an expected uptime efficiency = 90%. The remaining manual stations will each have one worker. It is anticipated that 8% of the cycle time will be lost due to repositioning at the bottleneck station. If the balance delay is expected to be $d = 0.07$, determine: (a) the cycle time; (b) number of workers; (c) number of workstations needed for the line; (d) average manning level on the line, including the automated stations; and (e) labor efficiency on the line.

**17.6** An overhead continuous conveyor is used to carry dishwasher base parts along a manual assembly line. The spacing between appliances = 2.2 m, and the speed of the conveyor = 1 m/min. The length of each workstation is 3.5 m. There are a total of 25 stations and 30 workers on the line. Determine: (a) elapsed time a dishwasher base part spends on the line, (b) feed rate, and (c) tolerance time.

**17.7** A moving belt line is used for a product whose work content = 20 min. Production rate = 48 units/hr. Assume that the proportion uptime $E = 0.96$. The length of each station = 5 ft and manning level = 1.0. The belt speed can be set at any value between 1.0 and 6.0 ft/min. It is expected that the balance delay will be about 0.07 or slightly higher. Time lost for repositioning each cycle is 3 sec. (a) Determine the number of stations needed on the line. (b) What would be an appropriate belt speed, spacing between parts, and tolerance time for this line?

**17.8** A final assembly plant for a certain automobile model is to have a capacity of 225,000 units annually. The plant will operate 50 wk/yr, 2 shifts/day, 5 day/wk, and 7.5 hr/shift. It will be divided into three departments: (1) body shop, (2) paint shop, (3) trim-chassis-final department. The body shop welds the car bodies using robots, and the paint shop coats the bodies. Both of these departments are highly automated. Trim–chassis–final has no automation. There are 15.0 hr of direct labor content on each car in this third department, where cars are moved by a continuous conveyor. Determine: (a) hourly production rate of the plant and (b) number of workers and workstations required in trim–chassis–final if no automated stations are used. The average manning level is 2.5, balancing efficiency = 90%, proportion uptime = 95%, and a repositioning time of 0.15 min is allowed for each worker.

**17.9** In the previous problem, if each workstation is 6.2 m long, and the tolerance time $T_t$ = cycle time $T_c$, determine the following: (a) speed of the conveyor, (b) center-to-center spacing between units on the line, (c) total length of the trim–chassis–final line, assuming no vacant space between stations, and (d) elapsed time a work unit spends in trim–chassis–final.

**17.10** Production rate for a certain assembled product is 47.5 units/hr. The assembly work content time = 32 min of direct manual labor. The line operates at 95% uptime. Ten workstations have two workers on opposite sides of the line so that both sides of the product can be worked on simultaneously. The remaining stations have one worker. Repositioning time lost by each worker is 0.2 min/cycle. It is known that the number of workers on the line is two more than the number required for perfect balance. Determine: (a) number of workers, (b) number of workstations, (c) balance efficiency, and (d) average manning level.

**17.11** Total work content for a product assembled on a manual production line is 33.0 min. Production rate of the line must be 47 units/hr. Work units are attached to a moving conveyor whose speed = 7.5 ft/min. Repositioning time per worker is 6 sec, and uptime efficiency of the line is 94%. Because of imperfect line balancing, the number of workers needed on the line must be four more workers than the number required for perfect balance. Assume the manning level $M = 1.6$. (a) How many workers are required on the line? (b) How many workstations are on the line? (c) What is the balance efficiency for this line? (d) If the workstations are arranged in a line, and the length of each station is 11 ft, what is the tolerance time in each station? (e) What is the elapsed time a work unit spends on the line?

**17.12** A manual assembly line is to be designed for a certain major appliance whose assembly work content time = 2.0 hr. The line will be designed for an annual production rate of 150,000 units. The plant will operate one 10-hr shift/day, 250 day/yr. A continuous conveyor system will be used, and it will operate at a speed = 1.6 m/min. The line must be designed under the following assumptions: balance delay = 6.5%, uptime efficiency = 96%, repositioning time = 6 sec for each worker, and average manning level = 1.25. (a) How many workers will be required to operate the assembly line? If each station is 2.0 m long, (b) how long will the production line be, and (c) what is the elapsed time a work unit spends on the line? (d) What is the labor efficiency on the assembly line?

**17.13** The work content for a product assembled on a manual production line is 48 min. The work is transported using a continuous overhead conveyor that operates at a speed of 5 ft/min. There are 24 workstations on the line, one third of which have two workers; the remaining stations each have one worker. Repositioning time per worker is 9 sec, and uptime efficiency of the line is 95%. (a) What is the maximum possible hourly production rate if the line is assumed to be perfectly balanced? (b) If the actual production rate is only 92% of the maximum possible rate determined in part (a), what is the balance delay on the line? (c) If the line is designed so that the tolerance time is 1.3 times the cycle time, what is the total length of the production line, and what is the elapsed time a product spends on the line?

**17.14** A moving belt line is used for a product whose work content time = 33.0 min. Production rate = 45 units/hr. The length of each station = 1.75 m, and manning level = 1.0. It is expected that the balance delay will be about 0.08 or slightly higher. Uptime reliability = 96%. Time lost for repositioning each cycle is 6 sec. (a) Determine the number of stations needed on the line. (b) If the tolerance time were 1.5 times the cycle time, determine the belt speed and spacing between parts for this line.

**17.15** Work content time for a product assembled on a manual production line is 45.0 min. Production rate of the line must be 40 units/hr. Work units are attached to a moving conveyor whose speed = 8 ft/min. Repositioning time per worker is 8 sec, uptime efficiency of the line is 93%, and manning level = 1.25. Because of imperfect line balancing, it is expected that the number of workers needed on the line will be about 10% more than the number required for perfect balance. If the workstations are arranged in a line, and the length of each station is 12 ft, (a) how long is the entire production line, and (b) what is the elapsed time a work unit spends on the line?

### Line Balancing (Single Model Lines)

**17.16** Show that the two statements of the objective function in single model line balancing in Eq. (17.27) are equivalent.

**17.17** The table below defines the precedence relationships and element times for a new model toy. (a) Construct the precedence diagram for this job. (b) If the ideal cycle time = 1.1 min, repositioning time = 0.1 min, and uptime proportion is assumed to be 1.0, what is the theoretical minimum number of workstations required to minimize the balance delay under the assumption that there will be one worker per station? (c) Use the largest candidate rule to assign work elements to stations. (d) Compute the balance delay for your solution.

| *Work Element* | $T_e$ *(min)* | *Immediate Predecessors* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.5 | – |
| 2 | 0.3 | 1 |
| 3 | 0.8 | 1 |
| 4 | 0.2 | 2 |
| 5 | 0.1 | 2 |
| 6 | 0.6 | 3 |
| 7 | 0.4 | 4,5 |
| 8 | 0.5 | 3,5 |
| 9 | 0.3 | 7,8 |
| 10 | 0.6 | 6,9 |

**17.18** Solve Problem 17.17 using the Kilbridge and Wester method in part (c).

**17.19** Solve Problem 17.17 using the ranked positional weights method in part (c).

**17.20** A manual assembly line is to be designed to make a small consumer product. The work elements, their times, and precedence constraints are given in the table below. The workers will operate the line for 400 min/day and must produce 300 products/day. A mechanized belt moving at a speed of 1.25 m/min will transport the products between stations. Because of the variability in the time required to perform the assembly operations, it has been determined that the tolerance time should be 1.5 times the cycle time of the line. (a) Determine the ideal minimum number of workers on the line. (b) Use the Kilbridge and Wester method to balance the line. (c) Compute the balance delay for your solution in part (b). (d) Determine the spacing between assemblies on the conveyor and (e) the required length of each workstation to meet the specifications for the line.

| *Element* | $T_e$ *(min)* | *Preceded By* | *Element* | $T_e$ *(min)* | *Preceded By* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.4 | – | 6 | 0.2 | 3 |
| 2 | 0.7 | 1 | 7 | 0.3 | 4 |
| 3 | 0.5 | 1 | 8 | 0.9 | 4,9 |
| 4 | 0.8 | 2 | 9 | 0.3 | 5,6 |
| 5 | 1.0 | 2,3 | 10 | 0.5 | 7,8 |

**17.21** Solve Problem 17.20 using the ranked positional weights method in part (b).

**17.22** A manual assembly line operates with a mechanized conveyor. The conveyor moves at a speed of 5 ft/min, and the spacing between base parts launched onto the line is 4 ft. It has been determined that the line operates best when there is one worker per station and each station is 6 ft long. There are 14 work elements that must be accomplished to complete the assembly, and the element times and precedence requirements are listed in the table below. Determine: (a) feed rate and corresponding cycle time, (b) tolerance time for each worker, and (c) ideal minimum number of workers on the line. (d) Draw the precedence diagram for the problem. (e) Determine an efficient line balancing solution. (f) For your solution, determine the balance delay.

| Element | $T_e$ (min) | Preceded By | Element | $T_e$ (min) | Preceded By: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.2 | – | 8 | 0.2 | 5 |
| 2 | 0.5 | – | 9 | 0.4 | 5 |
| 3 | 0.2 | 1 | 10 | 0.3 | 6,7 |
| 4 | 0.6 | 1 | 11 | 0.1 | 9 |
| 5 | 0.1 | 2 | 12 | 0.2 | 8,10 |
| 6 | 0.2 | 3,4 | 13 | 0.1 | 11 |
| 7 | 0.3 | 4 | 14 | 0.3 | 12,13 |

**17.23** A new small electrical appliance is to be assembled on a single model assembly line. The line will be operated 250 day/yr, 15 hr/day. The work content has been divided into work elements as defined in the table below. Also given are the element times and precedence requirements. Annual production is to be 200,000 units. It is anticipated that the line efficiency (proportion uptime) $E = 0.96$. The repositioning time for each worker is 0.08 min. Determine: (a) average hourly production rate, (b) cycle time, and (c) theoretical minimum number of workers required to meet annual production requirements. (d) Use one of the line balancing algorithms to balance the line. For your solution, determine: (e) balance efficiency and (f) overall labor efficiency on the line.

| Element No. | Element Description | $T_e$ (min) | Preceded By |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Place frame on workholder and clamp | 0.15 | – |
| 2 | Assemble fan to motor | 0.37 | – |
| 3 | Assemble bracket A to frame | 0.21 | 1 |
| 4 | Assemble bracket B to frame | 0.21 | 1 |
| 5 | Assemble motor to frame | 0.58 | 1,2 |
| 6 | Affix insulation to bracket A | 0.12 | 3 |
| 7 | Assemble angle plate to bracket A | 0.29 | 3 |
| 8 | Affix insulation to bracket B | 0.12 | 4 |
| 9 | Attach link bar to motor and bracket B | 0.30 | 4,5 |
| 10 | Assemble three wires to motor | 0.45 | 5 |
| 11 | Assemble nameplate to housing | 0.18 | – |
| 12 | Assemble light fixture to housing | 0.20 | 11 |
| 13 | Assemble blade mechanism to frame | 0.65 | 6,7,8,9 |
| 14 | Wire switch, motor, and light | 0.72 | 10,12 |
| 15 | Wire blade mechanism to switch | 0.25 | 13 |
| 16 | Attach housing over motor | 0.35 | 14 |
| 17 | Test blade mechanism, light, etc. | 0.16 | 15,16 |
| 18 | Affix instruction label to cover plate | 0.12 | – |
| 19 | Assemble grommet to power cord | 0.10 | – |
| 20 | Assemble cord and grommet to cover plate | 0.23 | 18,19 |
| 21 | Assemble power cord leads to switch | 0.40 | 17,20 |
| 22 | Assemble cover plate to frame | 0.33 | 21 |
| 23 | Final inspect and remove from workholder | 0.25 | 22 |
| 24 | Package | 1.75 | 23 |

## Mixed Model Assembly Lines

**17.24** Two product models, A and B, are to be produced on a mixed model assembly line. Hourly production rate and work content time for model A are 12 units/hr and 32.0 min, respectively; and for model B are 20 units/hr and 21.0 min. Line efficiency $E = 0.95$, balance efficiency

$E_b$ = 0.93, repositioning time $T_r$ = 0.10 min, and manning level $M$ = 1. Determine how many workers and workstations must be on the production line to produce this workload.

**17.25** Three models, A, B, and C, will be produced on a mixed model assembly line. Hourly production rate and work content time for model A are 10 units/hr and 45.0 min, for model B are 20 units/hr and 35.0 min, and for model C are 30 units/hr and 25.0 min. Line efficiency is 95%, balance efficiency is 0.94, repositioning efficiency $E_r$ = 0.93, and manning level $M$ = 1. Determine how many workers and workstations must be on the production line to produce this workload.

**17.26** For Problem 17.24, determine the variable rate launching intervals for models A and B.

**17.27** For Problem 17.25, determine the variable rate launching intervals for models A, B, and C.

**17.28** For Problem 17.24, determine: (a) the fixed rate launching interval and (b) the launch sequence of models A and B during 1 hr of production.

**17.29** For Problem 17.25, determine: (a) the fixed rate launching interval and (b) the launch sequence of models A, B, and C during 1 hr or production.

**17.30** Show that the two statements of the objective function in mixed model line balancing in Eq. (17.31) are equivalent.

**17.31** Two models A and B are to be assembled on a mixed model line. Hourly production rates for the two models are: A, 25 units/hr and B, 18 units/hr. The work elements, element times, and precedence requirements are given in the table below. Elements 6 and 8 are not required for model A, and elements 4 and 7 are not required for model B. Assume $E$ = 1.0, $E$ = 1.0, and $M_i$ = 1. (a) Construct the precedence diagram for each model and for both models combined into one diagram. (b) Find the theoretical minimum number of workstations required to achieve the required production rate. (c) Use the Kilbridge and Wester method to solve the line balancing problem. (d) Determine the balance efficiency for your solution in (c).

| Work Element $k$ | $T_{eAk}$ (min) | Preceded By | $T_{eBk}$ (min) | Preceded By |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.5 | – | 0.5 | – |
| 2 | 0.3 | 1 | 0.3 | 1 |
| 3 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.8 | 1 |
| 4 | 0.4 | 2 | – | – |
| 5 | 1.2 | 2,3 | 1.3 | 2,3 |
| 6 | – | – | 0.4 | 3 |
| 7 | 0.6 | 4,5 | – | – |
| 8 | – | – | 0.7 | 5,6 |
| 9 | 0.5 | 7 | 0.5 | 8 |
| $T_{wc}$ | 4.2 | | 4.5 | |

**17.32** For the data given in previous Problem 17.31, solve the mixed model line balancing problem except use the ranked positional weights method to determine the order of entry of work elements.

**17.33** Three models A, B, and C are to be assembled on a mixed model line. Hourly production rates for the three models are: A, 15 units/hr; B, 10 units/hr; and C, 5 units/hr. The work elements, element times, and precedence requirements are given in the table below. Assume $E$ = 1.0, $E_r$ = 1.0, and $M_i$ = 1. (a) Construct the precedence diagram for each model and for all three models combined into one diagram. (b) Find the theoretical minimum number of workstations required to achieve the required production rate. (c) Use the Kilbridge and

Wester method to solve the line balancing problem. (d) Determine the balance efficiency for the solution in (c).

| Element | $T_{eAk}$ (min) | Preceded By | $T_{eBk}$ (min) | Preceded By | $T_{eCk}$ (min) | Preceded By |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.6 | – | 0.6 | – | 0.6 | – |
| 2 | 0.5 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 |
| 3 | 0.9 | 1 | 0.9 | 1 | 0.9 | 1 |
| 4 | – | | 0.5 | 1 | – | |
| 5 | – | | – | | 0.6 | 1 |
| 6 | 0.7 | 2 | 0.7 | 2 | 0.7 | 2 |
| 7 | 1.3 | 3 | 1.3 | 3 | 1.3 | 3 |
| 8 | – | | 0.9 | 4 | – | |
| 9 | – | | – | | 1.2 | 5 |
| 10 | 0.8 | 6,7 | 0.8 | 6,7,8 | 0.8 | 6,7,9 |
| $T_{wc}$ | 4.8 | | 6.2 | | 6.6 | |

**17.34** For the data given in previous Problem 17.33, (a) solve the mixed model line balancing problem except that line efficiency $E = 0.96$ and repositioning efficiency $E_r = 0.95$. (b) Determine the balance efficiency for your solution.

**17.35** For Problem 17.33, determine: (a) the fixed rate launching interval and (b) the launch sequence of models A, B, and C during 1 hr of production.

**17.36** Two similar models, A and B, are to be produced on a mixed model assembly line. There are four workers and four stations on the line $(M_i = 1 \text{ for } i = 1, 2, 3, 4)$. Hourly production rates for the two models are: for A, 7 units/hr and for B, 5 units/hr. The work elements, element times, and precedence requirements for the two models are given in the table below. As the table indicates, most elements are common to both models. Element 5 is unique to model A, and elements 8 and 9 are unique to model B. Assume $E = 1.0$ and $E_r = 1.0$. (a) Develop the mixed model precedence diagram for the two models and for both models combined. (b) Determine a line balancing solution that allows the two models to be produced on the four stations at the specified rates. (c) Using your solution from (b), solve the fixed rate model launching problem by determining the fixed rate launching interval and constructing a table to show the sequence of model launchings during the hour.

| Work Element k | $T_{eAk}$ (min) | Preceded By | $T_{eBk}$ (min) | Preceded By |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | – | 1 | – |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1,8 |
| 4 | 2 | – | 2 | 8 |
| 5 | 1 | 2 | – | – |
| 6 | 2 | 2,3,4 | 2 | 2,3,4 |
| 7 | 3 | 5,6 | 3 | 6,9 |
| 8 | – | – | 4 | – |
| 9 | – | – | 2 | 4 |
| $T_{wc}$ | 16 | | 21 | |

chapter 18

# Transfer Lines and Similar Automated Manufacturing Systems

CHAPTER CONTENTS



The manufacturing systems considered in this chapter are used for high production of parts that require multiple processing operations. Each processing operation is performed at a workstation, and the stations are physically integrated by means of a mechanized work transport system to form an automated production line. Machining (milling, drilling, and similar rotating cutter operations) is a common process performed on these production lines, in which case the term ***transfer line*** or ***transfer machine*** is used. In our classification of manufacturing systems (Section 13.2), transfer lines are type III A, case S (fixed routing or parts, automated, single model systems). Other applications of automated production lines include robotic spotwelding in automobile final assembly plants, sheet metal pressworking, and electroplating of metals. Similar automated lines are used for assembly operations; however, the technology of automated assembly is sufficiently different that we postpone coverage of this topic until the next chapter.

Automated production lines require a significant capital investment. They are examples of fixed automation (Section 1.3), and it is generally difficult to alter the sequence and content of the processing operations once the line is built. Their application is therefore appropriate only under the following conditions:

- ***High product demand***, requiring high production quantities.
- ***Stable product design.*** Frequent design changes are difficult to cope with on an automated production line.
- ***Long product life***, at least several years in most cases.
- ***Multiple operations*** are performed on the product during its manufacture.

When the application satisfies these conditions, automated production lines provide the following benefits:

- Low direct labor content.
- Low product cost because cost of fixed equipment is spread over many units.
- High production rates.
- Production lead time (the time between beginning of production and completion of a finished unit) and work-in-process are minimized.
- Factory floor space is minimized.

In this chapter, we examine the technology of automated production lines and develop several mathematical models that can be used to analyze their operation.

## 18.1 FUNDAMENTALS OF AUTOMATED PRODUCTION LINES

An ***automated production line*** consists of multiple workstations that are linked together by a work handling system that transfers parts from one station to the next, as depicted in Figure 18.1. A raw workpart enters one end of the line, and the processing steps are

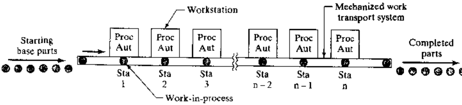



**Figure 18.1** General configuration of an automated production line. Key: Proc = processing operation, Aut = automated workstation.

performed sequentially as the part progresses forward (from left to right in our drawing). The line may include inspection stations to perform intermediate quality checks. Also, manual stations may also be located along the line to perform certain operations that are difficult or uneconomical to automate. Each station performs a different operation, so that the sum total of all the operations is required to complete one unit of work. Multiple parts are processed simultaneously on the line, one part at each workstation. In the simplest form of production line, the number of parts on the line at any moment is equal to the number of workstations, as indicated in our figure. In more complicated lines, provision is made for temporary parts storage between stations, in which case there is on average more than one part per station.

An automated production line operates in cycles, similar to a manual assembly line (Chapter 17). Each cycle consists of processing time plus the time to transfer parts to their respective next workstations. The slowest workstation on the line sets the pace of the line, just as in an assembly line. In Section 18.3, we develop equations to describe the cycle time performance of the transfer line and similar automated manufacturing systems.

Depending on workpart geometry, a transfer line may utilize pallet fixtures for part handling. A ***pallet fixture*** is a workholding device that is designed to (1) fixture the part in a precise location relative to its base and (2) be moved, located, and accurately clamped in position at successive workstations by the transfer system. With the parts accurately located on the pallet fixture, and the pallet accurately registered at a given workstation, the part is therefore itself accurately positioned relative to the processing operation performed at the station. The location requirement is especially critical in machining operations, where tolerances are typically specified in hundredths of a millimeter or thousands of an inch. The term ***palletized transfer line*** is sometimes used to identify a transfer line that uses pallet fixtures or similar workholding devices. The alternative method of workpart location is to simply index the parts themselves from station-to-station. This is called a ***free transfer line***, whose obvious benefit is that it avoids the cost of the pallet fixtures. However, certain part geometries require the use of pallet fixtures to facilitate handling and ensure accurate location at a workstation. When pallet fixtures are used, a means must be provided for them to be delivered back to the front of the line for re-use.

### 18.1.1 System Configurations

Although Figure 18.1 shows the flow of work to be in a straight line, the work flow can actually take several different forms. We classify them as follows: (1) in-line, (2) segmented in-line, and (3) rotary. The ***in-line*** configuration consists of a sequence of stations in a straight line arrangement, as in Figure 18.1. This configuration is common for machining big workpieces, such as automotive engine blocks, engine heads, and transmission cases. Because these parts require a large number of operations, a production line with many stations is needed. The in-line configuration can accommodate a large number of stations. In-line systems can also be designed with integrated storage buffers along the flow path (Section 18.1.3).

The ***segmented in-line*** configuration consists of two or more straight-line transfer sections, where the segments are usually perpendicular to each other. Figure 18.2 shows several possible layouts of the segmented in-line category. There are a number of reasons for designing a production line in these configurations rather than in a pure straight line, including: (1) available floor space may limit the length of the line, (2) it allows reorientation

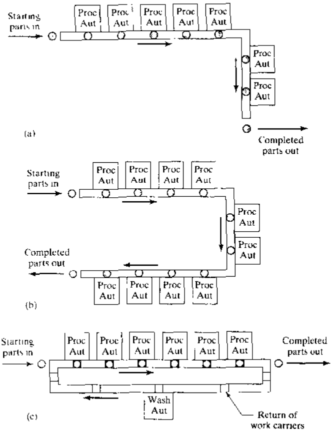



**Figure 18.2** Several possible layouts of the segmented in-line configuration of an automated production line: (a) L-shaped, (b) U-shaped, and (c) rectangular. Key: Proc = processing operation, Aut = automated workstation, Wash = work carrier washing station.

of the workpiece to present different surfaces for machining, and (3) the rectangular layout provides for return of workholding fixtures to the front of the line for reuse.

Figure 18.3 shows two transfer lines that perform metal machining operations on a truck rear axle housing. The first line, on the bottom right-hand side, is a segmented in-line configuration in the shape of a rectangle. Pallet fixtures are used in this line to position the starting castings at the workstations for machining. The second line, in the upper left corner, is a conventional in-line configuration consisting of seven stations. When processing on the first line is completed, the parts are manually transferred to the second line, where they are reoriented to present different surfaces for machining. In this line, the parts are moved by the transfer mechanism using no pallet fixtures.

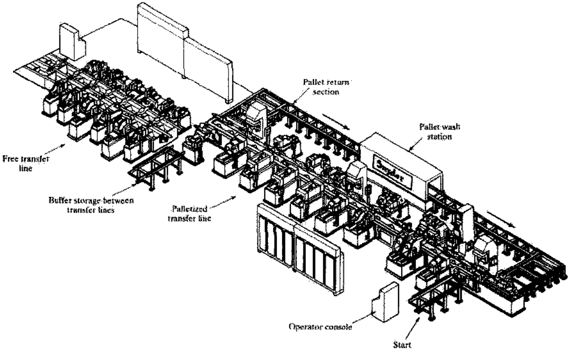



**Figure 18.3** Line drawing of two machining transfer lines. At bottom right, the first is a 12-station segmented in-line configuration that uses pallet fixtures to locate the workparts. The return loop brings the pallets back to the front of the line. The second transfer line (upper left) is a seven-station in-line configuration. The manual station between the lines is used to reorient the parts. (Courtesy of Snyder Corp.)

In the ***rotary*** configuration, the workparts are attached to fixtures around the periphery of a circular worktable, and the table is indexed (rotated in fixed angular amounts) to present the parts to workstations for processing. A typical arrangement is illustrated in Figure 18.4. The worktable is often referred to as a dial, and the equipment is called a ***dial indexing machine***, or simply, ***indexing machine***. Although the rotary configuration does not seem to belong to the class of production systems called "lines," their operation is nevertheless very similar. Compared with the in-line and segmented in-line configurations, rotary indexing systems are commonly limited to smaller workparts and fewer workstations; and they cannot readily accommodate buffer storage capacity. On the positive side, the rotary system usually involves a less expensive piece of equipment and typically requires less floorspace.

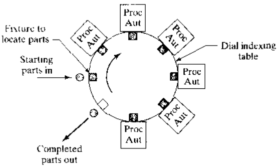



**Figure 18.4** Rotary indexing machine (dial indexing machine). Key: Proc = processing operation. Aut = automated workstation.

### 18.1.2 Workpart Transfer Mechanisms

The workpart transfer system moves parts between stations on the production line. Transfer mechanisms used on automated production lines are usually either synchronous or asynchronous (Section 17.1.2). Synchronous transfer has been the traditional means of moving parts in a transfer line. However, applications of asynchronous transfer systems are increasing because they provide certain advantages over synchronous parts movement [10]: (1) greater flexibility, (2) fewer pallet fixtures required, (3) easier to rearrange or expand the production system. These advantages come at higher first cost. Continuous work transport systems are uncommon on automated lines due to the difficulty in providing accurate registration between the station workheads and the continuously moving parts.

In this Section, we divide workpart transfer mechanisms into two categories: (1) linear transport systems for in-line systems and (2) rotary indexing mechanisms for dial indexing machines. Some of the linear transport systems provide synchronous movement, whereas others provide asynchronous motion. The rotary indexing mechanisms all provide synchronous motion.

*Linear Transfer Systems.* Most of the material transport systems described in Chapter 10 provide a linear motion, and some of these are used for workpart transfer in automated production systems. These include powered roller conveyors, belt conveyors, chain-driven conveyors, and cart-on-track conveyors (Section 10.4). Figure 18.5 illustrates

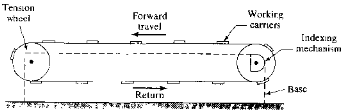



**Figure 18.5** Side view of chain or steel belt driven conveyor ("over-and-under" type) for linear workpart transfer using work carriers.

the possible application of a chain or belt driven conveyor to provide continuous or intermittent movement of parts between stations. Either a chain or flexible steel belt is used to transport parts using work carriers attached to the conveyor. The chain is driven by pulleys in either an "over-and-under" configuration, in which the pulleys turn about a horizontal axis, or an "around-the-corner" configuration, in which the pulleys rotate about a vertical axis.

The belt conveyor can also be adapted for asynchronous movement of work units using friction between the belt and the part to move parts between stations. The forward motion of the parts is stopped at each station using pop-up pins or other stopping mechanisms.

Cart-on-track conveyors provide asynchronous parts movement and are designed to position their carts within about ±0.12 mm (±0.005 inch), which is adequate for many processing situations. In the other types, provision must be made to stop the workparts and locate them within the required tolerance at each workstation. Pin-in-hole mechanisms and detente devices can be used for this purpose.

Many machining type transfer lines utilize various ***walking beam transfer*** systems, in which the parts are synchronously lifted up from their respective stations by a transfer beam and moved one position ahead to the next station. The transfer beam then lowers the parts into nests that position them for processing at their stations. The beam then retracts to make ready for the next transfer cycle. The action sequence is depicted in Figure 18.6.

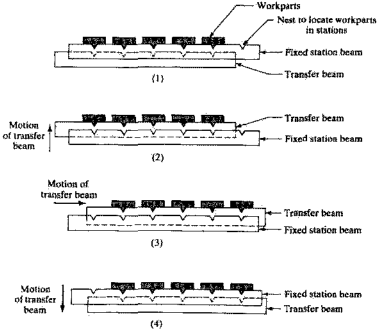



**Figure 18.6** Operation of walking beam transfer system: (1) workparts at station positions on fixed station beam, (2) transfer beam is raised to lift workparts from nests, (3) elevated transfer beam moves parts to next station positions, and (4) transfer beam lowers to drop workparts into nests at new station positions. Transfer beam then retracts to original position shown in (1).

*Rotary Indexing Mechanisms.* Several mechanisms are available to provide the rotational indexing motion required in a dial indexing machine. Two representative types are explained here: Geneva mechanism and cam drive.

The ***Geneva mechanism*** uses a continuously rotating driver to index the table through a partial rotation, as illustrated in Figure 18.7. If the driven member has six slots for a six-station dial indexing table, each turn of the driver results in 1/6 rotation of the worktable, or 60°. The driver only causes motion of the table through a portion of its own rotation. For a six-slotted Geneva, 120° of driver rotation is used to index the table. The remaining 240° of driver rotation is dwell time for the table, during which the processing operation must be completed on the work unit. In general,

$$\theta = \frac{360}{n_s} \tag{18.1}$$

where $\theta$ = angle of rotation of worktable during indexing (degrees of rotation), and $n_s$ = number of slots in the Geneva. The angle of driver rotation during indexing = $2\theta$, and the angle of driver rotation during which the work table experiences dwell time is $(360\text{-}2\theta)$. Geneva mechanisms usually have four, five, six, or eight slots, which establishes the maximum number of workstation positions that can be placed around the periphery of the table. Given the rotational speed of the driver, we can determine total cycle time as:

$$T_c = \frac{1}{N} \tag{18.2}$$

where $T_c$ = cycle time (min), and $N$ = rotational speed of driver (rev/min). Of the total cycle time, the dwell time, or available operation time per cycle, is given by:

$$T_s = \frac{(180 + \theta)}{360N} \tag{18.3}$$

where $T_s$ = available service or processing time or dwell time (min), and the other terms are defined above. Similarly, the indexing time is given by:

$$T_r = \frac{(180 - \theta)}{360N} \tag{18.4}$$

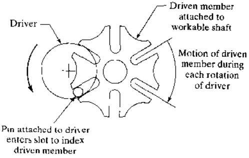



**Figure 18.7** Geneva mechanism with six slots.

where $T_r$ = indexing time (min). (We have previously referred to this indexing time as the repositioning time, so for consistency we retain the same notation.)

**EXAMPLE 18.1 Geneva Mechanism for a Rotary Indexing Table**

A rotary worktable is driven by a Geneva mechanism with six slots, as in Figure 18.7. The driver rotates at 30 rev/min. Determine the cycle time, available process time, and the lost time each cycle indexing the table.

***Solution:*** With a driver rotational speed of 30 rev/min, the total cycle time is given by Eq. (18.2):

$$T_c = (30)^{-1} = 0.0333 \text{ min} = 2.0 \text{ sec.}$$

The angle of rotation of the worktable during indexing for a six-slotted Geneva is given by Eq. (18.1):

$$\theta = \frac{360}{6} = 60^\circ$$

Eqs. (18.3) and (18.4) give the available service time and indexing time, respectively, as:

$$T_s = \frac{(180 + 60)}{360(30)} = 0.0222 \text{ min} = 1.333 \text{ sec.}$$

$$T_r = \frac{(180 - 60)}{360(30)} = 0.0111 \text{ min} = 0.667 \text{ sec.}$$

Various forms of ***cam drive*** mechanisms, one of which is illustrated in Figure 18.8, are used to provide an accurate and reliable method of indexing a rotary dial table. Although a relatively expensive drive mechanism, its advantage is that the cam can be designed to provide a variety of velocity and dwell characteristics.

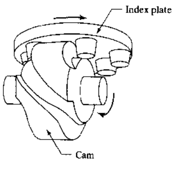



**Figure 18.8** Cam mechanism to drive dial indexing table (reprinted from [1]).

### 18.1.3 Storage Buffers

Automated production lines can be designed with storage buffers. A ***storage buffer*** in a production line is a location where parts can be collected and temporarily stored before proceeding to subsequent (downstream) workstations. The storage buffers can be manually operated or automated. When automated, a storage buffer consists of a mechanism to accept parts from the upstream workstation, a place to store the parts, and a mechanism to supply parts to the downstream station. A key parameter of a storage buffer is its storage capacity, that is, the number of workparts it is capable of holding. Storage buffers may be located between every pair of adjacent stations or between line stages containing multiple stations. We illustrate the case of one storage buffer between two stages in Figure 18.9.

There are a number of reasons why storage buffers are used on automated production lines. The reasons include:

- ***To reduce the effect of station breakdowns.*** Storage buffers between stages on a production line permit one stage to continue operation while the other stage is down for repairs. We analyze this issue in Section 18.4.
- ***To provide a bank of parts to supply the line.*** Parts can be collected into a storage unit and automatically fed to a downstream manufacturing system. This permits untended operation of the system between refills.
- ***To provide a place to put the output of the line.*** This is the opposite of the preceding case.
- ***To allow for curing time or other required delay.*** A curing or setting time is required for some processes such as painting or adhesive application. The storage buffer is designed to provide sufficient time for the curing to occur before supplying the parts to the downstream station.
- ***To smooth cycle time variations.*** Although this is generally not an issue in an automated line, it is relevant in manual production lines, where cycle time variations are an inherent feature of human performance.

Storage buffers are more readily accommodated in the design of an in-line transfer machine than a rotary indexing machine. In the latter case, buffers are sometimes located (1) before a dial indexing system to provide a bank of raw starting workparts, (2) following the dial indexing machine to accept the output of the system, or (3) between pairs of adjacent dial indexing machines.

### 18.1.4 Control of the Production Line

Controlling an automated production line is complex because of the sheer number of sequential and simultaneous activities that must be accomplished during operation of the

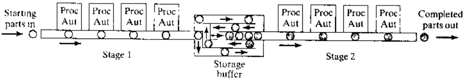



**Figure 18.9** Storage buffer between two stages of a production line.

line. In this Section, we discuss (1) the basic control functions that are accomplished to run the line and (2) the characteristics of controllers used on automated lines.

*Control Functions.* Three basic control functions can be distinguished in the operation of an automatic transfer machine. One is an operational requirement, the second is a safety requirement, and the third is for quality control. The three basic control functions are:

1. ***Sequence control.*** The purpose of this function is to coordinate the sequence of actions of the transfer system and associated workstations. The various activities of the production line must be carried out with split-second timing and accuracy. On a transfer line, for example, the parts must be released from their current workstations, transported, located, and clamped into position at their respective next stations; then the workheads must be actuated to begin their feed cycles; and so on. Sequence control is basic to the operation of an automated production line.
2. ***Safety monitoring.*** This function ensures that the production line does not operate in an unsafe condition. Safety applies to both the human workers in the area as well as the equipment itself. Additional sensors must be incorporated into the line beyond those required for sequence control to complete the safety feedback loop and avoid hazardous operation. For example, interlocks must be installed to prevent the equipment from operating when workers are performing maintenance or other duties on the line. In the case of machining transfer lines, cutting tools must be monitored for breakage and/or excessive wear to prevent feeding a defective cutter into the work. A more complete treatment of safety monitoring in manufacturing systems is presented in Section 3.2.1.
3. ***Quality control.*** In this control function, certain quality attributes of the workparts are monitored. The purpose is to detect and possibly reject defective work units produced on the line. The inspection devices required to accomplish quality control are sometimes incorporated into existing processing stations. In other cases, separate inspection stations are included in the line for the sole purpose of checking the desired quality characteristic. We discuss quality inspection principles and practices in production systems as well as the associated inspection technologies in Chapters 22 and 23.

When a defect is encountered during quality control inspection, the question arises as to what action should be taken to deal with the problem. One possible action is to stop the production line immediately and remove the defect. The trouble with stopping the line is that production time is lost. An alternative action is to continue to operate, but to lock out the affected work unit from further processing as it proceeds through the sequence of stations. This keeps the line producing but requires a more sophisticated level of control over the equipment. The same question of whether to interrupt or continue operation of the line arises in sequence control and safety monitoring, but answering the question is usually more straightforward in these modes of control. For example, when a workstation feed mechanism jams, interlocks prevent continuation of the line operation, and a line stop occurs that must be repaired. If a life-threatening safety violation occurs, the line must be stopped immediately. If, on the other hand, a minor safety problem occurs, such as detection of worn cutter that will last only a few more cycles, then a more reasonable action might be to wait until a forced line stop occurs and use that as the opportunity to replace the tool.

Let us refer to the two alternatives of immediately stopping the line or continuing to operate as instantaneous control and memory control. They are auxiliary control functions imbedded within the three basic functions.

1. ***Instantaneous control.*** This control mode stops the line immediately when a defect or malfunction is detected. This reaction to a problem is the simplest, most reliable, and easiest to implement. However, as our analysis in Section 18.3 shows, downtime on a production line can be very costly. Diagnostic features can be added to aid in identifying the location and cause of the problem so that repairs can be made in the minimum possible time. Instantaneous control is appropriate for serious safety problems and for malfunctions in sequence control that repeat every cycle.
2. ***Memory control.*** In contrast to instantaneous control, memory control is designed to keep the line running. If the problem is associated with a particular work unit (e.g., a defective part is detected), memory control prevents subsequent stations from processing the particular unit as it moves toward the end of the line. When the part reaches the last station, it is separated from the rest of the good parts produced. This usually requires that the final station on the line be a sortation station that is controlled by the memory controller.

Memory control is based on the premise that malfunctions occurring on the line are random and infrequent. On the other hand, if the malfunctions are systematic and repetitive (e.g., a workhead that has gone out of alignment), memory control will not improve performance but will instead degrade it. The line will continue to operate, with the consequence that bad parts will continue to be produced. To address this issue, a counter can be added to the control logic to count the number of consecutive failures and stop the machine for repairs after the count reaches a certain critical value.

*Line Controllers.* For many years, the traditional equipment used to control the sequence of steps on automated production lines were electromechanical relays. Since the 1970s, programmable logic controllers (PLCs, Chapter 8) have been used as the controllers in new installations. More recently, personal computers (PCs) are being used to accomplish the control functions to operate automated production lines [11]. In addition to being more reliable, computer control offers the following benefits:

1. Opportunity to improve and upgrade the control software, such as adding specific control functions not anticipated in the original system design.
2. Recording of data on process performance, equipment reliability, and product quality for subsequent analysis. In some cases, product quality records must be maintained for legal reasons.
3. Diagnostic routines to expedite maintenance and repair when line breakdowns occur and to reduce the duration of downtime incidents.
4. Automatic generation of preventive maintenance schedules indicating when certain preventive maintenance activities should be performed. This helps to reduce the frequency of downtime occurrences.
5. Provides a more convenient human-machine interface between the operator and the automated line.

## 18.2 APPLICATIONS OF AUTOMATED PRODUCTION LINES

Automated production lines are applied in processing operations as well as assembly. We discuss automated assembly systems in Chapter 19. Machining is one of the most common processing applications and is the focus of most of our discussion in this section. Other processes performed on automated production lines and similar systems include sheet metal forming and cutting, rolling mill operations, spot welding of automobile car bodies, and painting and plating operations.

### 18.2.1 Machining Systems

Many applications of machining transfer machines, both in-line and rotary configurations, are found in the automotive industry to produce engine and drivetrain components. In fact, the first transfer lines can be traced to the automobile industry (Historical Note 18.1). Machining operations commonly performed on transfer lines include milling, drilling, reaming, tapping, grinding, and similar rotational cutting tool operations. Provision can be made to perform turning and boring on transfer lines, but these applications are less prevalent. In this chapter, we discuss the various multiple station machining systems.

**Historical Note 18.1** Transfer lines [15].

Development of automated transfer lines is traced principally to the automobile industry, which had become the largest mass production industry in the United States by the early 1920s, with a similar trend in Europe. The Ford Motor Co. had pioneered the development of the moving assembly line, but the operations performed on these lines were manual. Attempts were being made to extend the principle of manual assembly lines by building lines capable of automatic or semiautomatic operation. The first fully automatic production line is credited to L. R. Smith of Milwaukee, Wisconsin during 1919 and 1920. This line produced automobile chassis frames out of sheet metal, using air-powered riveting heads that rotated into position at each station to engage the workpart. The line performed a total of 550 operations on each frame and was capable of producing over a million chassis frames per year.

The first metal machining multi-station line was developed by Archdale Co. in England for Morris Engines Ltd. in 1923 to machine automobile engine blocks. It had 53 stations, performed 224 min of machining on each part, and had a production rate of 15 blocks/hr. It was not a true automatic line because it required manual transfer of work between stations. Yet it stands as an important forerunner of the automated transfer line.

The first machining line to use automatic work transfer between stations was built by Archdale Company for Morris Engines in 1924. The two companies had obviously benefited from their previous collaborations. This line performed 45 machining operations on gearboxes and produced at the rate of 17 units/hr. Reliability problems caused this first transfer line to be less than completely successful.

*Transfer Lines.* In a ***transfer line***, the workstations containing machining workheads are arranged in an in-line or segmented in-line configuration, and the parts are moved between stations by transfer mechanisms such as the walking beam system (Section 18.1.2). It is the most highly automated and productive system in terms of the number of operations that can be performed to accommodate complex work geometries and the rates of production that can be achieved. It is also the most expensive of the systems discussed in this chapter. Machining type transfer lines are pictured in Figure 18.3. The transfer line can include a large number of workstations, but the reliability of the system decreases as the number of stations is increased. (We discuss this issue in Section 18.3.) Among the variations in features and options found in transfer lines are the following:

- Workpart transport can be synchronous or asynchronous.
- Workparts can be transported with or without pallet fixtures, depending on part geometry and ease of handling.
- A variety of monitoring and control features can be included to manage the line.

In recent years, transfer lines have been designed for ease of changeover to allow different but related workparts to be produced on the same line [10], [12], [13]. The workstations on these lines consist of a combination of fixed tooling and CNC machines, so that the differences in product can be accommodated by the CNC stations, while the common operations are performed by the stations with fixed tooling. Thus, we see a trend in transfer lines in the direction of flexible manufacturing systems (Chapter 16).

*Rotary Transfer Machines and Related Systems.* A rotary transfer machine consists of a horizontal circular worktable, on which are fixtured the workparts to be processed, and around whose periphery are located stationary workheads. The worktable is indexed to present each workpart to each workhead to accomplish the sequence of machining operations. An example is shown in Figure 18.10. Compared with a transfer line, the rotary indexing machine is limited to smaller and lighter workparts and fewer workstations.

Two variants of the rotary transfer machine are the center column machine and the trunnion machine. In the ***center column machine***, vertical machining heads are mounted on a center column in addition to the stationary machining heads located on the outside of the horizontal worktable, thereby increasing the number of machining operations that can be performed. The center column machine, pictured in Figure 18.11, is considered to be a high production machine that makes efficient use of floor space. The ***trunnion machine*** gets its name from a vertically oriented worktable, or ***trunnion***, to which workholders are attached to fixture the parts for machining. Since the trunnion indexes around a horizontal axis, this provides the opportunity to perform machining operations on opposite sides of the workpart. Additional workheads can be located around the periphery of the trunnion to increase the number of machining directions. Trunnion machines are most suitable for smaller workparts than the other rotary machines discussed here.

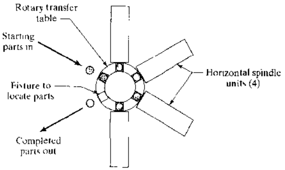



**Figure 18.10** Plan view of a rotary transfer machine.

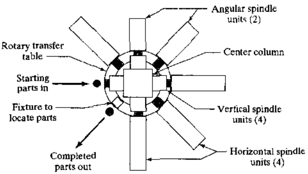



**Figure 18.11** Plan view of the center column machine.

### 18.2.2 System Design Considerations

For most companies that use automated production lines and related systems, the design of the system is turned over to a machine tool builder that specializes in this type of equipment. The customer (the company purchasing the equipment) must develop specifications that include design drawings of the part to be machined and the required production rate of the line that will produce them. Typically, several machine tool builders are invited to submit proposals. Each proposal is based on the machinery components comprising the builder's product line as well as the ingenuity of the engineer preparing the proposal. The proposed line consists of standard workheads, spindles, feed units, drive motors, transfer mechanisms, bases, and other standard components, all synthesized into a special configuration to match the machining requirements of the customer's particular part. Examples of these standard components are illustrated in Figures 18.12 and 18.13. The controls for the system are either designed by the machine builder or sublet as a separate contract to a

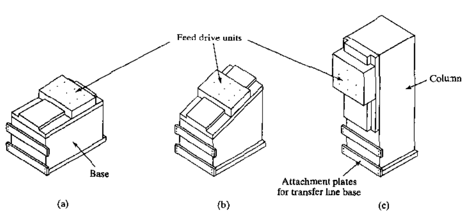



**Figure 18.12** Standard feed units used with in-line or rotary transfer machines: (a) horizontal feed drive unit, (b) angular feed drive unit, and (c) vertical column unit.

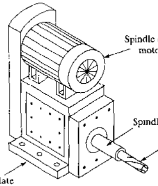



**Figure 18.13** Standard milling head unit. This unit attaches to the feed drive units in Figure 18.12.

controls specialist. Transfer lines and indexing machines constructed using this building-block approach are sometimes referred to as ***unitized production lines***.

An alternative approach in designing an automated line is to use standard machine tools and to connect them with standard or special material handling devices. The material handling hardware serves as the transfer system that moves work between the standard machines. The term ***link line*** is sometimes used in connection with this type of construction. In some cases, the individual machines are manually operated if there are fixturing and location problems at the stations that are difficult to solve without human assistance.

A company often prefers to develop a link line rather than a unitized production line because it can utilize existing equipment in the plant. This usually means the production line can be installed sooner and at lower cost. Since the machine tools in the system are standard, they can be reused when the production run is finished. Also, the lines can be engineered by personnel within the company rather than relying on outside contractors. The limitation of the link line is that it tends to favor simpler part shapes and therefore fewer operations and workstations. Unitized lines are generally capable of higher production rates and require less floor space. However, their high cost makes them suitable only for very long production runs on products that are not subject to frequent design changes.

## 18.3 ANALYSIS OF TRANSFER LINES WITH NO INTERNAL STORAGE

In the analysis of automated production lines, two general problem areas must be addressed: (1) process technology and (2) systems technology. Process technology refers to a body of knowledge about the theory and principles of the particular manufacturing processes used on the production line. For example, in the machining process, process technology includes the metallurgy and machinability of the work material, the proper application of cutting tools, chip control, machining economics, machine tool vibrations, and a host of other problem areas and issues. Many of the problems encountered in machining can be solved by direct application of good machining principles. The same is true of other processes. In each process, a technology has been developed over many years of research and practice. By making use of this technology, each individual workstation in the production line can be designed to operate at or near its maximum performance. However, even if each station performance could be optimized, there still remain larger systems issues that must be analyzed.

It is with this viewpoint of the larger system that we identify the second problem area. Two aspects of this problem stand out. The first is the ***line balancing problem***. Although this problem is normally associated with the design of manual assembly lines (Section 17.4.2), it is also a problem on automated production lines. Somehow, the total machining work that must be accomplished on the automated line must be divided as evenly as possible among the workstations. The solution to this problem on a machining transfer line is usually dominated by technological considerations (precedence constraints, as we called them in Chapter 17). Certain machining operations must be performed before others (e.g., drilling must precede tapping), and the element times are determined by the cycle time required to accomplish the given machining operation at a station. These two factors make the line balancing problem less of an issue on a machining type production line than it is in manual assembly, where the total work content can be divided into much smaller work elements, and the possible permutations on the order in which the elements can be performed is much greater.

The second and more critical systems problem in automated production line design is the ***reliability problem***. In a highly complex and integrated system such as an automated production line, failure of any one component can stop the entire system. It is this problem of how line performance is affected by reliability that we consider in this section.

### 18.3.1 Basic Terminology and Performance Measures

Our terminology borrows definitions and symbols from the previous chapter on manual assembly lines. We make the following assumptions about the operation of the transfer lines and rotary indexing machines: (1) The workstations perform processing operations, such as machining, not assembly; (2) processing times at each station are constant, though not necessarily equal; (3) synchronous transfer of parts; and (4) no internal storage buffers. In Section 18.4, we consider automated production lines with internal storage buffers.

In the operation of an automated production line, parts are introduced into the first workstation and are processed and transported at regular intervals to succeeding stations. This interval defines the ideal cycle time $T_c$ of the production line. $T_c$ is the processing time for the slowest station on the line plus the transfer time; that is,

$$T_c = \text{Max}\{T_{si}\} + T_r \qquad (18.5)$$

where $T_c$ = ideal cycle time on the line (min); $T_{si}$ = the processing time at station $i$ (min); and $T_r$ = repositioning time, called the transfer time here (min). We use the $\text{Max}\{T_{si}\}$ in Eq. (18.5) because this longest service time establishes the pace of the production line. The remaining stations with smaller service times must wait for the slowest station. Therefore, these other stations will experience idle time. The situation is the same as for a manual assembly line depicted in Figure 17.4.

In the operation of a transfer line, random breakdowns and planned stoppages cause downtime on the line. Common reasons for downtime on an automated production line are listed in Table 18.1. Although the breakdowns and line stoppages occur randomly, their frequency can be measured over the long run. When the line stops, it is down a certain average

**TABLE 18.1** Common Reasons for Downtime on an Automated Production Line

- Tool failures at workstations
- Tool adjustments at workstations
- Scheduled tool changes
- Limit switch or other electrical malfunctions
- Mechanical failure of a workstation
- Mechanical failure of the transfer system
- Stockouts of starting work units
- Insufficient space for completed parts
- Preventive maintenance on the line
- Worker breaks

time for each downtime occurrence. These downtime occurrences cause the actual average production cycle time of the line to be longer than the ideal cycle time given by Eq. (18.5). We can formulate the following expression for the actual average production time $T_p$:

$$T_p = T_c + FT_d \tag{18.6}$$

where $F$ = downtime frequency, line stops/cycle; and $T_d$ = downtime per line stop, min. The downtime $T_d$ includes the time for the repair crew to swing into action, diagnose the cause of the failure, fix it, and restart the line. Thus, $FT_d$ = downtime averaged on a per cycle basis.

One of the important measures of performance on an automated transfer line is production rate, which can be computed as the reciprocal of $T_p$:

$$R_p = \frac{1}{T_p} \tag{18.7}$$

where $R_p$ = actual average production rate (pc/min), and $T_p$ is the actual average production time from Eq. (18.6) (min). It is of interest to compare this rate with the ideal production rate given by

$$R_c = \frac{1}{T_c} \tag{18.8}$$

where $R_c$ = ideal production rate (pc/min). It is customary to express production rates on automated production lines as hourly rates (multiply the rates in Eqs. (18.7) and (18.8) by 60).

The machine tool builder uses the ideal production rate $R_c$ in its proposal for the automated transfer line and speaks of it as the production rate at 100% efficiency. Unfortunately, because of downtime, the line will not operate at 100% efficiency. While it may seem deceitful for the machine tool builder to ignore the effect of line downtime on production rate, it should be stated that the amount of downtime experienced on the line is mostly the responsibility of the company using the production line. In practice, most of the reasons for downtime occurrences in Table 18.1 represent factors that must be controlled and managed by the user company.

In the context of automated production systems, line efficiency refers to the proportion of uptime on the line and is really a measure of reliability more than efficiency.

Nevertheless, this is the terminology of production lines. Line efficiency can be calculated as follows:

$$E = \frac{T_c}{T_p} = \frac{T_c}{T_c + FT_d} \tag{18.9}$$

where $E$ = the proportion of uptime on the production line, and the other terms have been previously defined.

An alternative measure of performance is the proportion of downtime on the line, which is given by

$$D = \frac{FT_d}{T_p} = \frac{FT_d}{T_c + FT_d} \tag{18.10}$$

where $D$ = proportion of downtime on the line. It is obvious that

$$E + D = 1.0 \tag{18.11}$$

An important economic measure of performance of an automated production line is the cost per unit produced. This piece cost includes the cost of the starting blank that is to be processed on the line, the cost of time on the production line, and the cost of any tooling that is consumed (e.g., cutting tools on a machining line). The piece cost can be expressed as the sum of these three factors:

$$C_{pc} = C_m + C_o T_p + C_t \tag{18.12}$$

where $C_{pc}$ = cost per piece (\$/pc); $C_m$ = cost of starting material (\$/pc); $C_o$ = cost per minute to operate the line (\$/min); $T_p$ = average production time per piece (min/pc); and $C_t$ = cost of tooling per piece (\$/pc). $C_o$ includes the allocation of the capital cost of the equipment over its expected service life, labor to operate the line, applicable overheads, maintenance, and other relevant costs, all reduced to a cost per minute (see Section 2.5.3).

Eq. (18.12) does not include factors such as scrap rates, inspection costs, and rework costs associated with fixing defective work units. These factors can usually be incorporated into the unit piece cost in a fairly straightforward way.

**EXAMPLE 18.2 Transfer Line Performance**

A 20-station transfer line is being proposed to machine a certain component currently produced by conventional methods. The proposal received from the machine tool builder states that the line will operate at a production rate of 50 pc/hr at 100% efficiency. From similar transfer lines, it is estimated that breakdowns of all types will occur with a frequency $F$ = 0.10 breakdown per cycle and that the average downtime per line stop will be 8.0 min. The starting casting that is machined on the line costs \$3.00 per part. The line operates at a cost of \$75.00/hr. The 20 cutting tools (one tool per station) last for 50 parts each, and the average cost per tool = \$2.00 per cutting edge. Based on this data, compute the following: (a) production rate, (b) line efficiency, and (c) cost per unit piece produced on the line.

***Solution:*** (a) At 100% efficiency, the line produces 50 pc/hr. The reciprocal gives the unit time, or ideal cycle time per piece:

$$T_c = \frac{1}{50} = 0.02 \text{ hr/pc} = 1.2 \text{ min.}$$

The average production time per piece is given by Eq. (18.6):

$$T_p = T_c + FT_d = 1.2 + 0.10(8.0) = 1.2 + 0.8 = 2.0 \text{ min/pc.}$$

Production rate is the reciprocal of production time per piece:

$$R_p = \frac{1}{2.0} = 0.500 \text{ pc/min} = \mathbf{30.0 \text{ pc/hr.}}$$

Efficiency is the ratio of ideal cycle time to actual average production time, by Eq. (18.9):

$$E = \frac{1.2}{2.0} = 0.60 = \mathbf{60\%}$$

Finally, for the cost per piece produced, we need the tooling cost per piece, which is computed as follows:

$$C_t = (20 \text{ tools})(\$2/\text{tool})/(50 \text{ parts}) = \$0.80/\text{pc}$$

Now the unit cost can be calculated by Eq. (18.12). The hourly rate of $75/hr to operate the line is equivalent to $1.25/min.

$$C_{pc} = 3.00 + 1.25(2.0) + 0.80 = \mathbf{\$6.30/pc.}$$

### 18.3.2 Workstation Breakdown Analysis

Line downtime is usually associated with failures at individual workstations. Many of the reasons for downtime listed in Table 18.1 represent malfunctions that cause a single station to stop production. Since all workstations on an automated production line without internal storage are interdependent, the failure of one station causes the entire line to stop.

Let us consider what happens when a workstation breaks down. There are two possibilities, in terms of whether a workpart at a station is removed from the line when a breakdown occurs and the resulting effect that this has on the line operation. We refer to the analyses of these two possibilities as the upper-bound approach and the lower-bound approach. In the ***upper-bound approach***, the workstation malfunction has no effect on the part at that station, and therefore the part remains on the line for subsequent processing at the remaining stations. The upper-bound case applies in situations such as minor electrical or mechanical failures at stations, tool changes due to worn cutters, tool adjustments, preventive maintenance at stations, and so on. In these cases, the workpart is unaffected by the station malfunction, and there is no reason to remove the part. In the ***lower-bound approach***, the station malfunction results in damage to the part, and it must therefore be removed from the line and is not available to be processed at subsequent workstations. The lower-bound case arises when a drill or tap breaks in the part during processing, which results in damage to the part. The broken tool must be replaced at the workstation, and the part must be removed from the line and cannot proceed to the next stations for additional processing.

*Upper-Bound Approach.* The upper-bound approach provides an upper limit on the frequency of line stops per cycle. In this approach, we assume that the part remains on the line for further processing. It is therefore possible that there will be more than one line stop associated with a given part during its sequence of processing operations. Let $p_i$ = probability or frequency of a failure at station $i$, where $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$. Since a part is not removed from the line when a station jam occurs, it is possible (although not probable, thank goodness) that the part will be associated with a station breakdown at every station. The expected number of line stops per part passing through the line is obtained by merely summing the frequencies $p_i$ over the $n$ stations. Since each of the n stations is processing a part each cycle, then the expected frequency of line stops per cycle is equal to the expected frequency of line stops per part; that is,

$$F = \sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i \tag{18.13}$$

where $F$ = expected frequency of line stops per cycle, first encountered in Eq. (18.6); $p_i$ = frequency of station breakdown per cycle, causing a line stop; and $n$ = number of workstations on the line. If all $p_i$ are assumed equal, which is unlikely but useful for approximation and computation purposes, then

$$F = np \tag{18.14}$$

where all $p_i$ are equal, $p_1 = p_2 = \ldots = p_n = p$.

*Lower-Bound Approach.* The lower-bound approach gives an estimate of the lower limit on the expected frequency of line stops per cycle. In this approach, we assume that a station breakdown results in destruction of the part, resulting in its removal from the line and preventing its subsequent processing at the remaining workstations.

Again let $p_i$ = the probability that a workpart will jam at a particular station $i$. Then, considering a given part as it proceeds through the line, $p_1$ = probability that the part will jam at station 1, and $(1 - p_1)$ = probability that the part will not jam at station 1 and will thus be available for processing at subsequent stations. A jam at station 2 is contingent on successfully making it through station 1 and therefore the probability that this same part will jam at station 2 is given by $p_2(1 - p_1)$. Generalizing, the quantity

$$p_i(1 - p_{i-1})(1 - p_{i-2})\ldots(1 - p_2)(1 - p_1) \qquad \text{where } i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$$

is the probability that the given part will jam at any station $i$. Summing all these probabilities from $i = 1$ through $i = n$ gives the probability or frequency of line stops per cycle. Fortunately there is an easier way to determine this frequency by taking note of the fact that the probability that a given part will pass through all $n$ stations without a line stop is

$$\prod_{i=1}^{n}(1 - p_i)$$

Therefore, the frequency of line stops per cycle is

$$F = 1 - \prod_{i=1}^{n}(1 - p_i) \tag{18.15}$$

If all probabilities $p_i$ are equal, $p_i = p$, then

$$F = 1 - (1 - p)^n \tag{18.16}$$

Because of parts removal in the lower-bound approach, the number of parts coming off the line is less than the number launched onto the front of the line. Therefore, the production rate formula must be amended to reflect this reduction in output. Given that $F$ = frequency of line stops and a part is removed for every line stop, then the proportion of parts removed from the line is $F$. Accordingly, the proportion of parts produced is $(1 - F)$. This is the yield of the production line. The production rate equation becomes the following:

$$R_{ap} = \frac{1 - F}{T_p} \tag{18.17}$$

where $R_{ap}$ = the average actual production rate of acceptable parts from the line; $T_p$ = the average cycle rate of the transfer machine, given by Eq. (18.6). $R_p$, which is the reciprocal of $T_p$, is the average cycle rate of the system.

**EXAMPLE 18.3 Upper-Bound vs. Lower-Bound Approaches**

A 20-station transfer line has an ideal cycle time $T_c$ = 1.2 min. The probability of station breakdowns per cycle is equal for all stations, and $p$ = 0.005 breakdowns/cycle. For each of the upper-bound and lower-bound approaches, determine (a) frequency of line stops per cycle, (b) average actual production rate, and (c) line efficiency.

***Solution:*** (a) For the upper-bound approach, using Eq. (18.14),

$$F = 20(0.005) = \mathbf{0.10} \text{ line stops per cycle}$$

This is the same value we used in Example 18.2. For the lower-bound approach, using Eq. (18.16),

$$F = 1 - (1 - 0.005)^{20} = 1 - (0.995)^{20} = 1 - 0.0.9046 = \mathbf{0.0954} \text{ line stops per cycle}$$

(b) For the upper-bound approach, the production rate is calculated in Example 18.2 to be

$$R_p = \mathbf{30.0\ pc/hr.}$$

For the lower-bound approach, we must calculate $T_p$ using the new value of $F$.

$$T_p = 1.2 + 0.0954(0.8) = 1.9631 \text{ min.}$$

Now using Eq. (18.17) to compute production rate, we have

$$R_{ap} = \frac{0.9046}{1.9631} = 0.4608 \text{ pc/min.} = \mathbf{27.65\ pc/hr.}$$

This production rate is about 8% lower than we computed by the upper-bound approach. Note that the cycle rate

$$R_p = (1.9631)^{-1} = 0.5094 \text{ cycles/min.} = 30.56 \text{ cycles/hr}$$

is slightly higher than in the upper-bound case.

(c) For the upper-bound approach, the line efficiency was computed in Example 18.2 to be

$$E = 0.60 = \mathbf{60\%}.$$

For the lower-bound approach, we have

$$E = \frac{1.2}{1.9631} = 0.6113 = \mathbf{61.13\%}$$

Line efficiency is greater with the lower-bound approach, even though production rate is lower. The reason for this apparent anomaly is that the lower-bound approach, with its assumption of parts removal, leaves fewer parts remaining on the line to jam subsequent workstations. With fewer station jams, line efficiency is higher. However, fewer parts remaining on the line means production rate is lower.

### 18.3.3 What the Equations Tell Us

The upper-bound and lower-bound approaches provide upper and lower limits on the frequency of downtime occurrences. However, as illustrated by Example 18.3, they also provide upper and lower boundaries on production rate, under the circumstances of part removal in the lower-bound case and assuming that station breakdowns are the sole cause of scrap. Of course, there may be other causes of scrap, such as poor quality starting workparts.

Determining whether the upper-bound or lower-bound approach is more appropriate for a particular transfer line requires knowledge of the line operation. It is likely that the true line operation lies somewhere between these two extreme assumptions, that is, that some line stops require removal of parts while other line stops do not. In this case, the true values of breakdown frequency and production rate will lie somewhere between the values given by the respective upper-bound and lower-bound equations.

There are reasons why line stops occur that are not directly related to workstations. Some of these reasons are listed in Table 18.1 (e.g., transfer system failure, worker breaks, and stockout of starting parts). These other factors must be taken into account when determining line performance.

Perhaps the biggest difficulty in the practical use of the equations in this section is in determining the values of $p_i$ for the various workstations. We may be using the equations to predict performance for a proposed transfer line, and yet we do not know the critical reliability factors for the individual stations on the line. The most reasonable approach is to base the values of $p_i$ on previous experience and historical data for similar workstations.

Notwithstanding the preceding considerations, there are a number of general truths that are revealed by the equations in this section about the operation of automated transfer lines with no internal parts storage:

- As the number of workstations on an automated production line increases, line efficiency and production rate are adversely affected.
- As the reliability of individual workstations decreases, line efficiency and production rate are adversely affected.

- Comparing the upper-bound and lower-bound cases, the upper-bound calculations lead to higher values of breakdown frequency and production rate but to lower values of line efficiency.

## 18.4 ANALYSIS OF TRANSFER LINES WITH STORAGE BUFFERS

In an automated production line with no internal parts storage, the workstations are interdependent. When one station breaks down, all other stations on the line are affected, either immediately or by the end of a few cycles of operation. The other stations will be forced to stop for one of two reasons: (1) starving of stations or (2) blocking of stations. These terms have meanings that are basically the same as in the operation of manual assembly lines (Section 17.1.2). ***Starving*** on an automated production line means that a workstation is prevented from performing its cycle because it has no part to work on. When a breakdown occurs at any workstation on the line, the stations downstream from (following) the affected station will either immediately or eventually become starved for parts. ***Blocking*** means that a station is prevented from performing its work cycle because it cannot pass the part it just completed to the neighboring downstream station. When a breakdown occurs at a station on the line, the stations upstream from (preceding) the affected station become blocked because the broken-down station cannot accept the next part for processing from the neighboring upstream station. Therefore, none of the upstream stations can pass their just completed parts forward.

A method by which production lines can be designed to operate more efficiently is to add one or more parts storage buffers between workstations. The storage buffer divides the line into stages that can operate independently for a number of cycles, the number depending on the storage capacity of the buffer. If one storage buffer is used, the line is divided into two stages. If two buffers are used at two different locations along the line, then a three-stage line is formed. And so forth. The upper limit on the number of storage buffers is to have storage between every pair of adjacent stations. The number of stages will then equal the number of workstations. For an $n$-stage line, there will be $n$-1 storage buffers. This, of course, does not include the raw parts inventory at the front of the line or the finished parts inventory that accumulates at the end of the line.

Consider a two-stage transfer line, with a storage buffer separating the stages. Let us suppose that, on average, the storage buffer is half full. If the first stage breaks down, the second stage can continue to operate (avoid starving) using parts that have been collected in the buffer. And if the second stage breaks down, the first stage can continue to operate (avoid blocking) because it has the buffer to receive its output. The reasoning for a two-stage line can be extended to production lines with more than two stages. For any number of stages in an automated production line, the storage buffers allow each stage to operate somewhat independently, the degree of independence depending on the capacity of the upstream and downstream buffers.

### 18.4.1 Limits of Storage Buffer Effectiveness

Two extreme cases of storage buffer effectiveness can be identified: (1) no buffer storage capacity at all and (2) infinite capacity storage buffers. In the analysis that follows, let us assume that the ideal cycle time $T_c$ is the same for all stages considered. This is generally desirable in practice because it helps to balance production rates among stages.

In the case of no storage capacity, the production line acts as one stage. When a station breaks down, the entire line stops. This is the case of a production line with no internal storage analyzed in Section 18.3. The efficiency of the line was given by Eq. (18.9). We rewrite it here as the line efficiency of a zero capacity storage buffer:

$$E_0 = \frac{T_c}{T_c + FT_d} \tag{18.18}$$

where the subscript 0 identifies $E_0$ as the efficiency of a line with zero storage buffer capacity; and the other terms have the same meanings as before.

The opposite extreme is the case where buffer zones of infinite capacity are installed between every pair of stages. If we assume that each buffer zone is half full (in other words, each buffer zone has an infinite supply of parts as well as the capacity to accept an infinite number of additional parts), then each stage is independent of the rest. The presence of infinite storage buffers means that no stage will ever be blocked or starved because of a breakdown at some other stage.

Of course, an infinite capacity storage buffer cannot be realized in practice. If it could, then the overall line efficiency would be limited by the bottleneck stage. That is, production on all other stages would ultimately be restricted by the slowest stage. The downstream stages could only process parts at the output rate of the bottleneck stage. And it would make no sense to run the upstream stages at higher production rates because this would only accumulate inventory in the storage buffer ahead of the bottleneck. As a practical matter, therefore, the upper limit on the efficiency of the entire line is defined by the efficiency of the bottleneck stage. Given that the cycle time $T_c$ is the same for all stages, the efficiency of any stage $k$ is given by:

$$E_k = \frac{T_c}{T_c + F_k T_{dk}} \tag{18.19}$$

where the subscript $k$ is used to identify the stage. According to our argument above, the overall line efficiency would be given by

$$E_\infty = \text{Minimum}\{E_k\} \tag{18.20}$$

where the subscript $\infty$ identifies $E_\infty$ as the efficiency of a line whose storage buffers all have infinite capacity.

By including one or more storage buffers in an automated production line, we expect to improve the line efficiency above $E_0$, but we cannot expect to achieve $E_\infty$ simply because buffer zones of infinite capacity are not possible. Hence, the actual value of line efficiency for a given buffer capacity $b$ will fall somewhere between these extremes:

$$E_0 < E_b < E_\infty \tag{18.21}$$

Next, let us consider the problem of evaluating $E_b$ for realistic levels of buffer capacity for a two-stage automated production line.

### 18.4.2 Analysis of a Two-Stage Transfer Line

Most of the discussion in this section is based on the work of Buzacott [2], who pioneered the analytical research on production lines with buffer stocks. Several of his publications are listed in our references [3]–[7]. Our presentation in this Section will follow Buzacott's analysis in [2].

The two-stage line is divided by a storage buffer of capacity $b$, expressed in terms of the number of workparts that it can store. The buffer receives the output of stage 1 and forwards it to stage 2, temporarily storing any parts not immediately needed by stage 2 up to its capacity $b$. The ideal cycle time $T_c$ is the same for both stages. We assume the downtime distributions of each stage to be the same with mean downtime $= T_d$. Let $F_1$ and $F_2$ = the breakdown rates of stages 1 and 2, respectively. $F_1$ and $F_2$ are not necessarily equal.

Over the long run, both stages must have equal efficiencies. If the efficiency of stage 1 were greater than the stage 2 efficiency, then inventory would build up in the storage buffer until its capacity $b$ is reached. Thereafter, stage 1 would eventually be blocked when it outproduced stage 2. Similarly, if the efficiency of stage 2 were greater than that of stage 1, the inventory in the buffer would become depleted, thus starving stage 2. Accordingly, the efficiencies in the two stages would tend to equalize over time. The overall line efficiency for the two-stage line can be expressed:

$$E_b = E_0 + D_1' h(b) E_2 \tag{18.22}$$

where $E_b$ = overall line efficiency for a two-stage line with buffer capacity $b$; $E_0$ = line efficiency for the same line with no internal storage; and the second term on the right-hand side $\left(D_1' h(b) E_2\right)$ represents the improvement in efficiency that results from having a storage buffer with $b > 0$. Let us examine the right-hand side terms in Eq. (18.22). The value of $E_0$ was given by Eq. (18.18), but we write it below to explicitly define the two-stage efficiency when $b = 0$:

$$E_0 = \frac{T_c}{T_c + (F_1 + F_2)T_d} \tag{18.23}$$

The term $D_1'$ can be thought of as the proportion of total time that stage 1 is down, defined as follows:

$$D_1' = \frac{F_1 T_d}{T_c + (F_1 + F_2)T_d} \tag{18.24}$$

The term $h(b)$ is the proportion of the downtime $D_1'$ (when stage 1 is down) that stage 2 could be up and operating within the limits of storage buffer capacity $b$. Buzacott presents equations for evaluating $h(b)$ using Markov chain analysis. The equations cover several different downtime distributions based on the assumption that both stages are never down at the same time. Four of these equations are presented in Table 18.2.

Finally, $E_2$ corrects for the assumption in the calculation of $h(b)$ that both stages are never down at the same time. This assumption is unrealistic. What is more realistic is that when stage 1 is down but stage 2 could be producing because of parts stored in the buffer, there will be times when stage 2 itself breaks down. Therefore, $E_2$ provides an estimate of the proportion of stage 2 uptime when it could otherwise be operating even with stage 1 being down. $E_2$ is calculated as:

**TABLE 18.2** Formulas for Computing $h(b)$ in Eq. (18.22) for a Two-Stage Automated Production Line Under Several Downtime Distributions

**Assumptions and definitions**: Assume that the two stages have equal downtime distributions $(T_{d1} = T_{d2} = T_d)$ and equal cycle times $(T_{c1} = T_{c2} = T_c)$. Let $F_1$ = downtime frequency for stage 1, and $F_2$ = downtime frequency for stage 2. Define $r$ to be the ratio of breakdown frequencies as follows:

$$r = \frac{F_1}{F_2} \tag{18.25}$$

**Equations for *h(b)***: With these definitions and assumptions, we can express the relationships for $h(b)$ for two theoretical downtime distributions as derived by Buzacott [2]:

***Constant downtime***: Each downtime occurrence is assumed to be of constant duration $T_d$. This is a case of no downtime variation. Given buffer capacity $b$, define $B$ and $L$ as follows:

$$b = B\frac{T_d}{T_c} + L \tag{18.26}$$

where $B$ is the largest integer satisfying the relation: $b\frac{T_c}{T_d} \geq B$,

and $L$ represents the leftover units, the amount by which $b$ exceeds $B\frac{T_d}{T_c}$. There are two cases:

$$\text{Case 1: } r = 1.0,\ h(b) = \frac{B}{B+1} + L\frac{T_c}{T_d}\frac{1}{(B+1)(B+2)} \tag{18.27}$$

$$\text{Case 2: } r \neq 1.0,\ h(b) = r\frac{1 - r^B}{1 - r^{B+1}} + L\frac{T_c}{T_d}\frac{r^{B-1}(1-r)^2}{(1 - r^{B+1})(1 - r^{B+2})} \tag{18.28}$$

***Geometric downtime distribution***: In this downtime distribution, the probability that repairs are completed during any cycle duration $T_c$ is independent of the time since repairs began. This is a case of maximum downtime variation. There are two cases:

$$\text{Case 1: } r = 1.0,\ h(b) = \frac{b\frac{T_c}{T_d}}{2 + (b-1)\frac{T_c}{T_d}} \tag{18.29}$$

$$\text{Case 2: } r \neq 1.0. \text{ Define } K = \frac{1 + r - \frac{T_c}{T_d}}{1 + r - r\frac{T_c}{T_d}} \quad \text{then } h(b) = \frac{r(1 - K^b)}{1 - rK^b} \tag{18.30}$$

$$E_2 = \frac{T_c}{T_c + F_2 T_d} \tag{18.31}$$

It should be mentioned that Buzacott's derivation of Eq. (18.22) in [2] omitted the $E_2$ term, relying on the assumption that stages 1 and 2 will not share downtimes. However, without

$E_2$, the author has found that the equation tends to overestimate line efficiency. With $E_2$ included, as in our Eq. (18.22), the calculated values are much more realistic. In research subsequent to that reported in [2], Buzacott developed other equations that agree closely with results given by our own Eq. (18.22).

**EXAMPLE 18.4 Two-Stage Automated Production Line**

A 20-station transfer line is divided into two stages of 10 stations each. The ideal cycle time of each stage is $T_c = 1.2$ min. All of the stations in the line have the same probability of stopping, $p = 0.005$. We assume that the downtime is constant when a breakdown occurs, $T_d = 8.0$ min. Using the upper-bound approach, compute the line efficiency for the following buffer capacities: (a) $b = 0$, (b) $b = \infty$, (c) $b = 10$, and (d) $b = 100$.

***Solution:*** (a) A two-stage line with 20 stations and $b = 0$ turns out to be the same case as in our previous Examples 18.2 and 18.3. To review,

$$F = np = 20(0.005) = 0.10$$

$$E_0 = \frac{1.2}{1.2 + 0.1(8)} = \mathbf{0.60}$$

(b) For a two-stage line with 20 stations (each stage = 10 stations) and $b = \infty$, we first compute $F$:

$$F_1 = F_2 = 10(0.005) = 0.05$$

$$E_\infty = E_1 = E_2 = \frac{1.2}{1.2 + 0.05(8)} = \mathbf{0.75}$$

(c) For a two-stage line with $b = 10$, we must determine each of the terms in Eq. (18.22). We have $E_0$ from part (a). $E_0 = 0.60$. And we have $E_2$ from part (b). $E_2 = 0.75$.

$$D_1' = \frac{0.05(8)}{1.2 + (0.05 + 0.05)(8)} = \frac{0.40}{2.0} = 0.20$$

Evaluation of $h(b)$ is from Eq. (18.27) for a constant repair distribution. In Eq. (18.26), the ratio

$$\frac{T_d}{T_c} = \frac{8.0}{1.2} = 6.667. \text{ For } b = 10, B = 1 \text{ and } L = 3.333. \text{ Thus,}$$

$$h(b) = h(10) = \frac{1}{1+1} + 3.333\left(\frac{1.2}{8.0}\right)\frac{1}{(1+1)(1+2)} = 0.50 + 0.0833 = 0.5833$$

We can now use Eq. (18.22):

$$E_{10} = 0.600 + 0.20(0.5833)(0.75) = 0.600 + 0.0875 = \mathbf{0.6875}$$

(d) For $b = 100$, the only parameter in Eq. (18.22) that is different from part (c) is $h(b)$. For $b = 100$, $B = 15$ and $L = 0$ in Eq. (18.27). Thus, we have

$$h(b) = h(100) = \frac{15}{15 + 1} = 0.9375$$

Using this value,

$$E_{100} = 0.600 + 0.20(0.9375)(0.75) = 0.600 + 0.1406 = \mathbf{0.7406}$$

---

The value of $h(b)$ not only serves its role in Eq. (18.22). It also provides information on how much improvement in efficiency we get from any given value of $b$. Note in Example 18.4 that the difference between $E_\infty$ and $E_0 = 0.75 - 0.60 = 0.15$. For $b = 10$, $h(b) = h(10) = 0.5833$, which means we get 58.33% of the maximum possible improvement in line efficiency using a buffer capacity of 10 ($E_{10} = 0.6875 = 0.60 + 0.5833(0.75\text{-}0.60)$). For $b = 100$, $h(b) = h(100) = 0.9375$, which means we get 93.75% of the maximum improvement with $b = 100$ ($E_{100} = 0.7406 = 0.60 + 0.9375(0.75 - 0.60)$).

We are not only interested in the line efficiencies of a two-stage production line. We also want to know the corresponding production rates. These can be evaluated based on knowledge of the ideal cycle time $T_c$ and the definition of line efficiency. According to Eq. (18.9), $E = T_c/T_p$. Since $R_p$ = the reciprocal of $T_p$, then $E = T_cR_p$. Rearranging, we have

$$R_p = \frac{E}{T_c} \tag{18.32}$$

**EXAMPLE 18.5 Production Rates on the Two-Stage Line of Example 18.4**

Compute the production rates for the four cases in Example 18.4. The value of $T_c = 1.2$ min is as before.

***Solution:*** (a) For $b = 0$, $E_0 = 0.60$. Applying Eq. (18.32), we have

$$R_p = 0.60/1.2 = 0.5 \text{ pc/min} = 30 \text{ pc/hr.}$$

This is the same value calculated in Example 18.2.

(b) For $b = \infty$, $E_\infty = 0.75$.

$$R_p = 0.75/1.2 = 0.625 \text{ pc/min} = 37.5 \text{ pc/hr.}$$

(c) For $b = 10$, $E_{10} = 0.6875$.

$$R_p = 0.6875/1.2 = 0.5729 \text{ pc/min} = 34.375 \text{ pc/hr.}$$

(d) For $b = 100$, $E_{100} = 0.7406$.

$$R_p = 0.7406/1.2 = 0.6172 \text{ pc/min} = 37.03 \text{ pc/hr.}$$

---

In Example 18.4, a constant repair distribution was assumed. Every breakdown had the same constant repair time of 8.0 min. It is more realistic to expect that there will be some variation in the repair time distribution. Table 18.2 provides two possible distributions, representing extremes in possible variability. We have already used the constant repair distribution in Example 18.5, which represents the case of no downtime variation. This is covered in Table 18.2 by Eqs. (18.27) and (18.28). Let us consider the opposite extreme, the case of very high variation. This is presented in Table 18.2 as the geometric repair distribution, where h(b) is computed by Eqs. (18.29) and (18.30).

**EXAMPLE 18.6 Effect of High Variability in Downtimes**

Evaluate the line efficiencies for the two-stage line in Example 18.4, except that the geometric repair distribution is used instead of the constant downtime distribution.

***Solution:*** For parts (a) and (b), the values of $E_0$ and $E_\infty$ will be the same as in previous Example 18.4. $E_0 = 0.600$ and $E_\infty = 0.750$.

(c) For $b = 10$, all of the parameters in Eq. (18.22) remain the same except $h(b)$. Using Eq (18.29) from Table 18.2, we have

$$h(b) = h(10) = \frac{10(1.2/8.0)}{2 + (10 - 1)(1.2/8.0)} = 0.4478$$

Now using Eq. (18.22), we have

$$E_{10} = 0.600 + 0.20(0.4478)(0.75) = \mathbf{0.6672}$$

(d) For $b = 100$, again the only change is in $h(b)$.

$$h(b) = h(100) = \frac{100(1.2/8.0)}{2 + (100 - 1)(1.2/8.0)} = 0.8902$$

$$E_{100} = 0.600 + 0.20(0.8902)(0.75) = \mathbf{0.7333}$$

---

Note that when we compare the values of line efficiency for $b = 10$ and $b = 100$ in this example with the corresponding values in Example 18.4, both values are lower here. It must be concluded that increased downtime variability degrades line efficiency.

### 18.4.3 Transfer Lines with More than Two Stages

If the line efficiency of an automated production line can be increased by dividing it into two stages with a storage buffer between, then one might infer that further improvements in performance can be achieved by adding additional storage buffers. Although we do not present exact formulas for computing line efficiencies for the general case of any capacity $b$ for multiple storage buffers, efficiency improvements can readily be determined for the case of infinite buffer capacity. In Examples 18.5 and 18.6 we have seen the relative improvement in efficiency that result from intermediate buffer sizes between $b = 0$ and $b = \infty$.

**EXAMPLE 18.7 Transfer Lines with more than O+ne Storage Buffer**

For the same 20-station transfer line we have been considering in previous examples, compare line efficiencies and production rates for the following cases, where in each case the buffer capacity is infinite: (a) no storage buffers, (b) one buffer, (c) three buffers, and (d) 19 buffers. Assume in cases (b) and (c) that the buffers are located in the line to equalize the downtime frequencies; that is, all $F_i$ are equal. As before, the computations are based on the upper-bound approach.

***Solution:*** We have already computed the answer for (a) and (b) in Example 18.4.

(a) For the case of no storage buffer, $E_\infty = \mathbf{0.60}$

$$R_p = 0.60/1.2 = 0.50 \text{ pc/min} = \mathbf{30\ pc/hr.}$$

(b) For the case of one storage buffer (a two-stage line), $\mathbf{E_\infty = 0.75}$

$$R_p = 0.75/1.2 = 0.625 \text{ pc/min.} = \mathbf{37.5\ pc/hr.}$$

(c) For the case of three storage buffers (a four-stage line), we have

$$F_1 = F_2 = F_3 = F_4 = 5(.005) = 0.025.$$

$$T_p = 1.2 + 0.025(8) = 1.4 \text{ min/pc.}$$
$$E_\infty = 1.2/1.4 = \mathbf{0.8571}$$
$$R_p = 0.8571/1.2 = 0.7143 \text{ pc/min} = \mathbf{42.86 \text{ pc/hr.}}$$

(d) For the case of 19 storage buffers (a 20-stage line, where each stage is one station), we have

$$F_1 = F_2 = \ldots = F_{20} = 1(0.005) = 0.005$$
$$T_p = 1.2 + 0.005(8) = 1.24 \text{ min/pc}$$
$$E_\infty = 1.2/1.24 = \mathbf{0.9677}$$
$$R_p = 0.9677/1.2 = 0.8065 \text{ pc/min} = \mathbf{48.39 \text{ pc/hr.}}$$

This last value is very close to the ideal production rate of $R_c = 50$ pc/hr.

### 18.4.4 What the Equations Tell Us

The equations and analysis in this section provide some practical guidelines in the design and operation of automated production lines with internal storage buffers. The guidelines can be expressed as follows:

- If $E_0$ and $E_\infty$ are nearly equal in value, little advantage is gained by adding a storage buffer to the line. If $E_\infty$ is significantly greater than $E_0$, then storage buffers offer the possibility of significantly improving line performance.
- In considering a multi-stage automated production line, workstations should be divided into stages to make the efficiencies of all stages as equal as possible. In this way, the maximum difference between $E_0$ and $E_\infty$ is achieved, and no single stage will stand out as a significant bottleneck.
- In the operation of an automated production line with storage buffers, if any of the buffers are nearly always empty or nearly always full, this indicates that the production rates of the stages on either side of the buffer are out of balance, and that the storage buffer is serving little if any useful purpose.
- The maximum possible line efficiency is achieved by (1) setting the number of stages equal to the number of stations, that is, by providing a storage buffer between every pair of stations, and (2) using large capacity buffers.
- The "law of diminishing returns" operates in multi-stage automated lines. It is manifested in two ways: (1) As the number of storage buffers is increased, line efficiency improves at an ever-decreasing rate. (2) As the storage buffer capacity is increased, line efficiency improves at an ever-decreasing rate.

## REFERENCES

[1] BOOTHROYD, G., POLI, C., and MURCH, L. E., *Automatic Assembly*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1982.

[2] BUZACOTT, J. A., "Automatic Transfer Lines with Buffer Stocks," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1967, pp 183-200.

[3] BUZACOTT, J. A., "Prediction of the Efficiency of Production Systems without Internal Storage," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1968, pp 173-188.

[4] BUZACOTT, J. A., "The Role of Inventory Banks in Flow-Line Production Systems," *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1971, pp 425-436.

[5] BUZACOTT, J. A., and L. E. HANIFIN, "Transfer Line Design and Analysis - An Overview," *Proceedings*, 1978 Fall Industrial Engineering Conference of AIIE, December 1978.

[6] BUZACOTT, J. A., and L. E. HANIFIN, "Models of Automatic Transfer Lines with Inventory Banks - A Review and Comparison," *AIIE Transactions*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1978, pp 197-207.

[7] BUZACOTT, J. A., and SHANTHIKUMAR, J. G., *Stochastic Models of Manufacturing Systems*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., A Division of Simon & Schuster, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1993, Chapters 5 and 6.

[8] CHOW, W. M., *Assembly Line Design*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1990.

[9] GROOVER, M. P., "Analyzing Automatic Transfer Lines," *Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 7, No. 11, 1975, pp 26-31.

[10] KOELSCH, J. R., "A New Look to Transfer Lines" *Manufacturing Engineering*, April 1994, pp 73-78.

[11] LAVALLEE, R. J., "Using a PC to Control a Transfer Line," *Control Engineering*/2nd February 1991, pp 43-56.

[12] MASON, F., "High Volume Learns to Flex," *Manufacturing Engineering*, April 1995, pp 53-59.

[13] OWEN, J. V., "Transfer Lines Get Flexible," *Manufacturing Engineering*, January, 1999, pp 42-50.

[14] RILEY, F. J., *Assembly Automation*, Industrial Press, New York, 1983.

[15] WILD, R., *Mass-Production Management*, John Wiley & Sons, London, 1972.

## PROBLEMS

### Transfer Mechanisms

**18.1** A rotary worktable is driven by a Geneva mechanism with five slots. The driver rotates at 48 rev/min. Determine (a) the cycle time, (b) available process time, and (c) indexing time each cycle.

**18.2** A Geneva with six slots is used to operate the worktable of a dial indexing machine. The slowest workstation on the dial indexing machine has an operation time of 2.5 sec, so the table must be in a dwell position for this length of time. (a) At what rotational speed must the driven member of the Geneva mechanism be turned to provide this dwell time? (b) What is the indexing time each cycle?

**18.3** Solve Problem 18.2 except that the Geneva has eight slots.

### Automated Production Lines with No Internal Storage

**18.4** A ten-station transfer machine has an ideal cycle time of 30 sec. The frequency of line stops is $F = 0.075$ stops/cycle. When a line stop occurs, the average downtime is 4.0 min. Determine: (a) average production rate in pc/hr, (b) line efficiency, and (c) proportion downtime.

**18.5** Cost elements associated with the operation of the ten-station transfer line in Problem 18.4 are as follows: raw workpart cost = \$0.55/pc, line operating cost = \$42.00/hr, and cost of disposable tooling = \$0.27/pc. Compute the average cost of a workpiece produced.

**18.6** In Problem 18.4, the line stop occurrences are due to random mechanical and electrical failures on the line. Suppose that in addition to these reasons for downtime, the tools at each workstation on the line must be changed and/or reset every 150 cycles. This procedure takes a total of 12.0 min for all ten stations. Include this additional data and recompute $R_p$, $E$, and $D$.

**18.7** The dial indexing machine of Problem 18.2 experiences a breakdown frequency of $F = 0.06$. The average downtime per breakdown is 3.5 min. Determine: (a) average production rate in pieces per hour and (b) line efficiency.

**18.8** In the operation of a certain 15-station transfer line, the ideal cycle time = 0.58 min. Breakdowns occur at a rate of once every 20 cycles, and the average downtime per breakdown is 9.2 min. The transfer line is located in a plant that works an 8-hr day, 5 day/wk. Determine: (a) line efficiency and (b) how many parts the transfer line will produce in a week.

**18.9** A 22-station in-line transfer machine has an ideal cycle time of 0.35 min. Station breakdowns occur with a probability $p = 0.01$. Assume that station breakdowns are the only reason for line stops. Average downtime = 8.0 min per line stop. Use the upper-bound approach to determine: (a) ideal production rate $R_c$, (b) frequency of line stops $F$, (c) average actual production rate $R_p$, and (d) line efficiency $E$.

**18.10** Solve the preceding problem except use the lower-bound approach. Also determine the proportion of workparts removed from the production line.

**18.11** A ten-station rotary indexing machine performs nine machining operations at nine workstations, and the tenth station is used for loading and unloading parts. The longest process time on the line is 1.30 min, and the loading/unloading operation can be accomplished in less time than this. It takes 9.0 sec to index the machine between workstations. Stations break down or stop with a frequency of $p = 0.007$, which is considered equal for all ten stations. When these stops occur, it takes an average of 10.0 min to diagnose the problem and make repairs. Parts are not removed from the line when line stops occur, so the upper-bound approach is applicable. Determine: (a) line efficiency and (b) average actual production rate.

**18.12** A transfer machine has six stations that function as follows:

| *Station* | *Operation* | *Process Time* | $p_i$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Load part | 0.78 min. | 0 |
| 2 | Drill three holes | 1.25 min. | 0.02 |
| 3 | Ream two holes | 0.90 min. | 0.01 |
| 4 | Tap two holes | 0.85 min. | 0.04 |
| 5 | Mill flats | 1.32 min. | 0.01 |
| 6 | Unload parts | 0.45 min. | 0 |

In addition, transfer time = 0.18 min. Average downtime per occurrence = 8.0 min. Assume the upper-bound approach is applicable. A total of 20,000 parts must be processed through the transfer machine. Determine: (a) proportion downtime, (b) average actual production rate, and (c) how many hours of operation are required to produce the 20,000 parts.

**18.13** Solve the preceding problem only assume that each station breakdown causes damage to the workpart so that it must be removed. Accordingly, the lower-bound approach is applicable. Determine: (a) proportion downtime, (b) average actual production rate, (c) how many hours of operation are required to produce the 20,000 parts, and (d) how many starting workparts are required to produce the 20,000 parts.

**18.14** The cost to operate a certain 20-station transfer line is $72/hr. The line operates with an ideal cycle time of 0.85 min. Downtime occurrences happen on average once per 14 cycles. Average downtime per occurrence is 9.5 min. It is proposed that a new computer system and associated sensors be installed to monitor the line and diagnose downtime occurrences when they happen. It is anticipated that this new system will reduce downtime from its present value to 7.5 min. If the cost of purchasing and installing the new system is $15,000, how many units must the system produce for the savings to pay for the computer system?

**18.15** A 23-station transfer line has been logged for 5 days (total time = 2400 min). During this time, there were a total of 158 downtime occurrences on the line. The accompanying table identifies the type of downtime occurrence, how many occurrences of each type, and how much total time was lost for each type. The transfer line performs a sequence of machining operations, the longest of which takes 0.42 min. The transfer mechanism takes 0.08 min. to index the parts from one station to the next each cycle. Assuming no parts removal when the line jams, determine the following based on the 5-day observation period: (a) how many parts were produced, (b) downtime proportion, (c) production rate, and (d) frequency rate p associated with the transfer mechanism failures.

| *Type of Downtime* | *Number of Occurrences* | *Total Time Lost* |
|---|---|---|
| Associated with stations: | | |
| Tool-related causes | 104 | 520 min. |
| Mechanical failures | 21 | 189 min. |
| Miscellaneous | 7 | 84 min. |
| Subtotal | 132 | 793 min. |
| Transfer mechanism | 26 | 78 min. |
| Totals | 158 | 871 min. |

**18.16** An eight-station rotary indexing machine performs the machining operations shown in the accompanying table, together with processing times and breakdown frequencies for each station. The transfer time for the machine is 0.15 min/cycle. A study of the system was undertaken, during which time 2000 parts were completed. It was determined in this study that when breakdowns occur, it takes an average of 7.0 min to make repairs and get the system operating again. Assume the upper-bound approach is applicable. For the study period, determine: (a) average actual production rate, (b) line uptime efficiency, and (c) how many hours were required to produce the 2000 parts.

| *Station* | *Process* | *Process Time* | *Breakdowns* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Load part | 0.50 min. | 0 |
| 2 | Mill top | 0.85 min. | 22 |
| 3 | Mill sides | 1.10 min. | 31 |
| 4 | Drill two holes | 0.60 min. | 47 |
| 5 | Ream two holes | 0.43 min. | 8 |
| 6 | Drill six holes | 0.92 min. | 58 |
| 7 | Tap six holes | 0.75 min. | 84 |
| 8 | Unload part | 0.40 min. | 0 |

**18.17** Solve Problem 18.16, except use the lower-bound approach in your analysis, in which the part is removed every time a breakdown occurs. Determine: (a) how many starting workparts would be required to produce the 2000 units, (b) line uptime efficiency, and (c) how many hours were required to produce the 2000 parts.

**18.18** A 14-station transfer line has been logged for 2400 min. to identify type of downtime occurrence, how many occurrences, and time lost. The results are presented in the table below. The ideal cycle time for the line is 0.50 min., including transfer time between stations. Half of the downtime occurrences associated with "tool changes and failures" (35 occurrences and 200 min.) involve cases in which the part was damaged and had to be removed from the line. The remaining downtime occurrences follow the assumptions of the upper-bound approach. Determine: (a) how many acceptable parts were produced during the 2400 min,

(b) line uptime efficiency, (c) average actual production rate of acceptable parts per hour, and (d) frequency $p$ associated with transfer system failures.

| Type of Occurrence | Number | Time Lost |
|---|---|---|
| Tool changes and failures | 70 | 400 min. |
| Station failures (mechanical and electrical) | 45 | 300 min. |
| Transfer system failures | 25 | 150 min. |

**18.19** A transfer machine has a mean time between failures (MTBF) = 50 min. and a mean time to repair (MTTR) = 9 min. If the ideal cycle rate = 1 per min (when the machine is running), what is the average hourly production rate? Assume the upper-bound approach.

**18.20** A transfer machine has 36 stations. The ideal cycle time = 1.50 min. Frequency of line stops $F = 0.20$; however, this is complicated by the fact that in 25% of the line stops, the part is damaged and must be removed from the line. In other words, 25% of the line stops operate according to the lower-bound approach, while 75% operate under the upper-bound approach. The average downtime for the lower bound stops = 10.0 min, and the average downtime for the upper bound stops = 8.0 min. Given these conditions, if the line operates for 16.0 hr, determine the number of good parts produced and the number of parts removed from the line.

**18.21** A part is to be produced on an automated transfer line. The total work content time to make the part is 36 min, and this work will be divided evenly among the workstations, so that the processing time at each station is $36/n$, where $n$ = the number of stations. In addition, the time required to transfer parts between workstations is 6 sec. Thus, the cycle time = $0.1 + 36/n$ min. In addition, it is known that the station breakdown frequency will be $p = 0.005$, and that the average downtime per breakdown = 8.0 min. (a) Given these data and using the upper-bound approach, determine the number of workstations that should be included in the line to maximize production rate. (b) Also, what is the production rate and line efficiency for this number of stations?

## Automated Production Lines with Storage Buffers

**18.22** A 30-station transfer line has an ideal cycle time $T_c = 0.75$ min, an average downtime $T_d = 6.0$ min. per line stop occurrence, and a station failure frequency $p = 0.01$ for all stations. A proposal has been submitted to locate a storage buffer between stations 15 and 16 to improve line efficiency. Using the upper-bound approach, determine: (a) the current line efficiency and production rate and (b) the maximum possible line efficiency and production rate that would result from installing the storage buffer.

**18.23** Given the data in Problem 18.22, solve the problem except that (a) the proposal is to divide the line into three stages, that is, with two storage buffers located between stations 10 and 11 and between stations 20 and 21, respectively; and (b) the proposal is to use an asynchronous line with large storage buffers between every pair of stations on the line, that is, a total of 14 storage buffers.

**18.24** In Problem 18.22, if the capacity of the proposed storage buffer is to be 20 parts, determine: (a) line efficiency and (b) production rate of the line. Use the upper-bound approach and assume that the downtime ($T_d = 6.0$ min) is a constant.

**18.25** Solve Problem 18.24 but assume that the downtime ($T_d = 6.0$ min) follows the geometric repair distribution.

**18.26** In the transfer line of Problems 18.22 and 24, suppose it is more technically feasible to locate the storage buffer between stations 11 and 12, rather than between stations 15 and 16. Determine: (a) the maximum possible line efficiency and production rate that would result from installing the storage buffer and (b) the line efficiency and production rate for a storage buffer of capacity $b = 20$ parts. Assume that downtime ($T_d = 6.0$ min) is a constant.

**18.27** A proposed synchronous transfer line will have 20 stations and will operate with an ideal cycle time of 0.5 min. All stations are expected to have an equal probability of breakdown, $p = 0.01$. The average downtime per breakdown is expected to be 5.0 min., and the upper-bound approach is applicable in the analysis. An option under consideration is to divide the line into two stages, each stage having 10 stations, with a buffer storage zone between the stages. It has been decided that the storage capacity should be 20 units. The cost to operate the line is \$96.00/hr. Installing the storage buffer would increase the line operating cost by \$12.00/hr. Ignoring material and tooling costs, determine: (a) line efficiency, production rate, and unit cost for the one-stage configuration and (b) line efficiency, production rate, and unit cost for the optional two-stage configuration.

**18.28** A two-week study has been performed on a 12-station transfer line that is used to partially machine engine heads for a major automotive company. During the 80 hr of observation, the line was down a total of 42 hr, and a total of 1689 parts were completed. The accompanying table lists the machining operation performed at each station, the process times, and the downtime occurrences for each station. Transfer time between stations is 6 sec. To address the downtime problem, it has been proposed to divide the line into two stages, each consisting of six stations. The storage buffer between the stages would have a storage capacity of 20 parts. Assuming the upper-bound approach and a constant downtime, determine: (a) line efficiency and production rate of current one-stage configuration and (b) line efficiency and production rate of proposed two-stage configuration. (c) Given that the line is to be divided into two stages, should each stage consist of six stations as proposed, or is there a better division of stations into stages? Support your answer.

| *Station* | *Operation* | *Process Time* | *Downtime Occurrences* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Load part (manual) | 0.50 min. | 0 |
| 2 | Rough mill top | 1.10 min. | 15 |
| 3 | Finish mill top | 1.25 min. | 18 |
| 4 | Rough mill sides | 0.75 min. | 23 |
| 5 | Finish mill sides | 1.05 min. | 31 |
| 6 | Mill surfaces for drill | 0.80 min. | 9 |
| 7 | Drill two holes | 0.75 min. | 22 |
| 8 | Tap two holes | 0.40 min. | 47 |
| 9 | Drill three holes | 1.10 min. | 30 |
| 10 | Ream three holes | 0.70 min. | 21 |
| 11 | Tap three holes | 0.45 min. | 30 |
| 12 | Unload and inspect part (manual) | 0.90 min. | 0 |
| | Totals: | 9.40 min. | 246 |

**18.29** In Problem 18.28, the current line has an operating cost of \$66.00/hr. The starting workpart is a casting that costs \$4.50/pc. Disposable tooling costs \$1.25/pc. The proposed storage buffer will add \$6.00/hr to the operating cost of the line. Does the improvement in production rate justify this cost increase?

**18.30** A 16-station transfer line can be divided into two stages by installing a storage buffer between stations 8 and 9. The probability of failure at any station is $p = 0.01$. The ideal cycle time is 1.0 min, and the downtime per line stop is 10.0 min. These values are applicable for both the one-stage and two-stage configurations. The downtime should be considered constant, and the upper-bound approach should be used in the analysis. The cost of installing the storage buffer is a function of its capacity. This cost function is $C_b = \$0.60b/\text{hr} = \$0.01b/\text{min}$, where

$b$ = the buffer capacity. However, the buffer can only be constructed to store increments of 10. (In other words, $b$ can take on values of 10, 20, 30, etc.) The cost to operate the line itself is \$120/hr. Ignore material and tooling costs. Based on cost per unit of product, determine the buffer capacity $b$ that will minimize unit product cost.

**18.31** The uptime efficiency of a 20-station automated production line is only 40%. The ideal cycle time is 48 sec, and the average downtime per line stop occurrence is 3.0 min. Assume the frequency of breakdowns for all stations is equal ($p_i = p$ for all stations), the downtime is constant, and the upper-bound approach is applicable. To improve uptime efficiency, it is proposed to install a storage buffer with a 15-part capacity for \$14,000. The present production cost is \$4.00/unit, ignoring material and tooling costs. How many units would have to be produced for the \$14,000 investment to pay for itself?

**18.32** An automated transfer line is divided into two stages with a storage buffer between them. Each stage consists of nine stations. The ideal cycle time of each stage = 1.0 min, and frequency of failure for each station is $p = 0.01$. The average downtime per stop is 8.0 min, and a constant downtime distribution should be assumed. Determine the required capacity of the storage buffer such that the improvement in line efficiency $E$ compared to a zero buffer capacity would be 80% of the improvement yielded by a buffer with infinite capacity.

**18.33** In Problem 18.21, suppose that a two–stage line were to be designed with an equal number of stations in each stage. Work content time will be divided evenly between the two stages. The storage buffer between the stages will have a capacity = 3 $T_d/T_c$. Assume a constant repair distribution. (a) For this two-stage line, determine the number of workstations that should be included in each stage of the line to maximize production rate. (b) What is the production rate and line efficiency for this line configuration? (c) What is the buffer storage capacity?

**18.34** A 20–station transfer line presently operates with an efficiency $E = 1/3$. The ideal cycle time = 1.0 min. The repair distribution is geometric with an average downtime per occurrence = 8 min, and each station has an equal probability of failure. It is possible to divide the line into two stages with ten stations each, separating the stages by a storage buffer of capacity $b$. With the information given, determine the required value of $b$ that will increase the efficiency from $E = 1/3$ to $E = 2/5$.

chapter 19

# Automated Assembly Systems

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



The term *automated assembly* refers to the use of mechanized and automated devices to perform the various assembly tasks in an assembly line or cell. Much progress has been made in the technology of assembly automation in recent years. Some of this progress has been motivated by advances in the field of robotics. Industrial robots are sometimes used as components in automated assembly systems (Chapter 7). In the present chapter, we discuss automated assembly as a distinct field of automation. Although the manual assembly methods described in Chapter 17 will be used for many years into the future, there are significant opportunities for productivity gains in the use of automated methods.

As with transfer lines discussed in the previous chapter, automated assembly systems considered in this chapter are usually included in the category of fixed automation. Most automated assembly systems are designed to perform a fixed sequence of assembly steps on a specific product. In our classification scheme (Section 13.2), they are either type III A for multiple station systems or type I A for single station systems (less common). Automated assembly technology should be considered when the following conditions exist:

- ***High product demand.*** Automated assembly systems should be considered for products made in millions of units (or close to this range).
- ***Stable product design.*** In general, any change in the product design means a change in workstation tooling and possibly the sequence of assembly operations. Such changes can be very costly.
- ***The assembly consists of no more than a limited number of components.*** Riley [13] recommends a maximum of around a dozen parts.
- ***The product is designed for automated assembly.*** In Section 19.2, we examine the design factors that allow the assembly of a product to be automated.

Automated assembly systems involve a significant capital expense, although the investments are generally less than for automated transfer lines. The reasons for this are: (1) work units produced on automated assembly systems are usually smaller than those made on transfer lines, and (2) assembly operations do not have the large mechanical force and power requirements of processing operations such as machining. Accordingly, in comparing an automated assembly system and a transfer line both having the same number of stations, the assembly system would tend to be smaller in physical size. This usually reduces the cost of the system.

## 19.1 FUNDAMENTALS OF AUTOMATED ASSEMBLY SYSTEMS

An ***automated assembly system*** performs a sequence of automated assembly operations to combine multiple components into a single entity. The single entity can be a final product or a subassembly in a larger product. In many cases, the assembled entity consists of a base part to which other components are attached. The components are joined one at a time (usually), so the assembly is completed progressively.

A typical automated assembly system consists of the following subsystems: (1) one or more workstations at which the assembly steps are accomplished, (2) parts feeding devices that deliver the individual components to the workstations, and (3) a work handling system for the assembled entity. In assembly systems with one workstation, the work handling system moves the base part into and out of the station. In systems with multiple stations, the handling system transfers the partially assembled base part between stations.

Control functions required in automated assembly machines are the same as in the automated processing lines of Chapter 18: (1) sequence control, (2) safety monitoring, and (3) quality control. These functions are described in Section 18.1.4. The issue of memory control versus instantaneous control is especially relevant in multi-station automated assembly systems.

### 19.1.1 System Configurations

Automated assembly systems can be classified according to physical configuration. The principal configurations, illustrated in Figure 19.1, are: (a) in-line assembly machine, (b) dial-type assembly machine, (c) carousel assembly system, and (d) single station assembly ma-

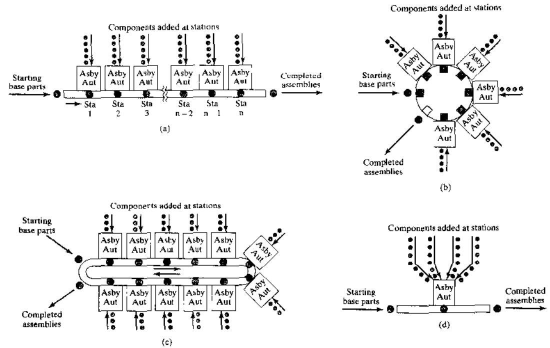



**Figure 19.1** Types of automated assembly systems: (a) in-line, (b) dial-type, (c) carousel, and (d) single station.

**TABLE 19.1** Possible Work Transfer Systems for the Four Assembly System Configurations

| | | *Work Transfer System* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *System Configuration* | *Stationary Base Part* | *Continuous* | *Synchronous* | *Asynchronous* |
| In-line | No | Unusual | Yes | Yes |
| Dial-type | No | Unusual | Yes | No |
| Carousel | No | Unusual | Yes | Yes |
| Single station | Yes | No | No | No |

chine. Table 19.1 summarizes the possible combinations of work transfer systems (Section 17.1.2) that are utilized with these assembly system configurations. The transfer mechanisms to provide the corresponding motions are identified in Table 17.3.

The ***in-line assembly machine***, Figure 19.1(a), consists of a series of automatic workstations located along an in-line transfer system. It is the assembly version of the machining transfer line. Synchronous and asynchronous transfer systems are the common means of transporting base parts from station-to-station with the in-line configuration.

In the typical application of the ***dial-type machine***, Figure 19.1(b), base parts are loaded onto fixtures or nests attached to the circular dial. Components are added and/or joined to the base part at the various workstations located around the periphery of the dial. The dial indexing machine operates with a synchronous or intermittent motion, in which the cycle consists of the service time plus indexing time. Dial-type assembly machines are sometimes designed to use a continuous rather than intermittent motion. This is common in beverage bottling and canning plants, but it is not common in mechanical and electronics assembly.

The operation of dial-type and in-line assembly systems is similar to the operation of their counterparts for processing operations described in Section 18.1.2, except that assembly operations are performed. For synchronous transfer of work between stations, the ideal cycle time equals the operation time at the slowest station plus the transfer time between stations. The production rate, at 100% uptime, is the reciprocal of the ideal cycle time. Because of part jams at the workstations and other malfunctions, the system operates at less than 100% uptime. We analyze the performance of these systems in Section 19.3.2.

As seen in Figure 19.1(c), the ***carousel assembly system*** represents a hybrid between the circular work flow of the dial assembly machine and the straight work flow of the in-line system. The carousel configuration can be operated with continuous, synchronous, or asynchronous transfer mechanisms to move the work around the carousel. Carousels with asynchronous transfer of work are often used in partially automated assembly systems (Section 19.3.4).

In the ***single station assembly machine***. Figure 19.1(d), assembly operations are performed on a base part at a single location. The typical operating cycle involves the placement of the base part at a stationary position in the workstation, followed by the addition of components to the base, and finally the removal of the completed assembly from the station. An important application of single station assembly is the component insertion machine, widely used in the electronics industry to populate components onto printed circuit boards. For mechanical assemblies, the single station cell is sometimes selected as the configuration for robotic assembly applications. Parts are fed into the single station, and the robot adds them to the base part and performs the fastening operations. Compared with the other three system types, the single station system is inherently slower, since all of the assembly tasks are performed and only one assembled unit is completed each cycle. Single station assembly systems are analyzed in Section 19.3.3.

### 19.1.2 Parts Delivery at Workstations

In each of the configurations described above, a workstation accomplishes one or both of the following tasks: (1) a part is delivered to the assembly workhead and added to the existing base part in front of the workhead (in the case of the first station in the system, the base part is often deposited into the work carrier), and/or (2) a fastening or joining operation is performed at the station in which parts added at the workstation or at previous workstations are permanently attached to the existing base part. In the case of a single station assembly system, these tasks are carried out multiple times at the single station. For task (1), a means of delivering the parts to the assembly workhead must be designed. The parts delivery system typically consists of the following hardware:

1. ***Hopper.*** This is the container into which the components are loaded at the workstation. A separate hopper is used for each component type. The components are usually loaded into the hopper in bulk. This means that the parts are initially randomly oriented in the hopper.
2. ***Parts feeder.*** This is a mechanism that removes the components from the hopper one at a time for delivery to the assembly workhead. The hopper and parts feeder are

4. ***Feed track.*** The preceding elements of the delivery system are usually separated from the assembly workhead by a certain distance. A ***feed track*** is used to move the components from the hopper and parts feeder to the location of the assembly workhead, maintaining proper orientation of the parts during the transfer. There are two general categories of feed tracks: gravity and powered. Gravity feed tracks are the most common. In this type, the hopper and parts feeder are located at an elevation above that of the workhead. The force of gravity is used to deliver the components to the workhead. The powered feed track uses vibratory action, air pressure, or other means to force the parts to travel along the feed track toward the assembly workhead.
5. ***Escapement*** and ***placement device.*** The purpose of the ***escapement device*** is to remove components from the feed track at time intervals that are consistent with the cycle time of the assembly workhead. The ***placement device*** physically places the component in the correct location at the workstation for the assembly operation. These elements are sometimes combined into a single operating mechanism. In other cases, they are two separate devices. Several types of escapement and placement devices are pictured in Figure 19.4.

The hardware elements of the parts delivery system are illustrated schematically in Figure 19.5. A parts selector is illustrated in the diagram. Improperly oriented parts are fed back into the hopper. In the case of a parts orientor, improperly oriented parts are reoriented and proceed to the feed track. A more detailed description of the various elements of the delivery system is provided in [3].

One of the recent developments in the technology of parts feeding and delivery systems is the programmable parts feeder [7], [10]. A ***programmable parts feeder*** is capable of feeding components of varying geometries with only a few minutes required to make the adjustments (change the program) for the differences. The flexibility of this type of feeder permits it to be used in batch production or when product design changes occur. Most parts feeders are designed as fixed automated systems for high production assembly of stable product designs.

### 19.1.3 Applications

Automated assembly systems are used to produce a wide variety of products and subassemblies. Table 19.2 presents a list of typical products made by automated assembly.

The kinds of operations performed on automated assembly machines cover a wide range. We provide a representative list of processes in Table 19.3. These processes are described in [9]. It should be noted that certain assembly processes are more suitable for automation than are others. For example, threaded fasteners (e.g., screws, bolts, and nuts), although common in manual assembly, are a challenging assembly method to automate. This issue, along with some guidelines for designing products for automated assembly, is discussed in the following section.

## 19.2 DESIGN FOR AUTOMATED ASSEMBLY

One of the obstacles to automated assembly is that many of the traditional assembly methods evolved when humans were the only available means of assembling a product. Many of the mechanical fasteners commonly used in industry today require the special anatom-

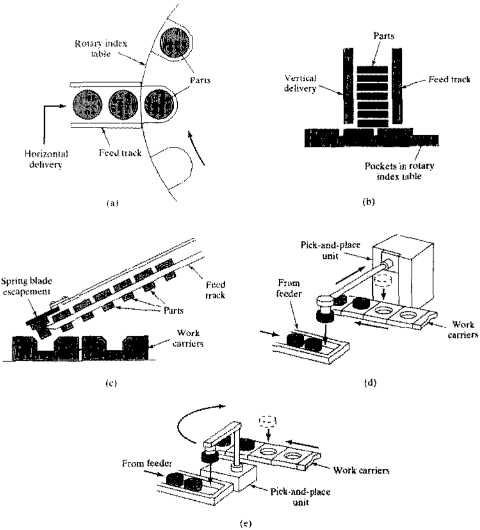



**Figure 19.4** Various escapement and placement devices used in automated assembly systems: (a) horizontal device and (b) vertical device for placement of parts onto dial indexing table, (c) escapement of rivet-shaped parts actuated by work carriers, and (d) and (e) are two types of pick-and-place mechanisms (reprinted from Gay [6]).

ical and sensory capabilities of human beings. Consider, for example, the use of a bolt, lock washer, and nut to fasten two sheet metal parts on a partially assembled cabinet. This kind of operation is commonly accomplished manually at either a single assembly station or on

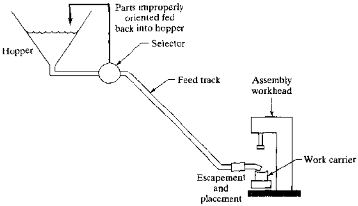



**Figure 19.5** Hardware elements of the parts delivery system at an assembly workstation.

**TABLE 19.2** Typical Products Made by Automated Assembly

| | |
|---|---|
| Alarm clocks | Light bulbs |
| Audio tape cassettes | Locks |
| Ball bearings | Mechanical pens and pencils |
| Ball point pens | Printed circuit board assemblies |
| Cigarette lighters | Pumps for household appliances |
| Computer diskettes | Small electric motors |
| Electrical plugs and sockets | Spark plugs |
| Fuel injectors | Video tape cassettes |
| Gear boxes | Wrist watches |

**TABLE 19.3** Some Typical Assembly Processes Used in Automated Assembly Systems

| |
|---|
| Adhesive bonding (automatic dispensing of adhesive) |
| Insertion of components (pin-in-hole printed circuit board assembly) |
| Placement of components (surface mount printed circuit board assembly) |
| Riveting |
| Screw fastening (automatic screwdriver) |
| Snap fitting |
| Soldering |
| Spotwelding |
| Stapling |
| Stitching |

an assembly line. The cabinet is positioned at the workstation with the two sheet metal parts to be fastened at an awkward location for the operator to reach. The operator picks up the bolt, lockwasher, and nut, somehow manipulating them into position on opposite sides of the two parts, and places the lockwasher and then the nut onto the bolt. As luck would have it, the threads of the nut initially bind on the bolt threads, and so the operator must unscrew slightly and restart the process, using a well-developed sense of touch to ensure that the threads are matching. Once the bolt and nut have been tightened with fingers, the operator reaches for the appropriate screwdriver (there are various bolt sizes with different heads) to tighten the fastener.

This kind of manual operation has been used commonly and successfully in industry for many years to assemble products. The hardware required is inexpensive, the sheet metal is readily perforated to provide the matching clearance holes, and the method lends itself to field service. What is becoming very expensive is the manual labor at the assembly workstation required to accomplish the initial fastening. The high cost of manual labor has resulted in a reexamination of assembly technology with a view toward automation. However, automating the assembly operation just described is very difficult. First, the positions of the holes through which the bolt must be inserted are different for each fastener, and some of the positions may be difficult for the operator to reach. Second, the holes between the two sheet metal parts may not match up perfectly, requiring the operator to reposition the two parts for a better fit. Third, the operator must juggle three separate hardware items (bolt, lockwasher, and nut) to perform the fastening operation. And the part to be fastened may also have to be included in the juggling act. Fourth, a sense of touch is required to make sure that the nut is started properly onto the bolt thread. Each of these four problems makes automation of the operation difficult. All four problems together make it nearly impossible. As a consequence, attempts at assembly automation have led to an examination of the methods specified by the designer to fasten together the various components of a product.

The first and most general lesson, which is obvious from this last example, is that the methods traditionally used for manual assembly are not necessarily the best methods for automated assembly. Humans are the most dexterous and intelligent machines, able to move to different positions in the workstation, adapt to unexpected problems and new situations during the work cycle, manipulate and coordinate multiple objects simultaneously, and make use of a wide range of senses in performing work. For assembly automation to be achieved, fastening procedures must be devised and specified during product design that do not require all of these human capabilities. The following are some recommendations and principles that can be applied in product design to facilitate automated assembly:

- ***Reduce the amount of assembly required.*** This principle can be realized during design by combining functions within the same part that were previously accomplished by separate components in the product. The use of plastic molded parts to substitute for sheet metal parts may be a way to actualize this principle. A more complex geometry molded into a plastic part might replace several metal parts. Although the plastic part may seem to be more costly, the savings in assembly time will justify the substitution in many cases.
- ***Use of modular design.*** In automated assembly, increasing the number of separate assembly steps accomplished by a single automated system results in a decrease in system reliability. This is demonstrated in our analysis of assembly system performance in Sections 19.3.2 and 19.3.3. To reduce this effect Riley [13] suggests that the design of the product be modular with perhaps each module requiring a maximum of 12 or so parts to be assembled on a single assembly system. Also, the subassembly should be designed around a base part to which other components are added [14].
- ***Reduce the number of fasteners required.*** Instead of using separate screws, nuts and similar fasteners, design the fastening mechanism into the component design using snap fits and similar features.

- ***Reduce the need for multiple components to be handled at once.*** The preferred practice in automated assembly machine design is to separate the operations at different stations rather than to simultaneously handle and fasten multiple components at the same workstation. For the case of the single station assembly system, this principle must be interpreted to mean that the handling of multiple components must be minimized in each assembly work element.
- ***Limit the required directions of access.*** This principle simply means that the number of directions in which new components are added to the existing subassembly should be minimized. If all of the components can be added vertically from above, this is the ideal situation. Obviously the design of the subassembly determines this.
- ***High quality required in components.*** High performance of the automated assembly system requires consistently good quality of the components added at each workstation. Poor quality components cause jams in the feeding and assembly mechanisms, which cause downtime in an automated system.
- ***Hopperability.*** This is a term that Riley [13] uses to identify the ease with which a given component can be fed and oriented reliably for delivery from the parts hopper to the assembly workhead. One of the major costs in the development of an automated assembly system is the engineering time to devise the means of feeding the components in the correct orientation for the assembly operation. The product designer is responsible for providing the orientation features and other geometric aspects of the components that determine the ease of feeding and orienting the parts.

## 19.3 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ASSEMBLY SYSTEMS

Certain performance aspects of automated assembly systems can be studied using mathematical models. In this section, we develop models to analyze the following issues in automated assembly: (1) parts delivery system at workstations, (2) multi-station automated assembly systems, (3) single station automated assembly systems, and (4) partial automation.

### 19.3.1 Parts Delivery System at Workstations

In the parts delivery system, Figure 19.5, the parts feeding mechanism is capable of removing parts from the hopper at a certain rate $f$. These parts are assumed to be randomly oriented initially, and must be presented to the selector or orientor to establish the correct orientation. In the case of a selector, a certain proportion of the parts will be correctly oriented initially, and these will be allowed to pass through. The remaining proportion that is incorrectly oriented will be rejected back into the hopper. In the case of an orientor, incorrectly oriented parts will be reoriented, resulting ideally in a 100% rate of parts passing through the device. In many delivery system designs, the functions of the selector and the orientor are combined. Let us define $\theta$ to be the proportion of components that pass through the selector-orientor process and are correctly oriented for delivery into the feed track. Hence, the effective rate of delivery of components from the hopper into the feed track is $f\theta$. The remaining proportion, $(1 - \theta)$, is recirculated back into the hopper. Obviously, the delivery rate $f\theta$ of components to the workhead must be sufficient to keep up with the cycle rate of the assembly machine.

Assuming the delivery rate of components $f\theta$ is greater than the cycle rate $R_c$ of the assembly machine, a means of limiting the size of the queue in the feed track must be established. This is generally accomplished by placing a sensor (e.g., limit switch or optical sensor) near the top of the feed track to turn off the feeding mechanism when the feed track is full. This sensor is referred to as the ***high level sensor***, and its location defines the active length $L_{f2}$ of the feed track. If the length of a component in the feed track is $L_c$, then the number of parts that can be held in the feed track is $n_{f2} = L_{f2}/L_c$. The length of the components must be measured from a point on a given component to the corresponding point on the next component in the queue to allow for possible overlap of parts. The value of $n_{f2}$ is the capacity of the feed track.

Another sensor is placed along the feed track at some distance from the first sensor and is used to restart the feeding mechanism again. If we define the location of this ***low level sensor*** as $L_{f1}$, then the number of components in the feed track at this point is $n_{f1} = L_{f1}/L_c$.

The rate at which parts in the feed track are reduced when the high level sensor is actuated (turns off the feeder) $= R_c$, which is the cycle rate of the automated assembly workhead. On average, the rate at which the quantity of parts will increase with the actuation of the low level sensor (turns on the feeder) is $f\theta - R_c$. However, the rate of increase will not be uniform due to the random nature of the feeder-selector operation. Accordingly, the value of $n_{f1}$ must be made large enough to virtually eliminate the probability of a stockout after the low level sensor has turned on the feeder.

**EXAMPLE 19.1 Parts Delivery System in Automatic Assembly**

The cycle time for a given assembly workhead = 6 sec. The parts feeder has a feed rate = 50 components/min. The probability that a given component fed by the feeder will pass through the selector is $\theta = 0.25$. The number of parts in the feed track corresponding to the low level sensor is $n_{f1} = 6$. The capacity of the feed track is $n_{f2} = 18$ parts. Determine (a) how long it will take for the supply of parts in the feed track to go from $n_{f2}$ to $n_{f1}$ and (b) how long it will take on average for the supply of parts to go from $n_{f1}$ to $n_{f2}$.

***Solution:*** (a) $T_c = 6 \text{ sec} = 0.1$ min. The rate of depletion of parts in the feed track, starting from $n_{f2}$, will be $R_c = 1/0.1 = 10$ parts/min.

$$\text{Time to deplete feed track (time to go from } n_{f2} \text{ to } n_{f1}) = \frac{18-6}{10} = 1.2 \text{ min.}$$

(b) The rate of parts increase in the feed track, once the low level sensor has been reached, is $f\theta - R_c = (50)(0.25) - 10 = 12.5 - 10 = 2.5$ parts/min.

$$\text{Time to replenish feed track (time to go from } n_{f1} \text{ to } n_{f2}) = \frac{18-6}{2.5} = 4.8 \text{ min.}$$

### 19.3.2 Multi-Station Assembly Machines

In this section, we analyze the operation and performance of automated assembly machines that have several workstations and use a synchronous transfer system. The types include the dial indexing machine, many in-line assembly systems, and certain carousel systems. Assumptions underlying the analysis are similar to those in our analysis of transfer lines: Assembly operations at the stations have: (1) constant element times, although the times are not necessarily equal at all stations; (2) synchronous parts transfer; and (3) no internal storage.

The analysis of an automated assembly machine with multiple stations shares much in common with the upper-bound approach used for metal machining transfer lines from Section 18.3. Some modifications in the analysis must be made to account for the fact that components are being added at the various workstations in the assembly system. The general operation of the assembly system is pictured in Figure 19.1(a)-(c). In developing the equations that govern the operation of the system, we will follow the general approach suggested by Boothroyd and Redford [2].

We assume that the typical operation at a workstation of an assembly machine consists of a component being added and/or joined in some fashion to an existing assembly. The existing assembly consists of a base part plus the components assembled to it at previous stations. The base part is launched onto the line either at or before the first workstation. The components that are added must be clean, uniform in size and shape, of high quality, and consistently oriented. When the feed mechanism and assembly workhead attempt to join a component that does not satisfy this technical description, the station can jam. When a jam occurs, it results in the shutdown of the entire system until the fault is corrected. Thus, in addition to the other mechanical and electrical failures that interrupt the operation of a production line, the problem of defective components is one that specifically plagues the operation of an automatic assembly system. This is the problem we propose to deal with in this Section.

*The Assembly Machine as a Game of Chance.* Defective parts occur in manufacturing with a certain fraction defect rate, $q(0 \leq q \leq 1.0)$. In the operation of an assembly workstation, $q$ can be considered to be the probability that the component to be added during the current cycle is defective. When an attempt is made to feed and assemble a defective component, the defect might or might not cause the station to jam. Let $m$ = probability that a defect results in a jam at the station and consequent stoppage of the line. Since the values of $q$ and $m$ may be different for different stations, we subscript these terms as $q_i$ and $m_i$, where $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$, the number of workstations on the assembly machine.

Consider what happens at a particular workstation, say station $i$, where there are three possible events that might occur when the feed mechanism attempts to feed the next component, and the assembly device attempts to join it to the existing assembly at the station. The three events and their associated probabilities are:

1. ***The component is defective and causes a station jam.*** The probability of this event is the fraction defect rate of the parts at the station $(q_i)$ multiplied by the probability that a defect will cause the station to jam $(m_i)$. This product is the same term $p_i$ in our previous analysis of transfer machines in Section 18.3.2. For an assembly machine, $p_i = m_i q_i$. When the station jams, the component must then be cleared and the next component be allowed to feed and be assembled. We assume that if the next component in the feed track were defective, the operator who cleared the previous jam would notice and remove this next defect as well. Anyway, the probability of two consecutive defects is very small, equal to $q_i^2$.
2. ***The component is defective but does not cause a station jam.*** This has a probability $(1 - m_i)q_i$. With this outcome, a bad part is joined to the existing assembly, perhaps rendering the entire assembly defective.
3. ***The component is not defective.*** This is the most desirable outcome and the most likely by far (hopefully). The probability that a part added at the station is not defective is equal to the proportion of good parts $(1 - q_i)$.

The probabilities of the three possible events must sum to unity for any workstation; that is,

$$m_i q_i + (1 - m_i)q_i + (1 - q_i) = 1 \tag{19.1}$$

For the special case where $m_i = m$ and $q_i = q$ for all $i$, this equation reduces to the following:

$$mq + (1 - m)q + (1 - q) = 1 \tag{19.2}$$

Although it is unlikely that all $m_i$ are equal and all $q_i$ are equal, it is nevertheless useful for computation and approximation purposes.

To determine the complete distribution of possible outcomes that can occur on an $n$-station assembly machine, the terms of Eq. (19.1) are multiplied together for all $n$ stations:

$$\prod_{i=1}^{n}\left[m_i q_i + (1 - m_i)q_i + (1 - q_i)\right] = 1 \tag{19.3}$$

In the special case where $m_i = m$ and $q_i = q$ for all $i$, this reduces to:

$$\left[mq + (1 - m)q + (1 - q)\right]^n = 1 \tag{19.4}$$

Expansion of Eq. (19.3) reveals the probabilities for all possible sequences of events that can take place on the $n$-station assembly machine. Unfortunately, the number of terms in the expansion becomes very large for a machine with more than two or three stations. The exact number of terms is equal to $3^n$, where $n$ = number of stations. For example, for an eight-station line, the number of terms $= 3^8 = 6561$, each term representing the probability of one of the 6561 possible outcome sequences on the assembly machine.

*Measures of Performance.* Fortunately, it is not necessary to calculate every term to make use of the description of assembly machine operation provided by Eq. (19.3). One of the characteristics of performance that we want to know is the proportion of assemblies that contain one or more defective components. Two of the three terms in Eq. (19.3) represent events in which a good component is added at the given station. The first term is $m_i q_i$, which indicates that a station jam has occurred, and thus a defective component has not been added to the existing assembly. The other term is $(1 - q_i)$, which means that a good component has been added at the station. The sum of these two terms represents the probability that a defective component is not added at station $i$. Multiplying these probabilities for all stations, we get the proportion of acceptable product coming off the line $P_{ap}$.

$$P_{ap} = \prod_{i=1}^{n}(1 - q_i + m_i q_i) \tag{19.5}$$

where $P_{ap}$ can be thought of as the ***yield*** of good assemblies produced by the assembly machine. If $P_{ap}$ = the proportion of good assemblies, then the proportion of assemblies containing at least one defective component $P_{qp}$ is given by:

$$P_{qp} = 1 - P_{ap} = 1 - \prod_{i=1}^{n}(1 - q_i + m_i q_i) \tag{19.6}$$

In the case of equal $m_i$ and equal $q_i$, these two equations become, respectively:

$$P_{ap} = (1 - q + mq)^n \tag{19.7}$$

$$P_{qp} = 1 - (1 - q + mq)^n \tag{19.8}$$

The yield $P_{ap}$ is certainly one of the important performance measures of an assembly machine. The proportion of assemblies with one or more defective components $P_{qp}$ must be considered a significant disadvantage of the machine's performance. Either these assemblies must be identified through an inspection process and possibly repaired, or they will become mixed in with the good assemblies. This latter possibility leads to undesirable consequences when the assemblies are placed in service.

Other performance measures of interest are the machine's production rate, proportion of uptime and downtime, and average cost per unit produced. To calculate production rate, we must first determine the frequency of downtime occurrences per cycle $F$. If each station jam results in a machine downtime occurrence, $F$ can be determined by taking the expected number of station jams per cycle; that is,

$$F = \sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i = \sum_{i=1}^{n} m_i q_i \tag{19.9}$$

In the case of a station performing only a joining or fastening operation and no part is added at the station, then the contribution to $F$ made by that station is $p_i$, the probability of a station breakdown, where $p_i$ does not depend on $m_i$ and $q_i$.

If $m_i = m$ and $q_i = q$ for all stations, $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$, then the above equation for $F$ reduces to the following:

$$F = nmq \tag{19.10}$$

The average actual production time per assembly is given by

$$T_p = T_c + \sum_{i=1}^{n} m_i q_i T_d \tag{19.11}$$

where $T_c$ = ideal cycle time of the assembly machine, which is the longest assembly task time on the machine plus the indexing or transfer time (min), and $T_d$ = average downtime per occurrence (min). For the case of equal $m_i$ and $q_i$,

$$T_p = T_c + nmqT_d \tag{19.12}$$

From the average actual production time, we obtain the production rate, which is the reciprocal of production time:

$$R_p = \frac{1}{T_p} \tag{19.13}$$

This is the same relationship as Eq. (18.7) in our previous chapter on transfer lines. However, the operation of assembly machines is different from processing machines. In an assembly machine, unless $m_i = 1.0$ for all stations, the production output will include some assemblies with one or more defective components. Accordingly, the production rate should be corrected to give the rate of acceptable product, that is, those that contain no defects. This is simply the yield $P_{ap}$ multiplied by the production rate $R_p$:

$$R_{ap} = P_{ap}R_p = \frac{P_{ap}}{T_p} = \frac{\prod_{i=1}^{n}(1 - q_i + m_i q_i)}{T_p} \tag{19.14}$$

where $R_{ap}$ = production rate of acceptable product (units/min). When all $m_i$ are equal and all $q_i$ are equal, the corresponding equation is

$$R_{ap} = P_{ap}R_p = \frac{P_{ap}}{T_p} = \frac{(1 - q + mq)^n}{T_p} \tag{19.15}$$

Eq. (19.13) gives the production rate of all assemblies made on the system, including those that contain one or more defective parts. Eqs. (19.14) and (19.15) give production rates for good product only. The problem still remains that the defective products are mixed in with the good units. We take up this issue of inspection and sortation in Chapter 22 (Section 22.5).

Line efficiency is calculated as the ratio of ideal cycle time to average actual production time. This is the same ratio as we defined in Chapter 17 (Eq. (17.6)):

$$E = \frac{R_p}{R_c} = \frac{T_c}{T_p} \tag{19.16}$$

where $T_p$ is calculated from Eq. (19.11) or Eq. (19.12). The proportion downtime $D = 1 - E$, as before. No attempt has been made to correct line efficiency E for the yield of good assemblies. We are treating assembly machine efficiency and the quality of units produced on it as separate issues.

On the other hand, the cost per assembled product must take account of the output quality. Therefore, the general cost formula given in Eq. (18.12) in the previous chapter must be corrected for yield, as follows:

$$C_{pc} = \frac{C_m + C_o T_p + C_t}{P_{ap}} \tag{19.17}$$

where $C_{pc}$ = cost per good assembly (\$/pc); $C_m$ = cost of materials, which includes the cost of the base part plus components added to it (\$/pc); $C_o$ = operating cost of the assembly system (\$/min); $T_p$ = average actual production time (min/pc); $C_t$ = cost of disposable tooling (\$/pc); and $P_{ap}$ = yield from Eq. (19.5). The effect of the denominator is to increase the cost per assembly; as the quality of the individual components deteriorates, the average cost per good quality assembly increases.

In addition to the traditional ways of indicating line performance (production rate, line efficiency, cost per unit), we see an additional dimension of importance in the form of yield. While the yield of good product is an important issue in any automated production line, we see that it can be explicitly included in the formulas for assembly machine performance by means of $q$ and $m$.

**EXAMPLE 19.2 Multi-Station Automated Assembly System**

A ten-station in-line assembly machine has an ideal cycle time = 6 sec. The base part is automatically loaded prior to the first station, and components are added at each of the stations. The fraction defect rate at each of the 10 stations is $q = 0.01$, and the probability that a defect will jam is $m = 0.5$. When a jam occurs, the average downtime is 2 min. Cost to operate the assembly machine is \$42.00/hr. Other costs are ignored. Determine: (a) average production rate of all assemblies (asb/hr), (b) yield of good assemblies, (c) average production rate of good product, (d) uptime efficiency of the assembly machine, and (e) cost per unit.

***Solution:*** (a) $T_c = 6$ sec $= 0.1$ min. The average production cycle time is

$$T_p = 0.1 + (10)(.5)(.01)(2.0) = 0.2 \text{ min}$$

The production rate is therefore

$$R_p = \frac{60}{0.2} = 300 \text{ total assemblies/hr}$$

(b) The yield is given by Eq. (19.7):

$$P_{ap} = (1 - .01 + .5 \times .01)^{10} = 0.9511$$

(c) Average production rate of good assemblies is determined by Eq. (19.15):

$$R_{ap} = 300(0.9511) = 285.3 \text{ good asbys/hr}$$

(d) The efficiency of the assembly machine is

$$E = 0.1/0.2 = 0.50 = 50\%$$

(e) Cost to operate the assembly machine $C_o$ = \$42/hr = \$0.70/min.

$$C_{pc} = (\$0.70/\text{min})(0.2 \text{ min/pc})/0.9511 = \$0.147/\text{pc}.$$

**EXAMPLE 19.3 Effect of Variations in *q* And *m* on Assembly System Performance**

Let us examine how the performance measures in Example 19.2 are affected by variations in $q$ and $m$. First, for $m = 0.5$, determine the production rate, yield, and efficiency for three levels of $q$: $q = 0$, $q = 0.01$, and $q = 0.02$. Second, for $q = 0.01$, determine the production rate, yield, and efficiency for three levels of $m$: $m = 0$, $m = 0.5$, and $m = 1.0$.

***Solution:*** Computations similar to those in Example 19.2 provide the following results:

| $q$ | $m$ | $R_p$ (asbys/hr) | Yield | $R_{ap}$ (asbys/hr) | $E$ (%) | (per asby) $C_{pc}$ | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0.5 | 600 | 1.0 | 600 | 100 | \$0.07 | (1) |
| 0.01 | 0.5 | 300 | 0.9511 | 285.3 | 50 | \$0.147 | (2) |
| 0.02 | 0.5 | 200 | 0.9044 | 180.9 | 33.33 | \$0.232 | (3) |
| 0.01 | 0 | 600 | 0.9044 | 542.6 | 100 | \$0.077 | (4) |
| 0.01 | 0.5 | 300 | 0.9511 | 285.3 | 50 | \$0.147 | (5) |
| 0.01 | 1.0 | 200 | 1.0 | 200 | 33.33 | \$0.21 | (6) |

Let us discuss the results of Example 19.3. The effect of component quality, as indicated in the value of $q$, is predictable. As fraction defect rate increases, meaning that component quality gets worse, all measures of performance suffer. Production rate drops, yield of good product is reduced, proportion uptime decreases, and cost per unit increases.

The effect of $m$ (the probability that a defect will jam the workhead and cause the assembly machine to stop) is less obvious. At low values of $m$ ($m = 0$) for the same component quality level ($q = 0.01$), production rate and machine efficiency are high, but yield of good product is low. Instead of interrupting the assembly machine operation and causing downtime, all defective components pass through the assembly process to become part of the final product. At $m = 1.0$, all defective components are removed before they become part of the product. Therefore, yield is 100%, but removing the defects takes time, adversely affecting production rate, efficiency, and cost per unit.

In Section 18.1.4, we discussed two types of control, instantaneous control and memory control. Memory control is particularly appropriate for automated assembly machine operation. With memory control, the assembly machine is provided with logic that identifies when a defective component is encountered but does not stop the machine. Instead, it remembers the position of the partially assembled unit that is affected by the defect, locking it out from additional assembly operations at subsequent workstations, and rejects the assembly after the last station. By contrast, instantaneous control stops the assembly machine when a defect (or other malfunction) occurs. With the introduction of the variable $m$, we are now in a position to compare the performance of the two control types.

**EXAMPLE 19.4 Instantaneous Control vs. Memory Control**

Let us compare the two control modes using the same automated assembly machine as in Examples 19.2 and 19.3. Fraction defect rate $q = 0.01$. Under ideal conditions, instantaneous control implies a value of $m = 1.0$, meaning that every defective component causes the assembly machine to stop. Likewise, memory control means $m = 0$. As before, cost to operate the assembly machine is \$42.00/hr; however, cost of additional sensors, controls, and sortation devices for memory control add \$12.00/hr for this mode of operation. Other costs are ignored. Compare (a) instantaneous control and (b) memory control on the basis of average actual production rate, yield, production rate of good product, uptime efficiency, and cost per unit produced.

***Solution:*** (a) For ***instantaneous control*** ($m = 1.0$) we have already made the calculations for this case in line (6) of Example 19.3.

| $R_p$ | Yield | $R_{ap}$ | $E$ | $C_{pc}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 200 | 1.0 | 200 | 33.33% | \$0.21/good asby |

(b) For ***memory control*** ($m = 0$), we have made most of the calculations in line (4) of Example 19.3. The only additional computation is cost per unit in which we include the additional cost of memory control.

$$C_o = \$42.00 + \$12.00 = \$54.00/\text{hr} = \$0.90/\text{min}.$$

$$C_{pc} = (\$0.90/\text{min})(0.1\ \text{min/pc})/0.9044 = \$0.10/\text{good asby}$$

| $R_p$ (asbys/hr) | Yield | $R_{ap}$ (asbys/hr) | E | $C_{pc}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 600 | 0.9044 | 542.6 | 100% | \$0.10/good asby |

Memory control has the clear advantage in this example, despite the higher operating costs for the assembly system. It is assumed that the sortation station is 100% effective; thus the good products, represented in the yield of 0.9044, are completely separated from the products that contain one or more defects.

In practice, the theoretical values of $m$ will not be realized for the two control types. With instantaneous control, a portion of the defective components will slip through undetected to become included in the final product, so that the actual value of $m$ will be less than 1.0. With memory control, there will be cases of line stops resulting from defective components jamming the machine in such a way that it cannot continue operation. Hence, the actual value of $m$ under memory control will be greater than the theoretical value of zero. These realities are ignored in the preceding example.

### 19.3.3 Single Station Assembly Machines

The single station assembly system is pictured in Figure 19.1(d). We assume a single workhead with several components feeding into the station to be assembled to a base part. Let $n_e$ = the number of distinct assembly elements that are performed on the machine. Each element has an element time, $T_{ej}$, where $j = 1, 2, \ldots, n_e$. The ideal cycle time for the single station assembly machine is the sum of the individual element times of the assembly operations to be performed on the machine plus the handling time to load the base part into position and unload the completed assembly. We can express this ideal cycle time as

$$T_c = T_h + \sum_{j=1}^{n_e} T_{ej} \tag{19.18}$$

where $T_h$ = handling time (min).

Many of the assembly elements involve the addition of a component to the existing subassembly. As in our analysis of multiple station assembly, each component type has a certain fraction defect rate $q_j$, and there is a certain probability that a defective component will jam the workstation $m_j$. When a jam occurs, the assembly machine stops, and it takes an average $T_d$ to clear the jam and restart the system. The inclusion of downtime resulting from jams in the machine cycle time gives

$$T_p = T_c + \sum_{j=1}^{n_e} q_j m_j T_d \tag{19.19}$$

For elements that do not include the addition of a component, the value of $q_j = 0$ and $m_j$ is irrelevant. This might occur, for example, when a fastening operation is performed with no part added during element $j$. In this type of operation, a term $p_j T_d$ would be included in the above expression to allow for a downtime during that element, where $p_j$ = the probability of a station failure during element $j$. For the special case of equal $q$ and equal $m$ values for all components added, Eq. (19.19) becomes

$$T_p = T_c + nmqT_d \tag{19.20}$$

Determining yield (proportion of assemblies that contain no defective components) for the single station assembly machine makes use of the same equations as for the multiple station systems, Eqs. (19.5) or (19.7). Uptime efficiency is computed as $E = T_c/T_p$, using the values of $T_c$ and $T_p$ from Eqs. (19.18) and (19.19) or (19.20).

**EXAMPLE 19.5 Single Station Automatic Assembly System**

A single station assembly machine performs five work elements to assemble four components to a base part. The elements are listed in the table below, together with the fraction defect rate ($q$) and probability of a station jam ($m$) for each of the components added (NA: not applicable).

| *Element* | *Operation* | *Time (sec)* | *q* | *m* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Add gear | 4 | 0.02 | 1.0 | |
| 2 | Add spacer | 3 | 0.01 | 0.6 | |
| 3 | Add gear | 4 | 0.015 | 0.8 | |
| 4 | Add gear and mesh | 7 | 0.02 | 1.0 | |
| 5 | Fasten | 5 | 0 | NA | 0.012 |

Time to load the base part is 3 sec, and time to unload the completed assembly is 4 sec, giving a total load/unload time of $T_h = 7$ sec. When a jam occurs, it takes an average of 1.5 min to clear the jam and restart the machine. Determine: (a) production rate of all product, (b) yield, and (c) production rate of good product, and (d) uptime efficiency of the assembly machine.

***Solution:*** (a) The ideal cycle time of the assembly machine is

$$T_c = 7 + (4 + 3 + 4 + 7 + 5) = 30 \text{ sec} = 0.5 \text{ min}$$

Frequency of downtime occurrences is

$$F = .02 \times 1.0 + .01 \times .6 + .015 \times .8 + .02 \times 1.0 + 0.012 = 0.07$$

Adding the average downtime due to jams,

$$T_p = 0.5 + 0.07(1.5) = 0.5 + 0.105 = 0.605 \text{ min.}$$

Production rate is therefore

$$R_p = 60/0.605 = 99.2 \text{ total assemblies/hr}$$

(b) Yield of good product is

$$P_{ap} = (1.0)(0.996)(0.997)(1.0) = 0.993$$

(c) Production rate of only good assemblies is

$$R_{ap} = 99.2(0.993) = 98.5 \text{ good assemblies/hr}$$

(d) Uptime efficiency is

$$E = 0.5/0.605 = 0.8264 = 82.64\%$$

As our analysis suggests, increasing the number of elements in the assembly machine cycle results in a higher cycle time, therefore decreasing the production rate of the machine. Accordingly, applications of the single station assembly machine are limited to medium volume, medium production rate situations. For higher production rates, one of the multi-station assembly systems is generally preferred.

### 19.3.4 Partial Automation

Many assembly lines in industry contain a combination of automated and manual workstations. These cases of partially automated production lines occur for two main reasons:

1. ***Automation is introduced gradually on an existing manual line.*** Suppose that demand for the product made on a manually operated line increases, and it is desired to increase production and reduce labor costs by automating some or all of the stations. The simpler operations are automated first, and the transition toward a fully automated line is accomplished over a long period of time. Meanwhile, the line operates as a partially automated system (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5.3).
2. ***Certain manual operations are too difficult or too costly to automate.*** Therefore, when the sequence of workstations is planned for the line, certain stations are designed to be automated, whereas the others are designed as manual stations.

Examples of operations that might be too difficult to automate are assembly procedures or processing steps involving alignment, adjustment, or fine-tuning of the work unit. These operations often require special human skills and/or senses to carry out. Many inspection procedures also fall into this category. Defects in a product or part that can be easily perceived by a human inspector are sometimes extremely difficult to identify by an automated inspection device. Another problem is that the automated inspection device can only check for the defects for which it was designed, whereas a human inspector is capable of sensing a variety of unanticipated imperfections and problems.

To analyze the performance of a partially automated production line, we build on our previous analysis and make the following assumptions: (1) Workstations perform either processing or assembly operations; (2) processing and assembly times at automated stations are constant, though not necessarily equal at all stations; (3) synchronous transfer of parts; (4) no internal buffer storage; (5) the upper-bound approach (Section 18.3.2) is applicable; and (6) station breakdowns occur only at automated stations. Breakdowns do not occur at manual stations because the human workers are flexible enough, we assume, to adapt to the kinds of disruptions and malfunctions that would interrupt the operation of an automated workstation. For example, if a human operator were to retrieve a defective part from the parts bin at the station, the part would immediately be discarded and replaced by another without much lost time. Of course, this assumption of human adaptability is not always correct, but our analysis is based on it.

The ideal cycle time $T_c$ is determined by the slowest station on the line, which is generally one of the manual stations. If the cycle time is in fact determined by a manual station, then $T_c$ will exhibit a certain degree of variability simply because there is random variation in any repetitive human activity. However, we assume that the average $T_c$ remains constant over time. Given our assumption that breakdowns occur only at automated stations, let $n_a$ = the number of automated stations and $T_d$ = average downtime per occurrence. For the automated stations that perform processing operations, let $p_i$ = the probability (frequency) of breakdowns per cycle; and for automated stations that perform assembly operations, let $q_i$ and $m_i$ equal, respectively, the defect rate and probability that the defect will cause station $i$ to stop. We are now in a position to define the average actual production time:

$$T_p = T_c + \sum_{i \in n_a} p_i T_d \tag{19.21}$$

where the summation applies to the $n_a$ automated stations only. For those automated stations that perform assembly operations in which a part is added,

$$p_i = m_i q_i$$

If all $p_i$, $m_i$, and $q_i$ are equal, respectively to $p$, $m$, and $q$, then the preceding equations reduce to the following:

$$T_p = T_c + n_a p T_d \tag{19.22}$$

and $p = mq$ for those stations that perform assembly consisting of the addition of a part.

Given that $n_a$ is the number of automated stations, then $n_w$ = the number of stations operated by manual workers, and $n_a + n_w = n$, where $n$ = the total station count. Let $C_{asi}$ = cost to operate automatic workstation $i$ (\$/min), $C_{wi}$ = cost to operate manual workstation $i$ (\$/min), and $C_{at}$ = cost to operate the automatic transfer mechanism. Then the total cost to operate the line is given by:

$$C_o = C_{at} + \sum_{i \in n_a} C_{asi} + \sum_{i \in n_w} C_{wi} \tag{19.23}$$

where $C_o$ = cost of operating the partially automated production system (\$/min). For all $C_{asi} = C_{as}$, and all $C_{wi} = C_w$, then

$$C_o = C_{at} + n_a C_{as} + n_w C_w \tag{19.24}$$

Now the total cost per unit produced on the line can be calculated as follows:

$$C_{pc} = \frac{C_m + C_o T_p + C_t}{P_{ap}} \tag{19.25}$$

where $C_{pc}$ = cost per good assembly (\$/pc), $C_m$ = cost of materials and components being processed and assembled on the line (\$/pc), $C_o$ = cost of operating the partially automated production system by either of Eqs. (19.23) or (19.24) (\$/min), $T_p$ = average actual production time (min/pc), $C_t$ = any cost of disposable tooling (\$/pc), and $P_{ap}$ = proportion of good assemblies by Eqs. (19.5) or (19.7).

**EXAMPLE 19.6 Partial Automation**

It has been proposed to replace one of the current manual workstations with an automatic workhead on a ten-station production line. The current line has six automatic stations and four manual stations. Current cycle time is 30 sec. The limiting process time is at the manual station that is proposed for replacement. Implementing the proposal would allow the cycle time to be reduced to 24 sec. The new station would cost \$0.20/min. Other cost data: $C_w$ = \$0.15/min, $C_{as}$ = \$0.10/min, and $C_{at}$ = \$0.12/min. Breakdowns occur at each automated station with a probability $p = 0.01$. The new automated station is expected to have the same frequency of breakdowns. Average downtime per occurrence $T_d = 3.0$ min, which will be unaffected by the new station. Material costs and tooling costs will be neglected in the analysis. It is desired to compare the current line with the proposed change on the basis of production rate and cost per piece. Assume a yield of 100% good product.

***Solution:*** For the current line, $T_c = 30 \text{ sec} = 0.50$ min.

$$T_p = 0.50 + 6(0.01)(3.0) = 0.68 \text{ min.}$$

$$R_p = 1/0.68 = 1.47 \text{ pc/min} = 88.2 \text{ pc/hr.}$$

$$C_o = 0.12 + 4(0.15) + 6(0.10) = \$1.32/\text{min.}$$

$$C_{pc} = 1.32(0.68) = \$0.898/\text{pc.}$$

For the proposed line, $T_c = 24 \text{ sec} = 0.4$ min.

$$T_p = 0.40 + 7(0.01)(3.0) = 0.61 \text{ min.}$$

$$R_p = 1/0.61 = 1.64 \text{ pc/min} = 98.4 \text{ pc/hr.}$$

$$C_o = 0.12 + 3(0.15) + 6(0.10) + 1(0.20) = \$1.37/\text{min.}$$

$$C_{pc} = 1.37(0.61) = \$0.836/\text{pc.}$$

Even though the line would be more expensive to operate per unit time, the proposed change would increase production rate and reduce piece cost.

*Storage Buffers.* The preceding analysis assumes no buffer storage between stations. When the automated portion of the line breaks down, the manual stations must also stop for lack of workparts (either due to starving or blocking, depending on where the manual stations are located relative to the automated stations). Performance would be improved if the manual stations could continue to operate even when the automated stations stop for a temporary downtime incident. Storage buffers located before and after the manual stations would reduce forced downtime at these stations.

**EXAMPLE 19.7 Storage Buffers on a Partially Automated Line**

Considering the current line in Example 19.6, suppose that the ideal cycle time for the automated stations on the current line $T_c = 18$ sec. The longest manual time is 30 sec. Under the method of operation assumed in Example 19.6, both manual and automated stations are out of action when a breakdown occurs at an automated station. Suppose that storage buffers could be provided for each operator to insulate them from breakdowns at automated stations. What effect would this have on production rate and cost per piece?

***Solution:*** Given $T_c = 18 \text{ sec} = 0.3$ min, the average actual production time on the automated stations is computed as follows:

$$T_p = 0.30 + 6(0.01)(3.0) = 0.48 \text{ min.}$$

Since this is less than the longest manual time of 0.50, the manual operations could work independently of the automated stations if storage buffers of sufficient capacity were placed before and after each manual station. Thus, the limiting cycle time on the line would be $T_c = 30$ sec $= 0.50$ min, and the corresponding production rate would be:

$$R_p = R_c = 1/0.50 = 2.0 \text{ pc/min} = 120.0 \text{ pc/hr.}$$

Using the line operating cost from Example 19.6, $C_o = \$1.32$/min, we have a piece cost of

$$C_{pc} = 1.32(0.50) = \$0.66/\text{pc.}$$

Comparing with Example 19.6, one can see that a dramatic improvement in production rate and unit cost is achieved through the use of storage buffers.

### 19.3.5 What the Equations Tell Us

The equations derived in this section and their application in our examples reveal several practical guidelines for the design and operation of automated assembly systems and the products made on such systems. We state these guidelines here:

- The parts delivery system at each station must be designed to deliver components to the assembly operation at a net rate (parts feeder multiplied by pass-through proportion of the selector/orientor) that is greater than or equal to the cycle rate of the assembly workhead. Otherwise, assembly system performance is limited by the parts delivery system rather than by the assembly process technology.
- The quality of components added in an automated assembly system has a significant effect on system performance. The effect of poor quality, as represented by the fraction defect rate, is either to:
  (1) cause jams at stations that stop the entire assembly system, which has adverse effects on production rate, uptime proportion, and cost per unit produced, or
  (2) cause the assembly of defective parts in the product which has adverse effects on yield of good assemblies and product cost.
- As the number of workstations increases in an automated assembly system, uptime efficiency and production rate tend to decrease due to parts quality and station reliability effects. This supports the ***Modularity Principle*** in Design for Automated Assembly (Section 19.2) and reinforces the need to use only the highest quality components on automated assembly systems.
- The cycle time of a multi-station assembly system is determined by the slowest station (longest assembly task) in the system. The number of assembly tasks to be performed is important only insofar as it affects the reliability of the assembly system. By comparison, the cycle time of a single station assembly system is determined by the sum of the assembly element times rather than by the longest assembly element.
- By comparison with a multi-station assembly machine, a single station assembly system with the same number of assembly tasks tends to have a lower production rate but a higher uptime efficiency.

- Multi-station assembly systems are appropriate for high production applications and long production runs. By comparison, single station assembly systems have a longer cycle time and are more appropriate for mid-range quantities of product.
- Storage buffers should be used on partially automated production lines to isolate the manual stations from breakdowns of the automated stations. Use of storage buffers will increase production rates and reduce unit product cost.
- An automated station should be substituted for a manual station only if it has the effect of reducing cycle time sufficiently to offset any negative effects of lower reliability.

## REFERENCES


[1] ANDREASEN, M. M., S. KAHLER, and T. LUND, *Design for Assembly*, IFS (Publications) Ltd., U.K., and Springer-Verlag, Berlin, FRG, 1983.

[2] BOOTHROYD, G., and A. H. REDFORD, *Mechanized Assembly*, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd , London, 1968.

[3] BOOTHROYD, G., C. POLI, and L. E. MURCH, *Automatic Assembly*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1982.

[4] BOOTHROYD, G., P. DEWHURST, and W. KNIGHT, *Product Design for Manufacture and Assembly*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1994.

[5] DELCHAMBRE, A., *Computer-Aided Assembly Planning*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1992.

[6] GAY, D. S., "Ways to Place and Transport Parts," *Automation*, June 1973.

[7] GOODRICH, J. L., and G. P. MAUL, "Programmable Parts Feeders," *Industrial Engineering*, May 1983, pp 28–33.

[8] GROOVER, M. P., M. WEISS, R. N. NAGEL, and N. G. ODREY, *Industrial Robotics: Technology, Programming, and Applications*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1986, Chapter 15.

[9] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[10] MACKZKA, W. J., "Feeding the Assembly System," *Assembly Engineering*, April 1985, pp 32–34.

[11] MURCH, L. E., and G. BOOTHROYD, "On-off Control of Parts Feeding," *Automation*, August 1970, pp. 32–34.

[12] NOF, S. Y., W. E. WILHELM, and H.-J. WARNECKE, *Industrial Assembly*, Chapman & Hall, London, UK, 1997.

[13] RILEY, F. J., *Assembly Automation*, Industrial Press Inc., New York, 1983.

[14] SCHWARTZ, W. H., "Robots Called to Assembly", *Assembly Engineering*, August 1985, pp 20–23.

[15] SYNTRON (FMC Corporation), *Vibratory Parts Feeders*, FMC Corporation (Materials Handling Equipment Division), Homer City, Pennsylvania.

[16] *Syntron Parts Handling Equipment*, Catalog No. PHE-10, FMC Corporation (Materials Handling Equipment Division), Homer City, Pennsylvania.

[17] WARNECKE, H. J., M. SCHWEIZER, K. TAMAKI, and S. NOF, "Assembly," *Handbook of Industrial Engineering*, Institute of Industrial Engineers, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1992, pp 505–562.

## PROBLEMS

### Parts Feeding

**19.1** A feeder-selector device at one of the stations of an automated assembly machine has a feed rate $f = 25$ parts/min and provides a throughput of one part in four ($\theta = 0.25$). The ideal cycle time of the assembly machine is 10 sec. The low level sensor on the feed track is set at 10 parts, and the high level sensor is set at 20 parts. (a) How long will it take for the supply of parts to be depleted from the high level sensor to the low level sensor once the feeder-selector device is turned off? (b) How long will it take for the parts to be resupplied from the low level sensor to the high level sensor, on average, after the feeder-selector device is turned on? (c) What proportion of the time that the assembly machine is operating will the feeder-selector device be turned on? Turned off?

**19.2** Solve Problem 19.1 except use a feed rate $f = 32$ parts/min. Note the importance of tuning the feeder-selector rate to the cycle rate of the assembly machine.

**19.3** A synchronous assembly machine has eight stations and must produce at a rate of 400 completed assemblies per hour. Average downtime per jam is 2.5 min. When a breakdown occurs, all subsystems (including the feeder) stop. The frequency of breakdowns of the machine is once every 50 cycles. One of the eight stations is an automatic assembly operation that uses a feeder-selector. The components fed into the selector can have any of five possible orientations, each with equal probability, but only one is correct for passage into the feed track to the assembly workhead. Parts rejected by the selector are fed back into the hopper. What minimum rate must the feeder deliver components to the selector during system uptime to keep up with the assembly machine?

### Multi-Station Assembly Systems

**19.4** A dial indexing machine has six stations that perform assembly operations on a base part. The operations, element times, $q$ and $m$ values for components added are given in the table below (NA means $q$ and $m$ are not applicable to the operation). The indexing time for the dial table is 2 sec. When a jam occurs, it requires 1.5 min to release the jam and put the machine back in operation. Determine: (a) production rate for the assembly machine, (b) yield of good product (final assemblies containing no defective components), and (c) proportion uptime of the system.

| *Station* | *Operation* | *Element Time (sec)* | *q* | *m* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Add part A | 4 | 0.015 | 0.6 |
| 2 | Fasten part A | 3 | NA | NA |
| 3 | Assemble part B | 5 | 0.01 | 0.8 |
| 4 | Add part C | 4 | 0.02 | 1.0 |
| 5 | Fasten part C | 3 | NA | NA |
| 6 | Assemble part D | 6 | 0.01 | 0.5 |

**19.5** An eight-station assembly machine has an ideal cycle time of 6 sec. The fraction defect rate at each of the eight stations is $q = 0.015$, and the system operates using the instantaneous control strategy. When a breakdown occurs, it takes 1 min, on average, for the system to be put back into operation. Determine the production rate for the assembly machine, the yield of good product (final assemblies containing no defective components), and proportion uptime of the system.

**19.6** Solve Problem 19.5 only assuming that memory control is used rather than instantaneous control. Other data are the same.

**19.7** Solve Problem 19.5 only assuming that $m = 0.6$ for all stations. Other data are the same.

**19.8** A six-station automatic assembly machine has an ideal cycle time of 12 sec. Downtime occurs for two reasons. First, mechanical and electrical failures of the workheads occur with a frequency of once per 50 cycles. Average downtime for these causes is 3 min. Second, defective components also result in downtime. The fraction defect rate of each of the six components added to the base part at the six stations is $q = 2\%$. The probability that a defective component will cause a station jam is $m = 0.5$ for all stations. Downtime per occurrence for defective parts is 2 min. Determine: (a) yield of assemblies that are free of defective components, (b) proportion of assemblies that contain at least one defective component, (c) average production rate of good product, and (d) uptime efficiency.

**19.9** An eight-station automatic assembly machine has an ideal cycle time of 10 sec. Downtime is caused by defective parts jamming at the individual assembly stations. The average downtime per occurrence is 3.0 min. The fraction defect rate is 1.0%, and the probability that a defective part will jam at a given station is 0.6 for all stations. The cost to operate the assembly machine is \$90.00/hr, and the cost of components being assembled is \$.60/unit assembly. Ignore other costs. Determine: (a) yield of good assemblies, (b) average production rate of good assemblies, (c) proportion of assemblies with at least one defective component, and (d) unit cost of the assembled product.

**19.10** An automated assembly machine has four workstations. The first station presents the base part, and the other three stations add parts to the base. The ideal cycle time for the machine is 15 sec, and the average downtime when a jam results from a defective part is 3.0 min. The fraction defective rates ($q$) and probabilities that a defective part will jam the station m are given in the following table. Quantities of 100,000 for each of the bases, brackets, pins, and retainers are used to stock the assembly line for operation. Determine: (a) proportion of good product to total product coming off the line, (b) production rate of good product coming off the line, and (c) total number of final assemblies produced, given the starting component quantities. Of the total, how many are good products, and how many are products that contain at least one defective component? (d) Of the number of defective assemblies determined in part (c), how many will have defective base parts? How many will have defective brackets? How many will have defective pins? How many will have defective retainers?

| *Station* | *Part Identification* | *q* | *m* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Base | 0.01 | 1.0 |
| 2 | Bracket | 0.02 | 1.0 |
| 3 | Pin | 0.03 | 1.0 |
| 4 | Retainer | 0.04 | 0.5 |

**19.11** A six-station automatic assembly machine has an ideal cycle time of 6 sec. At stations 2-6, parts feeders deliver components to be assembled to a base part that is added at the first station. Each of stations 2-6 is identical, and the five components are identical; that is, the completed product consists of the base part plus the five components. The base parts have zero defects, but the other components are defective at a rate $q$. When an attempt is made to assemble a defective component to the base part, the machine stops ($m = 1.0$). It takes an average of 2.0 min to make repairs and start the machine up after each stoppage. Since all components are identical, they are purchased from a supplier who can control the fraction defect rate very closely. However, the supplier charges a premium for better quality. The cost per component is determined by the following equation:

$$\text{Cost per component} = 0.1 + \frac{0.0012}{q}$$

where $q$ = the fraction defect rate. Cost of the base part is 20 cents. Accordingly, the total cost of the base part and the five components is:

$$\text{Product material cost} = 0.70 + \frac{0.006}{q}$$

The cost to operate the automatic assembly machine is \$150.00/hr. The problem facing the production manager is this: As the component quality decreases ($q$ increases), the down time increases, which drives production costs up. As the quality improves ($q$ decreases), the material cost increases because of the price formula used by the supplier. To minimize total cost, the optimum value of $q$ must be determined. Determine by analytical methods (rather than by trial-and-error) the value of $q$ that minimizes the total cost per assembly. Also, determine the associated cost per assembly and production rate. (Ignore other costs).

**19.12** A six-station dial indexing machine is designed to perform four assembly operations at stations 2-5 after a base part has been manually loaded at station 1. Station 6 is the unload station. Each assembly operation involves the attachment of a component to the existing base. At each of the four assembly stations, a hopper-feeder is used to deliver components to a selector device that separates components that are improperly oriented and drops them back into the hopper. The system was designed with the operating parameters for stations 2-5 as given in the following table. It takes 2 sec to index the dial from one station position to the next. When a component jam occurs, it takes an average of 2 min to release the jam and restart the system. Line stops due to mechanical and electrical failures of the assembly machine are not significant and can be neglected. The foreman says the system was designed to produce at a certain hourly rate, which takes into account the jams resulting from defective components. However, the actual delivery of finished assemblies is far below that designed production rate. Analyze the problem and determine the following: (a) What is the designed average production rate that the foreman alluded to? (b) What is the proportion of assemblies coming off the system that contain one or more defective components? (c) What seems to be the problem that limits the assembly system from achieving the expected production rate? (d) What is the production rate that the system is actually achieving? State any assumptions that you make in determining your answer.

| *Station* | *Assembly Time (sec)* | *Feed Rate f (per min)* | *Selector θ* | *q* | *m* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 4 | 32 | 0.25 | 0.01 | 1.0 |
| 3 | 7 | 20 | 0.50 | 0.005 | 0.6 |
| 4 | 5 | 20 | 0.20 | 0.02 | 1.0 |
| 5 | 3 | 15 | 1.0 | 0.01 | 0.7 |

**19.13** A six-station assembly machine has an ideal cycle time = 9 sec. The cost of individual components is low, and the fraction defect rate at each of the six stations is $q$ = 0.02. When a breakdown occurs, it takes an average of 2 min for the system to be put back into operation. A decision must be made whether the system should be operated under memory control or instantaneous control. For both of these strategies, determine: (a) production rate of good assemblies, (b) yield of good product (proportion of final assemblies containing no defective components), and (c) proportion of uptime of the assembly system. Which control would you recommend and why?

**19.14** For Example 19.5, dealing with a single station assembly system, suppose that the sequence of assembly elements were to be accomplished on a seven-station assembly system with synchronous parts transfer. Each element is performed at a separate station (stations 2-6), and the assembly time at each respective station is the same as the element time given in Example 19.5. Assume that the handling time is divided evenly (3.5 sec each) between a load station

(station 1) and an unload station (station 7). The transfer time $T_r$ = 2 sec, and the average downtime per downtime occurrence is $T_d$ = 2.0 min. Determine: (a) production rate of all completed units, (b) yield, (c) production rate of good quality completed units, and (d) up time efficiency.

### Single Station Assembly Systems

**19.15** A single station assembly machine is to be considered as an alternative to the dial indexing machine in Problem 19.4. Use the data given in the table of Problem 19.3 to determine: (a) production rate, (b) yield of good product (final assemblies containing no defective components), and (c) proportion uptime of the system. Handling time to load the base part and unload the finished assembly is 7 sec and the downtime averages 1.5 min every time a component jams. Why is the proportion uptime so much higher than in the case of the dial indexing machine in Problem 19.4?

**19.16** A single station robotic assembly system performs a series of five assembly elements, each of which adds a different component to a base part. Each element takes 6 sec. In addition, the handling time needed to move the base part into and out of position is 4 sec. For identification, the components, as well as the elements that assemble them, are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The fraction defect rate $q$ = 0.005 for all components, and the probability of a jam by a defective component $m$ = 0.7. Average downtime per occurrence = 5.5 min. Determine: (a) production rate, (b) yield of good product in the output, (c) uptime efficiency, and (d) proportion of the output that contains a defective type 3 component.

**19.17** robotic assembly cell uses an industrial robot to perform a series of assembly operations. The base part and parts 2 and 3 are delivered by vibratory bowl feeders that use selectors to ensure that only properly oriented parts are delivered to the robot for assembly. The robot cell performs the elements in the following table (also given are feeder rates, selector proportion $\theta$, element times, fraction defect rate $q$, probability of jam $m$, and, for the last element, the frequency of downtime incidents $p$). In addition to the times given in the table, the time required to unload the completed subassembly takes 4 sec. When a linestop occurs, it takes an average of 1.8 min to make repairs and restart the cell. Determine: (a) yield of good product, (b) average production rate of good product, and (c) uptime efficiency for the cell. State any assumptions you must make about the operation of the cell to solve the problem.

| Element | Feed Rate f (pc/min) | Selector $\theta$ | Element | Time $T_e$ (sec) | $q$ | $m$ | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 15 | 0.30 | Load base part | 4 | 0.01 | 0.6 | |
| 2 | 12 | 0.25 | Add part 2 | 3 | 0.02 | 0.3 | |
| 3 | 25 | 0.10 | Add part 3 | 4 | 0.03 | 0.8 | |
| 4 | | | Fasten | 3 | | | 0.02 |

### Partial Automation

**19.18** A partially automated production line has a mixture of three mechanized and three manual workstations. There are a total of six stations, and the ideal cycle time $T_c$ = 1.0 min, which includes a transfer time $T_r$ = 6 sec. Data on the six stations are listed in the following table. Cost of the transfer mechanism $C_{at}$ = \$0.10/min, cost to run each automated station $C_{as}$ = \$0.12/min, and labor cost to operate each manual station $C_w$ = \$0.17/min. It has been proposed to substitute an automated station in place of station 5. The cost of this station is estimated at $C_{as5}$ = \$0.25/min, and its breakdown rate $P_5$ = 0.02, but its process time would be only 30 sec, thus reducing the overall cycle time of the line from 1.0 min to 36 sec. Average downtime per breakdown of the current line as well as the proposed configuration is $T_d$ = 3.5 min. Determine the following for the current line and the proposed line: (a) production rate, (b) proportion uptime, and (c) cost per unit. Assume the line operates without storage buffers, so when an automated station stops, the whole line stops, including the manual stations. Also, in computing costs, neglect material and tooling costs.

| Station | Type | Process Time (sec) | $p_i$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Manual | 36 | 0 |
| 2 | Automatic | 15 | 0.01 |
| 3 | Automatic | 20 | 0.02 |
| 4 | Automatic | 25 | 0.01 |
| 5 | Manual | 54 | 0 |
| 6 | Manual | 33 | 0 |

**19.19** Reconsider Problem 19.18 except that both the current line and the proposed line will have storage buffers before and after the manual stations. The storage buffers will be of sufficient capacity to allow these manual stations to operate independently of the automated portions of the line. Determine: (a) production rate, (b) proportion uptime, and (c) cost per unit for the current line and the proposed line.

**19.20** A manual assembly line has six stations. The assembly time at each manual station is 60 sec. Parts are transferred by hand from one station to the next, and the lack of discipline in this method adds 12 sec ($T_r$ = 12 sec) to the cycle time. Hence, the current cycle time is $T_c$ = 72 sec. The following two proposals have been made: (1) Install a mechanized transfer system to pace the line, and (2) automate one or more of the manual stations using robots that would perform the same tasks as humans only faster. The second proposal requires the mechanized transfer system of the first proposal and would result in a partially or fully automated assembly line. The transfer system would have a transfer time $T_r$ = 6 sec, thus reducing the cycle time on the manual line to $T_c$ = 66 sec. Regarding the second proposal, all six stations are candidates for automation. Each automated station would have an assembly time of 30 sec. Thus, if all six stations were automated, the cycle time for the line would be $T_c$ = 36 sec. There are differences in the quality of parts added at the stations; these data are given for each station in the following table for ($q$ = fraction defect rate, $m$ = probability that a defect will jam the station). Average downtime per station jam at the automated stations $T_d$ = 3.0 min. Assume that the manual stations do not experience line stops due to defective components. Cost data: $C_{at}$ = \$0.10/min; $C_w$ = \$0.20/min; and $C_{as}$ = \$0.15/min. Determine if either or both of the proposals should be accepted. If the second proposal is accepted, how many stations should be automated and which ones? Use cost per piece as the criterion of your decision. Assume for all cases considered that the line operates without storage buffers, so when an automated station stops, the whole line stops, including the manual stations.

| Station | $q_i$ | $m_i$ | Station | $q_i$ | $m_i$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.005 | 1.0 | 4 | 0.020 | 1.0 |
| 2 | 0.010 | 1.0 | 5 | 0.025 | 1.0 |
| 3 | 0.015 | 1.0 | 6 | 0.030 | 1.0 |

**19.21** Solve Problem 19.20, except that the probability that a defective part will jam the automated station is $m$ = 0.5 for all stations.

# PART IV
# Quality Control Systems

## chapter 20

# Introduction to Quality Assurance

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



In the 1980s, the issue of quality control (QC) became a national concern in the United States. The Japanese automobile industry had demonstrated that high-quality cars could be produced at relatively low cost. This combination of high quality and low cost was a contradiction of conventional wisdom in the United States, where it was always believed that superior quality is achieved only at a premium price. Cars were perhaps the most visible product area where the Japanese exceled, but there were other areas as well, such as televisions, video cassette recorders, audio equipment, small appliances, 35 mm cameras, machine tools, and industrial robots. In some of these markets, the Japanese have become so dominant that there are few if any U.S. manufacturers remaining.

Of course, there were skeptics who initially argued that the lower wage rates in Japan gave their products a competitive advantage over those made in America. While Japanese wages were in fact lower at that time, the argument obscured the reality that Japanese products were not only cheaper, they were better quality. How did the Japanese achieve such great success in manufacturing, an accomplishment made even more remarkable by the fact that their industries were virtually wiped out during World War II? There is no single answer that explains their success. It was a combination of factors, including: (1) a well developed work ethic and orientation toward quality that is instilled into the Japanese worker, (2) design features incorporated into Japanese products that reduce labor content and increase reliability and quality, (3) a philosophy of continuous improvement (the Japanese call it ***kaizen***), and (4) attention to the use of QC techniques, some of which were imported from the United States, whereas others were uniquely Japanese (Historical Note 20.1).

In the United States, ***quality control*** has traditionally been concerned with detecting poor quality in manufactured products and taking corrective action to eliminate it. Operationally, QC has often been limited to inspection of the product and its components and deciding whether the measured or gaged dimensions and other features conformed to design specifications. If they did, the product was shipped. The modern view of QC, derived largely from the Japanese influence, encompasses a broader scope of activities that are accomplished throughout the enterprise, not just by the inspection department. The term ***quality assurance*** suggests this broader scope of activities that are implemented in an organization to ensure that a product (or service) will satisfy (or even surpass) the requirements of the customer.

This part of the book contains four chapters on quality control systems. The position of the quality control systems in the larger production system is shown in Figure 20.1. Our block diagram indicates that QC is one of the manufacturing support systems, but that it also consists of facilities—inspection equipment used in the factory. The present chapter addresses the broad issue of quality assurance, with an emphasis on product design. Subsequent chapters deal with quality systems in production operations. The topics include statistical process control, inspection and measurement, and the various technologies used to accomplish inspection, such as coordinate measuring machines and machine vision. Let us begin by attempting to define "quality"—that somewhat nebulous factor that we are attempting to control and ensure.

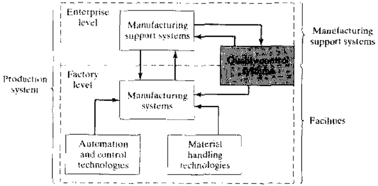



**Figure 20.1** Quality control systems in the larger production system.

## 20.1 QUALITY DEFINED[1]

The dictionary[2] defines ***quality*** as "the degree of excellence which a thing possesses," or "the features that make something what it is"—its characteristic elements and attributes. Crosby defines quality as "conformance to requirements" [2]. Juran summarizes it as "fitness for use" and "quality is customer satisfaction" [8]. The American Society for Quality Control (ASQC) defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy given needs" [3].

### 20.1.1 Dimensions of Quality

The meaning of quality cannot easily be captured in a simple short statement. To sharpen the definition, Garvin defines eight dimensions of quality that are applicable in particular to a manufactured product [4]:

1. ***Performance***. Performance refers to the totality of the product's operating characteristics. For example, in an automobile, it refers to factors such as acceleration, top speed, braking distance, steering and handling, and ride.
2. ***Features***. These refer to the special characteristics and options that are often intended by the designer to distinguish the product from its competitors. In a television, these features might include a larger viewing screen and "picture-in-picture."
3. ***Aesthetic appeal***. This usually refers to the appearance of the product. How pleasing is the product to the senses, especially the visual sense? A car's body style, front grille treatment, and color influence the customer's aesthetic appeal for the car.
4. ***Conformance*** This is the degree to which the product's appearance and function conform to preestablished standards. The term ***workmanship*** is often applicable here. In an automobile, conformance includes the body's fit and finish and absence of squeaks.
5. ***Reliability***. Reliability in a product means that it is always available for the customer and that it lasts a long time before final failure. In a car, it is the quality factor that allows the car to be started in cold weather and the absence of maintenance and repair visits to the dealer.
6. ***Durability***. If the product and its components last a long time despite heavy use, then it possesses durability. Signs of durability in a car include a motor that continues to run for well over 100,000 miles, a body that does not rust, a dashboard that does not crack, and upholstery fabric that does not wear out after many years of use.
7. ***Serviceability***. How easy is the product to service and maintain? Many products have become so complicated that the owner cannot do the servicing. The product must be taken back to the original dealer for service. Accordingly, serviceability includes such factors as the courtesy and promptness of the service provided by the dealer.
8. ***Perceived quality***. This is a subjective and intangible factor that may include the customer's perception (whether correct or not) of several of the preceding dimensions. Perceived quality is often influenced by advertising, brand recognition, and the reputation of the company making the product.

[1] Portions of this section are based on Groover [6], Section 42.1.

[2] ***Webster's New World Dictionary***, Third College Edition, Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, 1988.

### 20.1.2 Quality in Design and Manufacturing

Juran and Gryna distinguish two aspects of quality in a manufactured product [8]: (1) product features and (2) freedom from deficiencies. ***Product features*** are the characteristics of a product that result from design; they are the functional and aesthetic features of the product intended to appeal to and provide satisfaction to the customer. In an automobile, these features include the size of the car, the arrangement of the dashboard, the fit and finish of the body, and similar aspects. They also include the available options for the customer to choose. Table 20.1 lists some of the important general product features. The reader will note a similarity between the terms used in this table and the dimensions of quality in the preceding section. In our table, we have highlighted the overlapping terms in italics.

The sum of the features of a product usually defines its ***grade***, which relates to the level in the market at which the product is aimed. Cars (and most other products) come in different grades. Certain cars provide basic transportation because that is what some customers want, while others are upscale for consumers willing to spend more to own a "better product." The features are decided in design, and they generally determine the inherent cost of the product. Superior features and more of them translates to higher cost.

***Freedom from deficiencies*** means that the product does what it is supposed to do (within the limitations of its design features) and that it is absent of defects and out-of-tolerance conditions (see Table 20.1). This aspect of quality applies to the individual components of the product as well as to the product itself. Achieving freedom from deficiencies means producing the product in conformance with design specifications, which is the responsibility of the manufacturing departments. Although the inherent cost to make a product is a function of its design, minimizing the product's cost to the lowest possible level within the limits set by its design is largely a matter of avoiding defects, tolerance deviations, and other errors during production. Costs of these deficiencies include scrapped parts, larger lot sizes for scrap allowances, rework, reinspection, sortation, customer complaints and returns, warranty costs and customer allowances, lost sales, and lost good will in the marketplace.

**TABLE 20.1** Aspects of Quality*

| *Quality Aspect* | *Examples* |
|---|---|
| **Product features** | Design configuration, size, weight<br>Function and ***performance***<br>Distinguishing ***features*** of the model<br>***Aesthetic appeal***<br>Ease of use<br>Availability of options<br>***Reliability*** and dependability<br>***Durability*** and long service life<br>***Serviceability***<br>Reputation of product and producer. |
| **Freedom from deficiencies** | Absence of defects<br>***Conformance*** to specifications<br>Components within tolerance<br>No missing parts<br>No early failures |

*Terms in italics refer to the dimensions of quality in Section 20.1.1.

*Source:* Compiled from [8] and other sources.

Thus, product features are the aspect of quality for which the design department is responsible. Product features determine to a large degree the price that a company can charge for its products. Freedom from deficiencies is the quality aspect for which the manufacturing departments are responsible. The ability to minimize these deficiencies has an important influence on the cost of the product. These are generalities that oversimplify the way things work, because the responsibility for high quality extends well beyond the design and manufacturing functions in an organization.

## 20.2 TRADITIONAL AND MODERN QUALITY CONTROL

The principles and approaches to QC have evolved during the twentieth century, although quality and workmanship have been issues for thousands of years (Historical Note 20.1). Early applications of QC were associated with the developing field of statistics. Since around 1970, world competition and the demand of the consuming public for high quality products has resulted in what we will call a modern view of QC.

### Historical Note 20.1 Quality control [3], [10], [11]

Recognition of the importance of quality dates from ancient times. The Egyptians cut stones for their pyramids so accurately that they must have developed principles of measurement, precision, and QC. The craftsmen of ancient Rome and the Middle Ages understood their trades and built quality into their products to avoid "customer complaints."

Around 1800, Eli Whitney was awarded a contract from the U.S. Government to supply 10,000 muskets in two years using ***interchangeable parts*** (the "uniformity principle," as Whitney called it). This principle represented a new technology in the early nineteenth century, and it required much greater precision and repeatability in the making of components than had previously been achieved. Whitney completed the contract, but not until ten years later. He did it by using fixtures and gages designed to make the parts more accurately. The importance of interchangeable parts cannot be overstated in the evolution of modern manufacturing.

Quality control as practiced today dates from less than a century ago. Bell Telephone in the United States led the development. An inspection department was formed in the early 1900s at Western Electric Company (the manufacturing division of Bell Telephone at that time) to support the telephone operating companies. Workers in this department were subsequently transferred to the Bell Laboratories, where they developed new theories and procedures for QC. Around 1924, W. Shewhart developed ***control charts*** (Sections 20.2.1 and 21.2). In 1928, H. Dodge and H. Romig developed ***acceptance sampling techniques*** (Sections 20.2.1 and 22.2.1).

During World War II, the United States began applying sampling procedures to military suppliers. Bell Laboratories developed sampling plans for the U.S. Army that subsequently became the military standards. Statistical quality control (SQC) became widely adopted by U.S. industry. The American Society for Quality Control (ASQC) was founded in 1946 through the merger of several other quality societies. During the 1950s, several significant books on quality were published, including the works of E. Grant and A. Duncan, A. Feigenbaum, and J. Juran and F. Gryna.

Immediately after World War II, Japan's manufacturing industries were in disarray. Products built in Japan during that period were noted for their poor quality. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, W. Deming and J. Juran were invited to Japan to introduce SQC and quality management principles to Japanese industry. Following their advice, Japanese manufacturers gradually improved their quality systems. During the 1950s and 1960s, G. Taguchi in Japan developed new concepts of ***quality control*** and ***design of experiments***. His concept of quality control extended from product design through production and even to customer relations (Section 20.3.1). K. Ishikawa developed the ***cause-and-effect diagram*** (Section 21.3.6) around 1950. The approach to product development and design called ***quality function deployment*** was introduced in Japan by Y. Akao in 1966 (Section 24.4). By the 1980s, Japanese products were penetrating Western markets with great success due to their higher quality. The Japanese success was due largely to their quest for continual improvement in their products and processes.

During the late 1980s, the quality movement had taken a firm hold in the United States, largely as a consequence of Japanese competition. In 1987, an international standard on quality systems, ISO 9000 (Section 20.4), was adopted by 91 nations. In 1988, the Malcolm Baldridge National Quality Award was established by an act of the U.S. Congress.

### 20.2.1 Traditional Quality Control

Traditional QC focused on inspection. In many factories, the only department responsible for QC was the inspection department. Much attention was given to sampling and statistical methods. The term ***statistical quality control*** (SQC) was used to describe these methods. In SQC, inferences are made about the quality of a population of manufactured items (e.g., components, subassemblies, products,) based on a sample taken from the population. The sample consists of one or more of the items drawn at random from the population. Each item in the sample is inspected for certain quality characteristics of interest. In the case of a manufactured part, these characteristics relate to the process or processes just completed. For example, a cylindrical part may be inspected for diameter following the turning operation that generated it.

Two statistical sampling methods dominate the field of SQC: (1) control charts and (2) acceptance sampling. A ***control chart*** is a graphical technique in which statistics on one or more process parameters of interest are plotted over time to determine if the process is behaving normally or abnormally. The chart has a central line that indicates the value of the process mean under normal operation. Abnormal process behavior is identified when the process parameter strays significantly from the process mean. Control charts are widely used in ***statistical process control***, which is the topic of Chapter 21.

***Acceptance sampling*** is a statistical technique in which a sample drawn from a batch of parts is inspected, and a decision is made whether to accept or reject the batch on the basis of the quality of the sample. Acceptance sampling is traditionally used for various purposes: (1) receiving inspection of raw materials from a vendor, (2) deciding whether or not to ship a batch of parts or products to a customer, and (3) inspection of parts between steps in the manufacturing sequence.

In statistical sampling, which includes both control charts and acceptance sampling, there are risks that defects will slip through the inspection process, resulting in defective products being delivered to the customer. With the growing demand for 100% good quality rather than tolerating even a small fraction of defective product, the use of sampling procedures has declined over the past several decades in favor of 100% automated inspection. We discuss these inspection principles in Chapter 22 and the associated technologies in Chapter 23.

The management principles and practices that characterize traditional QC included the following [3]:

- Customers are external to the organization. The sales and marketing department is responsible for relations with customers.

- The company is organized by functional departments. There is little appreciation of the interdependence of the departments in the larger enterprise. The loyalty and viewpoint of each department tends to be centered on itself rather than on the corporation. There tends to exist an adversarial relationship between management and labor.
- Quality is the responsibility of the inspection department. The quality function in the organization emphasizes inspection and conformance to specifications. Its objective is simple: elimination of defects.
- Inspection follows production. The objectives of production (to ship product) often clash with the objectives of QC (to ship only good product).
- Knowledge of SQC techniques resides only in the minds of the QC experts in the organization. Workers' responsibilities are limited. Managers and technical staff do all the planning. Workers follow instructions.
- There is an emphasis on maintaining the status quo.

### 20.2.2 The Modern View of Quality Control

High quality is achieved by a combination of good management and good technology. The two factors must be integrated to achieve an effective quality system in an organization. The management factor is captured in the frequently used term "total quality management." The technology factor includes traditional statistical tools combined with modern measurement and inspection technologies.

*Total Quality Management.* ***Total quality management*** (TQM) denotes a management approach that pursues three main objectives: (1) achieving customer satisfaction, (2) continuous improvement, and (3) encouraging involvement of the entire work force. These objectives contrast sharply with the practices of traditional management regarding the QC function. Compare the following factors, which reflect the modern view of quality management, with the preceding list that characterizes the traditional approach to quality management:

- Quality is focused on customer satisfaction. Products are designed and manufactured with this quality focus. Juran's definition, "quality is customer satisfaction," defines the requirement for any product. The technical specifications—the product features—must be established to achieve customer satisfaction. The product must be manufactured free of deficiencies. Included in the focus on customers is the notion that there are internal customers as well as external customers. External customers are those who buy the company's products. Internal customers are departments or individuals inside the company who are served by other departments and individuals in the organization. The final assembly department is the customer of the parts production departments. The engineer is the customer of the technical staff support group. And so forth.
- The quality goals of an organization are driven by top management, which determines the overall attitude toward quality in a company. The quality goals of a company are not established in manufacturing; they are defined at the highest levels of the organization. Does the company want to simply meet specifications set by the customer, or does it want to make products that go beyond the technical specifications? Does it want to be known as the lowest price supplier or the highest quality producer in its industry? Answers to these kinds of questions define the quality goals of the company. These must be set by top management. Through the goals they define,

the actions they take, and the examples they set, top management determines the overall attitude toward quality in the company.

- Quality control is pervasive in the organization, not just the job of the inspection department. It extends from the top of the organization through all levels. There is recognition of the important influence that product design has on product quality. Decisions made in product design directly impact the quality that can be achieved in manufacturing.
- In manufacturing, the viewpoint is that inspecting the product after it is made is not good enough. Quality must be built into the product. Production workers must inspect their own work and not rely on the inspection department to find their mistakes.
- Quality is the job of everyone in the organization. It even extends outside the immediate organization to the suppliers. One of the tenets of a modern QC system is to develop close relationships with suppliers.
- High product quality is a process of continuous improvement. It is a never-ending chase to design better products and then to manufacture them better. We examine a step-by-step procedure for quality improvement in Chapter 21 (Section 21.4.2).

*Quality Control Technologies.* Good technology also plays an important role in achieving high quality. Modern technologies in QC include: (1) quality engineering and (2) quality function deployment. The topic of quality function deployment is related to product design, and we discuss it in Chapter 24 (Section 24.4). Other technologies in modern QC include (3) statistical process control, (4) 100% automated inspection, (5) on-line inspection, (6) coordinate measurement machines for dimensional measurement, and (7) non-contact sensors such as machine vision for inspection. These topics are discussed in the following chapters in this part of the book.

## 20.3 TAGUCHI METHODS IN QUALITY ENGINEERING[3]

The term ***quality engineering*** encompasses a broad range of engineering and operational activities whose aim is to ensure that a product's quality characteristics are at their nominal or target values. It could be argued that the areas of quality engineering and TQM overlap to a significant degree, since implementation of good quality engineering is strongly dependent on management support and direction. The field of quality engineering owes much to G. Taguchi, who has had an important influence on its development, especially in the design area-both product design and process design. In this section, we review some of the Taguchi methods: (1) off-line and on-line quality control, (2) robust design, and (3) loss function. Taguchi has also made contributions in the area of design of experiments, although some of his approaches in this area have been criticized [11]. More complete treatments of Taguchi's methods can be found among references [3], [10], [12], [13].

We begin our coverage with Taguchi's off-line and on-line quality control. Although the term "quality control" is used, his approach represents a broader program of quality assurance.

[3] Portions of this section are based on Groover [6], Section 42.4.

### 20.3.1 Off-Line and On-Line Quality Control

Taguchi believes that the quality system must be distributed throughout the organization. The quality system is divided into two basic functions:

1. ***Off-line quality control.*** This function is concerned with design issues, both product and process design. It is applicable prior to production and shipment of the product. In the sequence of the two functions, off-line control precedes on-line control.
2. ***On-line quality control.*** This is concerned with production operations and relations with the customer after shipment. Its objective is to manufacture products within the specifications defined in product design, utilizing the technologies and methods developed in process design.

Traditional QC methods are more closely aligned with this second function, which is to achieve conformance to specification The Taguchi approach is summarized in Figure 20.2.

*Off-Line Quality Control.* Off-line quality control consists of two stages: (1) product design and (2) process design. The ***product design*** stage is concerned with the development of a new product or a new model of an existing product. The goals in product design are to properly identify customer needs and to design a product that meets those needs but can also be manufactured consistently and economically. The ***process design*** stage is what we usually think of as the manufacturing engineering function. It is concerned with specifying the processes and equipment, setting work standards, documenting procedures, and developing clear and workable specifications for manufacturing. A three-step approach applicable to both of these design stages is outlined: (1) system design, (2) parameter design, and (3) tolerance design.

***System design*** involves the application of engineering knowledge and analysis to develop a prototype design that will meet customer needs. In the product design stage, system design refers to the final product configuration and features, including starting materials, components, and subassemblies. For example, in the design of a new car, system

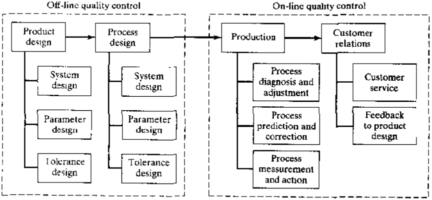



**Figure 20.2** Block diagram of Taguchi's off-line and on-line quality control.

design includes the size of the car, its styling, engine size and power, and other features that target it for a certain market segment. In process design, system design means selecting the most appropriate manufacturing methods. For example, it means selecting a forging operation rather than casting to produce a certain component. The use of existing technologies should be emphasized rather than developing new ones. Obviously, the product and process design stages overlap, because product design determines the manufacturing process to a great degree. Also, the quality of the product is impacted significantly by decisions made during product design.

***Parameter design*** is concerned with determining optimal parameter settings for the product and process. In parameter design, the nominal values for the product or process parameters are specified. Examples of parameters in product design include the dimensions of components in an assembly or the resistance of an electronic component. Examples of parameters in process design include the speed and feed in a machining operation or the furnace temperature in a sintering process. The nominal value is the ideal or target value that the product or process designer would like the parameter to be set at for optimum performance.

It is in the parameter design stage that a robust design is achieved. A ***robust design*** is one in which the parameter values have been selected so that the product or process performs consistently, even in the face of influencing factors that are difficult to control. It is one of Taguchi's central concepts, and we define the term more thoroughly in Section 20.3.2. Taguchi advocates the use of various experimental designs to determine the optimal parameter settings.

In ***tolerance design***, the objective is to specify appropriate tolerances about the nominal values established in parameter design. A reality that must be addressed in manufacturing is that the nominal value of the product or process parameter cannot be achieved without some inherent variation. A ***tolerance*** is the allowable variation that is permitted about the nominal value. The tolerance design phase attempts to achieve a balance between setting wide tolerances to facilitate manufacture and minimizing tolerances to optimize product performance. Some of the factors that favor wide versus narrow tolerances are presented in Table 20.2. Tolerance design is strongly influenced by the Taguchi loss function, explained in Section 20.3.3.

*On-Line Quality Control.* This function of quality assurance is concerned with production operations and customer relations. In production, Taguchi classifies three approaches to quality control:

**TABLE 20.2** Factors in Favor of Wide and Narrow Tolerances

| *Factors in Favor of Wide (Loose) Tolerances* | *Factors in Favor of Narrow (Tight) Tolerances* |
|---|---|
| • Yield in manufacturing is increased. Fewer defects are produced.<br>• Fabrication of special tooling (dies, jigs, molds, etc.) is easier. Tools are therefore less costly.<br>• Setup and tooling adjustment is easier.<br>• Fewer production operations may be needed.<br>• Less skilled, lower cost labor can be used.<br>• Machine maintenance may be reduced.<br>• The need for inspection may be reduced.<br>• Overall manufacturing cost is reduced. | • Parts interchangeability is increased in assembly.<br>• Fit and finish of the assembled product is better, for greater aesthetic appeal.<br>• Product functionality and performance are likely to be improved.<br>• Durability and reliability of the product may be increased.<br>• Serviceability of the product in the field is likely to be improved due to increased parts interchangeability.<br>• Product may be safer in use. |

1. ***Process diagnosis and adjustment.*** In this approach, the process is measured periodically and adjustments are made to move parameters of interest toward nominal values.
2. ***Process prediction and correction.*** This refers to the measurement of process parameters at periodic intervals so that trends can be projected. If projections indicate deviations from target values, corrective process adjustments are made.
3. ***Process measurement and action.*** This involves inspection of all units (100%) to detect deficiencies that will be reworked or scrapped. Since this approach occurs after the unit is already made, it is less desirable than the other two forms of control.

The Taguchi on-line approach includes ***customer relations,*** which consists of two elements. First, there is the traditional customer service that deals with repairs, replacements, and complaints. And second, there is a feedback system in which information on failures, complaints, and related data are communicated back to the relevant departments in the organization for correction. For example, customer complaints of frequent failures of a certain component are communicated back to the product design department so that the component's design can be improved. This latter scheme is part of the continuous improvement process advocated by Taguchi.

### 20.3.2 Robust Design

The objective of parameter design in Taguchi's off-line/on-line quality control is to set specifications on product and process parameters to create a design that resists failure or reduced performance in the face of variations. Taguchi calls the variations noise factors. A ***noise factor*** is a source of variation that is impossible or difficult to control and that affects the functional characteristics of the product. Three types of noise factors can be distinguished:

1. ***Unit-to-unit noise factors.*** These are inherent random variations in the process and product caused by variability in raw materials, machinery, and human participation. They are associated with a production process that is in statistical control.
2. ***Internal noise factors.*** These sources of variation are internal to the product or process. They include: (1) time-dependent factors, such as wear of mechanical components, spoilage of raw materials, and fatigue of metal parts; and (2) operational errors, such as improper settings on the product or machine tool.
3. ***External noise factors.*** An external noise factor is a source of variation that is external to the product or process, such as outside temperature, humidity, raw material supply, and input voltage. Internal and external noise factors constitute what we have previously called assignable variations. Taguchi distinguishes between internal and external noise factors because external noise factors are generally more difficult to control.

A ***robust design*** is one in which the function and performance of the product or process are relatively insensitive to variations in any of these noise factors. In product design, robustness means that the product can maintain consistent performance with minimal disturbance due to variations in uncontrollable factors in its operating environment. In process design, robustness means that the process continues to produce good product with minimal effect from uncontrollable variations in its operating environment. Some examples of robust designs are presented in Table 20.3.

**TABLE 20.3** Some Examples of Robust Designs in Products and Processes

**Product design:**
- An airplane that flies as well in stormy weather as in clear weather
- A car that starts in Minneapolis, Minnesota in January as well as Phoenix, Arizona in July
- A tennis racket that returns the ball just as well when hit near the rim as when hit in dead center
- A hospital operating room that maintains lighting and other life support systems when the electric power to the hospital is interrupted

**Process design:**
- A turning operation that produces a good surface finish throughout a wide range of cutting speeds
- A plastic injection molding operation that molds a good part despite variations in ambient temperature and humidity in the factory
- A metal forging operation that presses good parts in spite of variations in starting temperature of the raw billet

**Other:**
- A biological species that survives unchanged for millions of years despite significant climatic changes in the world in which it lives

### 20.3.3 The Taguchi Loss Function

The Taguchi loss function is a useful concept in tolerance design. Taguchi defines quality as "the loss a product costs society from the time the product is released for shipment" [13]. Loss includes costs to operate, failure to function, maintenance and repair costs, customer dissatisfaction, injuries caused by poor design, and similar costs. Some of these losses are difficult to quantify in monetary terms, but they are nevertheless real. Defective products (or their components) that are detected, repaired, reworked, or scrapped before shipment are not considered part of this loss. Instead, any expense to the company resulting from scrap or rework of defective product is a manufacturing cost rather than a quality loss.

Loss occurs when a product's functional characteristic differs from its nominal or target value. Although functional characteristics do not translate directly into dimensional features, the loss relationship is most readily understood in terms of dimensions. When the dimension of a component deviates from its nominal value, the component's function is adversely affected. No matter how small the deviation, there is some loss in function. The loss increases at an accelerating rate as the deviation grows, according to Taguchi. If we let $x$ = the quality characteristic of interest and $N$ = its nominal value, then the loss function will be a U-shaped curve as in Figure 20.3. Taguchi uses a quadratic equation to describe this curve:

$$L(x) = k(x - N)^2 \tag{20.1}$$

where $L(x)$ = loss function; $k$ = constant of proportionality; and $x$ and $N$ are as defined. At some level of deviation $(x_2 - N) = -(x_1 - N)$, the loss will be prohibitive, and it is necessary to scrap or rework the product. This level identifies one possible way of specifying the tolerance limit for the dimension. But even within these limits, there is also a loss, as suggested by our cross-hatching.

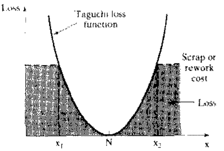



**Figure 20.3** The quadratic quality loss function.

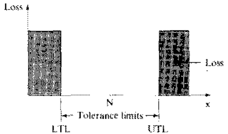



**Figure 20.4** Loss function implicit in traditional tolerance specification.

In the traditional approach to QC, tolerance limits are defined, and any product within those limits is acceptable. Whether the quality characteristic (e.g., the dimension) is close to the nominal value or close to one of the tolerance limits, it is acceptable. Trying to visualize this approach in terms analogous to the preceding relation, we obtain the discontinuous loss function in Figure 20.4. In this approach, any value within the upper tolerance limit (UTL) and lower tolerance limit (LTL) is acceptable. The reality is that products closer to the nominal specification are better quality and will work better, look better, last longer, and have components that fit better. In short, products made closer to nominal specifications will provide greater customer satisfaction. To improve quality and customer satisfaction, one must attempt to reduce the loss by designing the product and process to be as close as possible to the target value.

It is possible to make calculations based on the Taguchi loss function if one accepts the assumption of the quadratic loss equation, Eq. (20.1). In the following examples, we illustrate several aspects of its application: (1) estimating the constant $k$ in the loss function, Eq. (20.1), based on known cost data, (2) using the Taguchi loss function to estimate the cost of alternative tolerances, (3) comparing the expected loss for alternative manufacturing processes that have different process distributions, and (4) tolerance design.

**EXAMPLE 20.1 Estimating the Constant *k* in the Taguchi Loss Function**

Suppose that a certain part dimension is specified as $100.0 \pm 0.20$ mm. To investigate the impact of this tolerance on product performance, the company has studied its repair records to discover that if the ±0.20 mm tolerance is exceeded, there is a 60% chance that the product will be returned for repairs at a cost of $100 to the company (during the warranty period) or to the customer (beyond the warranty period). Estimate the Taguchi loss function constant $k$ for these data.

***Solution:*** In Eq. (20.1) for the loss function, the value of $(x - N)$ is the tolerance value 0.20. The loss is the expected cost of the repair, which can be calculated as follows:

$$E\{L(x)\} = 0.60(\$100) + 0.40(0) = \$60$$

Using this cost in Eq. (20.1), we have

$$60 = k(0.20)^2 = k(0.04)$$

$$k = \frac{60}{0.04} = \$1500$$

Therefore, the Taguchi loss function for this case is the following:

$$L(x) = 1500(x - N)^2 \tag{20.2}$$

The Taguchi loss function can be used to evaluate the relative costs of alternative tolerances that might be applied to the component in question, as illustrated in the following example.

**EXAMPLE 20.2 Using the Taguchi Loss Function to Estimate the Cost of Alternative Tolerances**

Let us use the Taguchi quadratic loss function, Eq. (20.2), to evaluate the cost of several alternative tolerances for the same data given in Example 20.1. Specifically, given the nominal dimension of 100, as before, determine the cost (value of the loss function) for tolerances of (a) ±0.10 mm and (b) ±0.05 mm.

***Solution:*** (a) For a tolerance of ±0.10 mm, the value of the loss function is:

$$L(x) = 1500(0.10)^2 = 1500(0.01) = \$15.00$$

(b) For a tolerance of ±0.05 mm, the value of the loss function is:

$$L(x) = 1500(0.05)^2 = 1500(0.0025) = \$3.75$$

The loss function can be figured into production piece cost computations, if certain characteristics of the process are known, namely: (1) the applicable Taguchi loss function; (2) production cost per piece; (3) the probability distribution for the process relative to the product parameter of interest; and (4) the cost of sortation, rework, and/or scrap for an out-of-tolerance piece. Adding these terms, we have the total piece cost as follows:

$$C_{pc} = C_p + C_s + qC_r + C_{TLF} \tag{20.3}$$

where $C_{pc}$ = total cost per piece ($/pc), $C_p$ = production cost per piece ($/pc), $C_s$ = inspection and sortation cost per piece ($/pc), $q$ = proportion of parts falling outside of the tolerance limits and needing rework, $C_r$ = rework cost per piece for those parts requiring rework ($/pc), and $C_{TLF}$ = Taguchi loss function cost per piece ($/pc). Because of the probability distribution associated with the production process, the analysis requires the use of expected costs. The following example illustrates the computation.

**EXAMPLE 20.3 Comparing the Expected Cost for Alternative Manufacturing Processes**

Suppose that the part in Examples 20.1 and 20.2 can be produced by two alternative manufacturing processes. Both processes can produce parts with an average dimension at the desired nominal value of 100 mm. The distribution of the output is normal for each process, but their standard deviations are different. The relevant data for the two processes are given in the following table.

| | *Process A* | *Process B* |
|---|---|---|
| Taguchi loss function | Eq. (20.2) | Eq. (20.2) |
| Production cost per piece | \$5.00/pc | \$10.00/pc |
| Process standard deviation | 0.08 mm | 0.04 mm |
| Cost of sortation | \$1.00/pc | \$1.00/pc |
| Rework cost if tolerance exceeded | \$20.00/pc | \$20.00/pc |

Determine the average cost per piece for the two processes.

***Solution:*** To deal with the normal distribution, we divide the distribution in each case into intervals with a range of 0.04 mm, using the center point of each interval to represent the range. This is illustrated in Figure 20.5 for the two distribu-

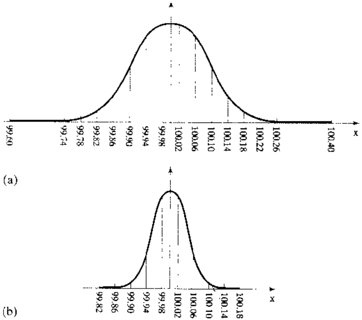



**Figure 20.5** Dividing the distribution of the two processes into intervals, and using the center point of each interval to represent the range: (a) process A and (b) process B.

tions. The calculation of the expected value of the Taguchi loss function is somewhat tedious. The probability of the population falling into each interval must be determined using standard normal tables. Then the Taguchi loss function must be calculated for each range and multiplied by the respective probability. The calculations are performed for process A in the following table. The center of each interval is given in column (1), with the interval range in column (2). In column (3) is the $z$-value range for the standard normal distribution corresponding to the range in column (2). Calculation of $z$ for the standard normal tables is based on $\sigma = 0.08$ for process A. Column (4) gives the value of the probability for the $z$-value range. In column (5) is the deviation from the nominal value of the dimension $(x - N)$. Column (6) shows the Taguchi loss function calculated by Eq. (20.2). Finally, in column (7) is the expected value of loss function for each range, which is column (4) multiplied by column (6). The resulting value of the Taguchi loss function is the sum of the entries in column (7), shown at the bottom of column (7).

| *(1) Center of Range* | *(2) Range* | *(3) z-Value Range $\sigma = 0.08$* | *(4) Corresponding Probability* | *(5) (x-N)* | *(6) L(x) Eq. (20.2)* | *(7) $E\{L(x)\}$ ((4) × (6))* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 99.60-99.74 | −5.00 to −3.25 | 0.0006 | 0.28 | 117.6 | 0.0705 |
| 99.76 | 99.74-99.78 | −3.25 to −2.75 | 0.0024 | 0.24 | 86.4 | 0.2074 |
| 99.80 | 99.78-99.82 | −2.75 to −2.25 | 0.0092 | 0.20 | 60.0 | 0.5520 |
| 99.84 | 99.82-99.86 | −2.25 to −1.75 | 0.0279 | 0.16 | 38.4 | 1.0713 |
| 99.88 | 99.86-99.90 | −1.75 to −1.25 | 0.0655 | 0.12 | 21.6 | 1.4148 |
| 99.92 | 99.90-99.94 | −1.25 to −0.75 | 0.1210 | 0.08 | 9.6 | 1.1616 |
| 99.96 | 99.94-99.98 | −0.75 to −0.25 | 0.1747 | 0.04 | 2.4 | 0.4193 |
| 100.00 | 99.98-100.02 | −0.25 to +0.25 | 0.1974 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 100.04 | 100.02-100.06 | +0.25 to +0.75 | 0.1747 | 0.04 | 2.4 | 0.4193 |
| 100.08 | 100.06-100.10 | +0.75 to +1.25 | 0.1210 | 0.08 | 9.6 | 1.1616 |
| 100.12 | 100.10-100.14 | +1.25 to +1.75 | 0.0655 | 0.12 | 21.6 | 1.4148 |
| 100.16 | 100.14-100.18 | +1.75 to +2.25 | 0.0279 | 0.16 | 38.4 | 1.0713 |
| 100.20 | 100.18-100.22 | +2.25 to +2.75 | 0.0092 | 0.20 | 60.0 | 0.5520 |
| 100.24 | 100.22-100.26 | +2.75 to +3.25 | 0.0024 | 0.24 | 86.4 | 0.2074 |
| 100.28 | 100.26-100.40 | +3.25 to +5.00 | 0.0006 | 0.28 | 117.6 | 0.0705 |
| Totals | If applicable | | 1.0000 | | | $9.79 |

The total cost per piece includes the other costs, namely the production cost per piece, inspection and sortation cost, and rework cost, if there is any rework, in addition to the loss function cost. For process A, the production cost is $5.00/pc, the sortation cost is $1.00/pc, and the rework cost is $20.00. However, the rework cost is only applicable to those parts that fall outside the specified tolerance of ±0.20 mm. The proportion of parts that lie beyond this interval can be found by computing the standard normal z statistic and determining the associated probability. The $z$-value is $0.20/0.08 = 2.5$, and the probability (from standard normal tables) is 0.0124. The total cost per piece is calculated using Eq. (20.3) as follows:

$$C_{pc} = 5.00 + 1.00 + 0.0124(20.00) + 9.79 = \$16.04/\text{pc}$$

Next, the same computations are made for process B, shown in the following table.

| (1) Center of Range | (2) Range | (3) z-Value Range $\sigma = 0.04$ | (4) Corresponding Probability | (5) (x-N) | (6) L(x) Eq. (20.2) | (7) $E\{L(x)\}$ ((4) × (6)) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 99.84 | 99.82-99.86 | 5.0 to 3.5 | 0.0002 | 0.16 | 38.4 | 0.0077 |
| 99.88 | 99.86-99.90 | −3.5 to −2.5 | 0.0060 | 0.12 | 21.6 | 0.1296 |
| 99.92 | 99.90-99.94 | −2.5 to −1.5 | 0.0606 | 0.08 | 9.6 | 0.5818 |
| 99.96 | 99.94-99.98 | −1.5 to −0.5 | 0.2417 | 0.04 | 2.4 | 0.5801 |
| 100.00 | 99.98-100.02 | −0.5 to +0.5 | 0.3830 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 100.04 | 100.02-100.06 | +0.5 to +1.5 | 0.2417 | 0.04 | 2.4 | 0.5801 |
| 100.08 | 100.06-100.10 | +1.5 to +2.5 | 0.0606 | 0.08 | 9.6 | 0.5818 |
| 100.12 | 100.10-100.14 | +2.5 to +3.5 | 0.0060 | 0.12 | 21.6 | 0.1296 |
| 100.16 | 100.14-100.18 | +3.5 to +5.0 | 0.0002 | 0.16 | 38.4 | 0.0077 |
| Totals | If applicable | | 1.0000 | | | \$2.60 |

In this case, we take note of the fact that process B, although its production piece cost is much higher than for process A, there are virtually no out-of-tolerance units produced (as long as the process is in statistical control, which can be verified by statistical sampling). We should take advantage of this fact by omitting the sortation step. Also, there is no rework. The total cost per piece for process B is calculated as follows:

$$C_{pc} = 10.00 + 0 + 0 + 2.60 = \$12.60/\text{pc}.$$

Because of a much smaller Taguchi loss function cost, process B is the lower cost production method.

The calculations in the preceding example are dominated by the computation of the expected value of the Taguchi loss function. Let us examine this computation more closely. The expected value is given by:

$$E\{L(x)\} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i L(x_i) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} P_i k(x_i - N)^2 \tag{20.4}$$

where $E\{L(x)\}$ = expected value of the Taguchi loss function; $P_i$ = probability of the interval being the outcome; $x_i$ = the value of the quality characteristic of interest, such as a dimension, representing the interval; and $N$ = the nominal value of the quality characteristic. Summation of the term $P_i(x_i - N)^2$ is, in effect, a calculation of the variance $\sigma^2$ (whose square root is the standard deviation $\sigma$). We can exploit this equivalence in our calculation of the Taguchi loss function by expressing it as follows:

$$E\{L(x)\} = k\sigma^2 \tag{20.5}$$

Let us see how this formula compares with our previous computation of $E\{L(x)\}$ in Example 20.3.

**EXAMPLE 20.4 Computation of Taguchi loss function using Eq. (20.5)**

Recalculate the Taguchi loss function using Eq. (20.5) for the two processes in Example 20.3.

***Solution:*** The constant $k$ in the Taguchi loss function, Eq. (20.2), is $k = 1500$. For process A, $\sigma = 0.08$ mm. Using Eq. (20.5), we have:

$$E\{L(x)\} = 1500(0.08)^2 = 1500\,(0.0064) = \$9.60$$

For process B, $\sigma = 0.04$ mm. The loss function value is:

$$E\{L(x)\} = 1500(0.04)^2 = 1500\,(0.0016) = \$2.40$$

These values compare with \$9.79 for process A and \$2.60 for process B in Example 20.3. A closer agreement would have been obtained had we used narrower intervals in Figure 20.4.

---

Eq. (20.5) represents a special case of the more general situation. The special case is when the process mean $\mu$, which is the average of all $x_i$, is centered about the nominal value $N$. The more general case is when the process mean $\mu$ may or may not be centered about the nominal value. In this more general case, the calculation of the value of the Taguchi loss function becomes:

$$E\{L(x)\} = k[(\mu - \mathrm{N})^2 + \sigma^2] \tag{20.6}$$

If the process mean is centered at the nominal value, so that $\mu = N$, then Eq. (20.6) reduces to Eq. (20.5).

## 20.4 ISO 9000

This chapter on quality control would not be complete without mention of the principal standard that is devoted to this subject. ISO 9000 is a set of international standards on quality developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), based in Geneva, Switzerland and representing virtually all industrialized nations. The U.S. representative to the ISO is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The American Society for Quality Control (ASQC) is the ANSI member organization that is responsible for quality standards. ASQC publishes and disseminates ANSI/ASQC Q9000, which is the U.S. version of ISO 9000.

ISO 9000 establishes standards for the systems and procedures used by a facility that affect the quality of the products and services produced by the facility. It is not a standard for the products or services themselves. ISO 9000 is not just one standard; it is a family of standards, as listed in Table 20.4. The family includes a glossary of quality terms, guidelines for selecting and using the various standards, models for quality systems, and guidelines for auditing quality systems.

The ISO standards are generic rather than industry specific. They are applicable to any facility producing any product and/or providing any service, no matter what the market. As mentioned, the focus of the standards is on the facility's quality system rather than its products or services. In ISO 8402, a ***quality system*** is defined as "the organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, processes, and resources needed to implement qual-

**TABLE 20.4** ISO 9000 and Other ISO Quality Standards, 1994 Update

| *Standard* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| ISO 8402 | Vocabulary for quality management and quality assurance |
| ISO 9000-1 | Quality management and quality assurance, Part 1: Guidelines for selection and use |
| ISO 9000-2 | Quality management and quality assurance, Part 2: Generic guidelines for application of ISO 9001, ISO 9002, and ISO 9003 |
| ISO 9000-3 | Quality management and quality assurance, Part 3: Guidelines for application of ISO 9001 to the development, supply, and maintenance of software |
| ISO 9000-4 | Quality management and quality assurance, Part 4: Application for dependability program management |
| ISO 9001 | Quality system models for facilities whose operations include design and/or development, production, inspection and testing, installation, and servicing of products |
| ISO 9002 | Quality system models for facilities that manufacture products that are designed and serviced by others |
| ISO 9003 | Quality system models for facilities that only perform inspection and testing |
| ISO 9004-1 | Quality management and quality system elements: Guidelines |
| ISO 9004-2 | Quality management and quality system elements: Guidelines for services |
| ISO 9004-3 | Quality management and quality system elements: Guidelines for processed materials |
| ISO 9004-4 | Quality management and quality system elements: Guidelines for quality improvement |
| ISO 10011-1 | Guidelines for auditing quality systems, Part 1: Auditing |
| ISO 10011-2 | Guidelines for auditing quality systems, Part 2: Qualification criteria for quality system auditors |
| ISO 10011-3 | Guidelines for auditing quality systems, Part 3: Management of audit programs |
| ISO 10012-1 | Metrological qualification system for measuring equipment |
| ISO 10013 | Guidelines for developing quality manuals |
| ISO/TR 13425 | Guidelines for the selection of statistical methods in standardization and specification |

*Source:* ISO Easy, http://www.exit109.com.

ity management." ISO 9000 is concerned with the set of activities undertaken by a facility to ensure that its output provides customer satisfaction. It does not specify methods or procedures for achieving customer satisfaction; instead it describes concepts and objectives for achieving it.

ISO 9000 can be applied in a facility in two ways. The first is to implement the standards or selected portions of the standards simply for the sake of improving the firm's quality systems. Improving the procedures and systems for delivering high quality products and/or services is a worthwhile accomplishment, whether or not formal recognition is awarded. Implementation of ISO 9000 requires that all of a facility's activities affecting quality be carried out in a three-phase cycle that continues indefinitely. The three phases are:

1. ***Planning*** of the activities and procedures that affect quality.
2. ***Control*** of the activities affecting quality to ensure that customer specifications are satisfied and that corrective action is taken on any deviations from specifications.
3. ***Documentation*** of the activities and procedures affecting quality to ensure that quality objectives are understood by employees, feedback is provided for planning, and evidence of quality system performance is available for managers, customers, and for certification purposes.

The second way to apply ISO 9000 is to become registered. ISO 9000 registration not only improves the facility's quality systems, but it also provides formal certification that the facility meets the requirements of the standard. This has benefits for the firm in several ways. Two significant benefits are: (1) reducing the frequency of quality audits performed by the facility's customers and (2) qualifying the facility for business partnerships with companies that require ISO 9000 registration. This latter benefit is especially important for firms doing business in the European Community, where certain products are classified as regulated, and ISO 9000 registration is required for companies making these products as well as their suppliers.

Registration is obtained by subjecting the facility to a certification process by an accredited third-party agency. The certification process consists of on-site inspections and review of the firm's documentation and procedures so that the agency is satisfied that the facility conforms to the ISO 9000 standard. If the outside agency finds the facility nonconforming in certain areas, then it will notify the facility about which areas need upgrading, and a subsequent visit will be scheduled. Once registered, the external agency will periodically audit the facility to verify continuing conformance. The facility must pass these audits to retain ISO 9000 registration.

The three quality system standards or models intended for facilities seeking ISO 9000 registration are ISO 9001, ISO 9002, and ISO 9003. These models contain the requirements for registration that must be satisfied by the facility. A facility chooses to become registered in one of these standards depending on which model most closely fits its operations. The facility's customer(s) may also influence the choice of standard. ISO 9001 has the broadest coverage and is designed for facilities whose operations include design and/or development, production, inspection and testing, installation, and servicing of products. ISO 9002 applies to facilities that manufacture products that are designed and serviced by others. ISO 9003 applies to facilities that only perform inspection and testing. A summary of the topic areas covered by the three standards is provided in Table 20.5. It should be noted that the wording of each section is virtually the same among the three standards.

**TABLE 20.5** Topic Areas Covered by ISO 9001, ISO 9002, and ISO 9003

| *Section Number* | *Topic Area and Brief Description* | ISO *9001* | ISO *9002* | ISO *9003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | ***Management responsibility.*** Management shall define and document its policy and objectives for quality and ensure understanding and implementation at all levels of the organization. | X | X | X |
| 2. | ***Quality system.*** The facility shall establish and maintain a quality system that ensures conformance of the product or service to specified requirements. | X | X | X |
| 3. | ***Contract review.*** Procedures shall be established and maintained for review and coordination of contracts to ensure that requirements are adequately defined and documented. | X | X | |
| 4. | ***Design control.*** The facility shall establish and maintain procedures to control the product design to ensure that specifications are satisfied. | X | | |
| 5. | ***Document control.*** Procedures shall be established and maintained to control all documents pertaining to the requirements of this standard. | X | X | X |
| 6. | ***Purchasing.*** The facility shall ensure that all purchased products conform to specified requirements. | X | X | |
| 7. | ***Purchaser-supplied product*** Procedures shall be established and maintained for verification, storage, and maintenance of purchaser-supplied items that will be incorporated into the final product sent to the ultimate customer. | X | X | |
| 8. | ***Product identification and traceability.*** Where appropriate, procedures shall be established and maintained for identifying the product from drawings, specifications, and other documents during all stages of production, delivery, and installation. | X | X | X |
| 9. | ***Process control.*** The facility shall plan the production and install processes that directly affect quality and shall ensure that these processes are performed under controlled conditions. Controlled conditions include, e.g., documented work instructions, process monitoring and control, and specified criteria for workmanship. | X | X | |
| 10. | ***Inspection and testing.*** The facility shall (1) ensure that incoming materials are not further processed or used until verified as conforming to specification; (2) inspect, test, and identify product during processing as specified in the quality plan; and (3) carry out all final inspection and testing of the product to ensure conformance of the finished product to specified requirements. | X | X | X |
| 11. | ***Inspection, measuring, and test equipment.*** The facility shall calibrate and maintain inspection, measurement, and test equipment used to demonstrate that product conforms to specified requirements. | X | X | X |
| 12. | ***Inspection and test status.*** The facility shall identify the inspection and test status of the product through the use of markings, labels, stamps, inspection records, or other suitable means that indicate conformance or nonconformance of the product to specification. In addition, records shall identify the authority responsible for release of conforming product. | X | X | X |
| 13. | ***Control of nonconforming product.*** The facility shall establish and maintain procedures to ensure that nonconforming product is prevented from being used or installed. | X | X | X |
| 14. | ***Corrective action.*** Procedures shall be established, documented, and maintained to (1) investigate the cause of nonconforming product and the corrective action to prevent recurrence, (2) perform analysis to detect and eliminate causes of nonconforming product, (3) apply controls to ensure that corrective actions are effective, and (4) implement and record changes in procedures resulting from corrective actions. | X | X | |

*(continued on next page)*

**TABLE 20.5** *(continued)*

| Section Number | Topic Area and Brief Description | ISO 9001 | ISO 9002 | ISO 9003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15. | ***Handling, storage, packaging, and delivery.*** The facility shall establish and maintain procedures to (1) prevent damage during product handling; (2) avoid damage and deterioration during product storage; (3) control packaging and related operations; and (4) protect the product after final inspection and testing, including delivery when contractually required. | X | X | X |
| 16. | ***Quality records.*** The facility shall establish and maintain procedures for the identification, collection, indexing, filing, storage, maintenance, and disposition of quality records. | X | X | X |
| 17. | ***Internal quality audits.*** The facility shall perform planned and documented internal audits to verify that quality activities are effective and comply with its own procedures. | X | X | |
| 18. | ***Training.*** The facility shall establish and maintain procedures to (1) identify training needs and (2) provide training as needed for employees who affect quality. | X | X | X |
| 19. | ***Servicing.*** When servicing is contractually specified, the facility shall establish and maintain procedures for performing and verifying that servicing meets the requirements specified in the contract. | X | | |
| 20. | ***Statistical techniques.*** As appropriate, the facility shall establish procedures to identify adequate statistical techniques for verifying that process capabilities and product characteristics are acceptable. | X | X | X |

*Source:* Paraphrased and/or quoted from ISO 9001 [1].

## REFERENCES

[1] ARNOLD, K. L., *The Manager's Guide to ISO 9000*, The Free Press, New York, 1994.

[2] CROSBY, P. B., *Quality is Free*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1979.

[3] EVANS, J. R., and LINDSAY, W. M., *The Management and Control of Quality*, Third Edition, West Publishing Company, St. Paul, Minnesota. 1996.

[4] GARVIN, D. A., "Competing on the Eight Dimensions of Quality," *Harvard Business Review*, June 1987, pp. 101–109.

[5] GOETSCH, D. L., and S. B. DAVIS, *Introduction to Total Quality*, Second Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1997.

[6] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York)

[7] JOHNSON, P. L., *ISO 9000: Meeting the New International Standards*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1993.

[8] JURAN, J. M., and GRYNA, F. M., *Quality Planning and Analysis*, Third Edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1993.

[9] KANTNER, R., *The ISO 9000 Answer Book*. Oliver Wight Publications, Inc., Essex Junction, Vermont, 1994

[10] LOCHNER, R. H., and MATAR, J. E., *Designing for Quality*, ASQC Quality Press, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1990.

[11] MONTGOMERY, D., *Introduction to Statistical Quality Control*, Third edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1996.

[12] PEACE, G. S., *Taguchi Methods*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., Reading, Massachusetts, 1993.

[13] TAGUCHI, G., ELSAYED, E. A., and HSIANG, T. C., *Quality Engineering in Production Systems*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1989.

## PROBLEMS

### Taguchi Loss Function

**20.1** A certain part dimension on a power garden tool is specified as 25.50 ±0.30 mm. Company repair records indicate that if the ±0.30 mm tolerance is exceeded, there is a 75% chance that the product will be returned for replacement. The cost associated with replacing the product, which includes not only the product cost itself but also the additional paperwork and handling associated with replacement, is estimated to be \$300. Determine the constant $k$ in the Taguchi loss function for these data.

**20.2** The design specification on the resistance setting for an electronic component is 0.50 ±0.02 ohm. If the component is scrapped, the company suffers a \$200 loss. (a) What is the implied value of the constant $k$ in the Taguchi quadratic loss function? (b) If the output of the process that sets the resistance is centered on 0.50 ohm, with a standard deviation of 0.01 ohm, what is the expected loss per unit?

**20.3** The Taguchi quadratic loss function for a particular component in a piece of earth-moving equipment is $L(x) = 3500(x - N)^2$, where $x$ = the actual value of a critical dimension and $N$ is the nominal value. If $N$ = 150.00 mm, determine the value of the loss function for tolerances of (a) ±0.20 mm and (b) ±0.10 mm.

**20.4** The Taguchi loss function for a certain component is given by $L(x) = 8000(x - N)^2$, where $x$ = the actual value of a dimension of critical importance and $N$ is its nominal value. Company management has decided that the maximum loss that can be accepted is \$10.00. (a) If the nominal dimension is 30.00 mm, at what value should the tolerance on this dimension be set? (b) Does the value of the nominal dimension have any effect on the tolerance that should be specified?

**20.5** Two alternative manufacturing processes, A and B, can be used to produce a certain dimension on one of the parts in an assembled product. Both processes can produce parts with an average dimension at the desired nominal value. The tolerance on the dimension is ±0.15 mm. The output of each process follows a normal distribution. However, the standard deviations are different. For process A, $\sigma$ = 0.12 mm; and for process B, $\sigma$ = 0.07 mm. Production costs per piece for A and B are \$7.00 and \$12.00, respectively. If inspection and sortation are required, the cost is \$0.50/pc. If a part is found to be defective, it must be scrapped at a cost equal to its production cost. The Taguchi loss function for this component is given by $L(x) = 2500(x - N)^2$, where $x$ = value of the dimension and $N$ is its nominal value. Determine the average cost per piece for the two processes.

**20.6** Solve Problem 20.5, except that the tolerance on the dimension is ±0.30 mm rather than ±0.15 mm.

**20.7** Solve Problem 20.5, except that the average value of the dimension produced by process B is 0.10 mm greater than the nominal value specified. The average value of the dimension produced by process A remains at the nominal value $N$.

**20.8** Two different manufacturing processes, A and B, can be used to produce a certain component. The specification on the dimension of interest is 100.00 ±0.20 mm. The output of process A follows the normal distribution, with $\mu$ = 100.00 mm and $\sigma$ = 0.10 mm. The output of process B is a uniform distribution defined by $f(x) = 2.0$ for $99.75 \leq x \leq 100.25$ mm. Production costs per piece for processes A and B are each \$5.00. Inspection and sortation cost is \$0.50/pc. If a part is found to be defective, it must be scrapped at a cost equal to twice its production cost. The Taguchi loss function for this component is given by $L(x) = 2500(x - N)^2$, where $x$ = value of the dimension and $N$ is its nominal value. Determine the average cost per piece for the two processes.

chapter 21

# Statistical Process Control

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



*Statistical process control* (SPC) involves the use of various methods to measure and analyze a process. SPC methods are applicable in both manufacturing and nonmanufacturing situations, but most of the applications are in manufacturing. The overall objectives of SPC are to (1) improve the quality of the process output, (2) reduce process variability and achieve process stability, and (3) solve processing problems. There are seven principal methods or tools used in SPC; these tools are sometimes referred to as the "magnificent seven" [6]:

1. control charts
2. histograms
3. Pareto charts
4. check sheets
5. defect concentration diagrams
6. scatter diagrams
7. cause and effect diagrams

Most of these tools are statistical and/or technical in nature. However, it should be mentioned that SPC includes more than the magnificent seven tools. There are also nontechnical aspects in the implementation of SPC. To be successful, SPC must include a commitment to quality that pervades the organization from senior top management to the starting worker on the production line.

Our discussion in this chapter will emphasize the seven SPC tools. A more detailed treatment of SPC is presented in several of our references. For coverage of control charts we recommend [5]–[7], and [9], and for the other six SPC tools [2] and [3].

## 21.1 PROCESS VARIABILITY AND PROCESS CAPABILITY[1]

Before describing the seven SPC tools, it is appropriate to discuss process variability, the reason for needing SPC. In any manufacturing operation, variability exists in the process output. In a machining operation, which is one of the most accurate manufacturing processes, the machined parts may appear to be identical, but close inspection reveals dimensional differences from one part to the next. These process variations constitute the statistical basis of control charts.

### 21.1.1 Process Variations

Manufacturing process variations can be divided into two types: (1) random and (2) assignable. *Random variations* result from intrinsic variability in the process, no matter how well designed or well controlled it is. All processes are characterized by these kinds of variations, if one looks closely enough. Random variations cannot be avoided; they are caused by factors such as inherent human variability from one operation cycle to the next, minor variations in raw materials, and machine vibration. Individually, these factors may not amount to much, but collectively the errors can be significant enough to cause trouble unless they are within the tolerances specified for the part. Random variations typically form a normal statistical distribution. The output of the process tends to cluster about the mean value, in terms of the product's quality characteristic of interest, such as part length or diameter. A large proportion of the population is centered around the mean, with fewer parts away from the mean. When the only variations in the process are of this type, the process is said to be *in statistical control*. This kind of variability will continue so long as the process

[1] Portions of this section and accompanying problems at the end of this chapter are based on Groover [4], Section 42.2.

is operating normally. It is when the process deviates from this normal operating condition that variations of the second type appear.

*Assignable variations* indicate an exception from normal operating conditions. Something has occurred in the process that is not accounted for by random variations. Reasons for assignable variations include operator mistakes, defective raw materials, tool failures, and equipment malfunctions. Assignable variations in manufacturing usually betray themselves by causing the output to deviate from the normal distribution. The process is suddenly *out of statistical control.*

Let us expand on our descriptions of random and assignable variations with reference to Figure 21.1. The variation of some part characteristic of interest is shown at four points in time $t_0, t_1, t_2$, and $t_3$. These are the times during operation of the process when samples are taken to assess the distribution of values of the part characteristic. At sampling time $t_0$ the process is seen to be operating in statistical control, and the variation in the part characteristic follows a normal distribution whose mean $= \mu_0$ and standard deviation $= \sigma_0$. This represents the inherent variability of the process during normal operation. The process is in statistical control. At sampling time $t_1$ an assignable variation has been introduced into the process, which is manifested by an increase in the process mean $(\mu_1 > \mu_0)$. The process standard deviation seems unchanged $(\sigma_1 = \sigma_0)$. At time $t_2$ the process mean seems to have assumed its normal value $(\mu_2 = \mu_0)$, but the variation in the process mean has increased $(\sigma_2 > \sigma_0)$. Finally, at sampling time $t_3$, both the mean and standard deviation of the process are observed to have increased $(\mu_3 > \mu_0$ and $\sigma_3 > \sigma_0)$.

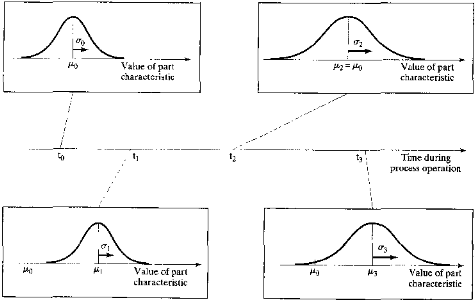



**Figure 21.1** Distribution of values of a part characteristic of interest at four times during process operation: at $t_0$ process is in statistical control; at $t_1$ process mean has increased; at $t_2$ process standard deviation has increased; and at $t_3$ both process mean and standard deviation have increased.

Using statistical methods based on the preceding distinction between random and assignable variations, it should be possible to periodically observe the process by collecting measurements of the part characteristic of interest and thereby detecting when the process has gone out of statistical control. The most applicable statistical method for doing this is the control chart.

### 21.1.2 Process Capability and Tolerances

Process capability relates to the normal variations inherent in the output when the process is in statistical control. By definition, *process capability* equals $\pm 3$ standard deviations about the mean output value (a total range of 6 standard deviations):

$$PC = \mu \pm 3\sigma \tag{21.1}$$

where PC = process capability; $\mu$ = process mean, which is set at the nominal value of the product characteristic (we assume bilateral tolerances are used); and $\sigma$ = standard deviation of the process. Assumptions underlying this definition are: (1) the output is normally distributed, and (2) steady state operation has been achieved and the process is in statistical control. Under these assumptions, 99.73% of the parts produced will have output values that fall within $\pm 3.0\sigma$ of the mean.

The process capability of a given manufacturing operation is not always known (in fact, it is rarely known), and measurements of the characteristic of interest must be made to assess it. These measurements form a sample, and so the parameters $\mu$ and $\sigma$ in Eq. (21.1) must be estimated from the sample average and the sample standard deviation, respectively. The sample average $\bar{x}$ is given by:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i}{n} \tag{21.2}$$

and the sample standard deviation $s$ can be calculated from:

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (x_i - \bar{x})}{n - 1}} \tag{21.3}$$

where $x_i$ = measurement $i$ of the part characteristic of interest; and $n$ = the number of measurements in the sample, $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$. Many hand-held calculators automatically compute these values based on input values of $x_i$. The values of $\bar{x}$ and $s$ are then substituted for $\mu$ and $\sigma$ in Eq. (21.1) to yield the following best estimate of process capability:

$$PC = \bar{x} \pm 3s \tag{21.4}$$

The issue of tolerances is germane to our discussion of process capability. Design engineers tend to assign dimensional tolerances to components and assemblies based on their judgment of how size variations will affect function and performance. The advantages and disadvantages of tight and loose tolerances are summarized in Table 20.2.

Consideration should be given by the design engineer to the relationship between the tolerance on a given dimension (or other part characteristic) and the process capability of the operation producing the dimension. Ideally, the specified tolerance should be greater than the process capability. If function and available processes prevent this, then a sortation operation may have to be included in the manufacturing sequence to separate parts that are within the tolerance from those that are outside.

When design tolerances are specified as being equal to process capability, then the upper and lower boundaries of this range define the *natural tolerance limits*. It is useful to know the ratio of the specified tolerance range relative to the process capability, called the *process capability index*, defined as:

$$\mathrm{PCI} = \frac{\mathrm{UTL} - \mathrm{LTL}}{6\sigma} \tag{21.5}$$

where PCI = process capability index; UTL = upper tolerance limit of the tolerance range; LTL = lower tolerance limit; and $6\sigma$ = range of the natural tolerance limits. The underlying assumption in this definition is that the process mean is set equal to the nominal design specification, so that the numerator and denominator in Eq. (21.5) are centered about the same value.

Table 21.1 shows how defect rate (proportion of out-of-tolerance parts) varies with process capability index. It is clear that any increase in the tolerance range will reduce the percentage of nonconforming parts. The desire to achieve very low fraction defect rates has led to the popular notion of "six sigma" limits in quality control (bottom row in Table 21.1). Achieving six sigma limits virtually eliminates defects in manufactured product, assuming the process is maintained within statistical control.

## 21.2 CONTROL CHARTS[2]

Control charts are the most widely used method in SPC, and our discussion in this section will focus on them. The underlying principle of control charts is that the variations in any process divide into two types, as previously described: (1) random variations, which are the only variations present if the process is in statistical control; and (2) assignable variations, which indicate a departure from statistical control. The purpose of a control chart is to identify when the process has gone out of statistical control, thus signaling the need for some corrective action to be taken.

A *control chart* is a graphical technique in which statistics computed from measured values of a certain process characteristic are plotted over time to determine if the process remains in statistical control. The general form of the control chart is illustrated in Figure 21.2. The chart consists of three horizontal lines that remain constant over time: a center, a lower control limit (L CL), and an upper control limit (UCL). The center is usually set at the nominal design value. The UCL and LCL are generally set at $\pm 3$ standard deviations of the sample means.

It is highly unlikely that a sample drawn from the process lies outside the UCL or LCL while the process is in statistical control. Therefore, if it happens that a sample value does

[2] Portions of this section and accompanying problems at the end of this chapter are based on Groover [4], Section 42.5.

**TABLE 21.1** Defect Rate as a Function of Process Capability Index (Tolerance Defined in Terms of Number of Standard Deviations of the Process), Given That the Process Is Operating in Statistical Control

| *Process Capability Index (PCI)* | *Tolerance = Number of Standard Deviations* | *Defect Rate (%)* | *Defective Parts per Million* | *Comments* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.333 | ±1.0 | 31.74 | 317,400 | Sortation required. |
| 0.667 | ±2.0 | 4.56 | 45,600 | Sortation required. |
| 1.000 | ±3.0 | 0.27 | 2,700 | Tolerance = process capability. |
| 1.333 | ±4.0 | 0.0063 | 63 | Significant reduction in defects. |
| 1.667 | ±5.0 | 0.000057 | 0.57 | Rare occurrence of defects. |
| 2.000 | ±6.0 | 0.0000002 | 0.002 | Defects almost never occur. |

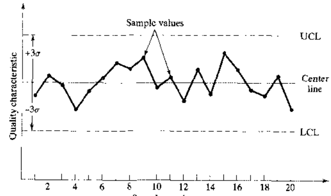



**Figure 21.2** Control chart.

fall outside these limits, it is interpreted to mean that the process is out of control. In response, an investigation is undertaken to determine the reason for the out-of-control condition, and appropriate corrective action is taken to eliminate the condition. By similar reasoning, if the process is operating in statistical control, and there is no evidence of undesirable trends in the data, then no adjustments should be made, since they would introduce an assignable variation to the process. The philosophy "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" is applicable in control charts.

There are two basic types of control charts: (1) control charts for variables and (2) control charts for attributes. Control charts for variables require a measurement of the quality characteristic of interest. Control charts for attributes simply require a determination of whether a part is defective or how many defects there are in the sample.

### 21.2.1 Control Charts for Variables

A process that is out of statistical control manifests this condition in the form of significant changes in: (1) process mean and/or (2) process variability. Corresponding to these possibilities, there are two principal types of control charts for variables: (1) $\bar{x}$ chart and (2) $R$ chart. The *$\bar{x}$ chart* (call it "$x$ bar chart") is used to plot the average measured value of a certain quality characteristic for each of a series of samples taken from the production process. It indicates how the process mean changes over time. The *R chart* plots the range of each sample, thus monitoring the variability of the process and indicating whether it changes over time.

A suitable quality characteristic of the process must be selected as the variable to be monitored on the $\bar{x}$ and $R$ charts. In a mechanical process, this might be a shaft diameter or other critical dimension. Measurements of the process itself must be used to construct the two control charts.

With the process operating smoothly and absent of assignable variations, a series of samples (e.g., $m = 20$ or more is generally recommended) of small size (e.g., $n = 5$ parts per sample) are collected and the characteristic of interest is measured for each part. The following procedure is used to construct the center, LCL, and UCL for each chart:

1. Compute the mean $\bar{x}$ and range $R$ for each of the $m$ samples.
2. Compute the grand mean $\bar{\bar{x}}$, which is the mean of the $\bar{x}$ values for the $m$ samples. This will be the center for the $\bar{x}$ chart.
3. Compute $\bar{R}$, which is the mean of the $R$ values for the $m$ samples. This will be the center for the $R$ chart.
4. Determine the UCL and LCL for the $\bar{x}$ and $R$ charts. Values of standard deviation can be estimated from the sample data using Eq. (21.3) to compute these control limits. However, an easier approach is based on statistical factors tabulated in Table 21.2 that have been derived specifically for these control charts. Values of the factors depend on sample size $n$. For the $\bar{x}$ chart:

**TABLE 21.2** Constants for the $\bar{x}$ and $R$ Charts

| *Sample Size* $n$ | *$\bar{x}$ Chart* $A_2$ | *R Chart* $D_3$ | $D_4$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 1.023 | 0 | 2.574 |
| 4 | 0.729 | 0 | 2.282 |
| 5 | 0.577 | 0 | 2.114 |
| 6 | 0.483 | 0 | 2.004 |
| 7 | 0.419 | 0.076 | 1.924 |
| 8 | 0.373 | 0.136 | 1.864 |
| 9 | 0.337 | 0.184 | 1.816 |
| 10 | 0.308 | 0.223 | 1.777 |

$$\mathrm{LCL} = \bar{\bar{x}} - A_2\bar{R} \tag{21.6a}$$

$$\mathrm{UCL} = \bar{\bar{x}} + A_2\bar{R} \tag{21.6b}$$

And for the $R$ chart:

$$\mathrm{LCL} = D_3\bar{R} \tag{21.7a}$$

$$\mathrm{UCL} = D_4\bar{R} \tag{21.7b}$$

**EXAMPLE 21.1 $\bar{x}$ and $R$ Charts**

Although 20 or more samples are recommended, let us use a much smaller number here to illustrate the calculations. Suppose eight samples ($m = 8$) of size 5 ($n = 5$) have been collected from a manufacturing process that is in statistical control, and the dimension of interest has been measured for each part. It is desired to determine the values of the center, LCL, and UCL to construct the $\bar{x}$ and $R$ charts. The calculated values of $\bar{x}$ and $R$ for each sample are given below (measured values are in centimeters), which is step (1) in our procedure.

| $s$ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{x}$ | 2.008 | 1.998 | 1.993 | 2.002 | 2.001 | 1.995 | 2.004 | 1.999 |
| $R$ | 0.027 | 0.011 | 0.017 | 0.009 | 0.014 | 0.020 | 0.024 | 0.018 |

***Solution:*** In step (2), we compute the grand mean of the sample averages.

$$\bar{\bar{x}} = \frac{2.008 + 1.998 + 1.993 + 2.002 + 2.001 + 1.995 + 2.004 + 1.999}{8} = 2.000 \text{ cm}$$

In step (3), the mean value of $R$ is computed.

$$R = \frac{0.027 + 0.011 + 0.017 + 0.009 + 0.014 + 0.020 + 0.024 + 0.018}{8} = 0.0175 \text{ cm}$$

In step (4), the values of LCL and UCL are determined based on factors in Table 21.2. First, using Eq. (21.6) for the $\bar{x}$ chart,

$$\mathrm{LCL} = 2.000 - 0.577(0.0175) = 1.9899$$

$$\mathrm{UCL} = 2.000 + 0.577(0.0175) = 2.0101$$

And for the $R$ chart using Eq (21.7),

$$\mathrm{LCL} = 0(0.0175) = 0$$

$$\mathrm{UCL} = 2.114(0.0175) = 0.0370$$

The two control charts are constructed in Figure 21.3 with the sample data plotted in the charts.

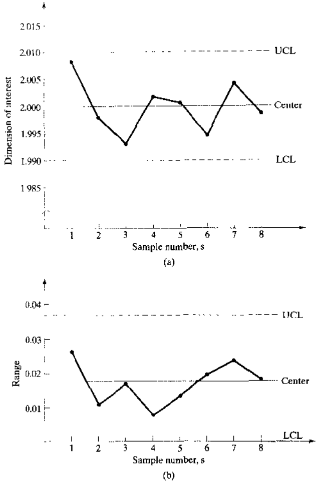



**Figure 21.3** Control charts for Example 21.1: (a) $\bar{x}$ chart and (b) $R$ chart.

If the mean and standard deviation for the process are known, an alternative way to calculate the center and UCL and LCL for the $\bar{x}$ chart is the following:

$$\text{LCL} = \mu - \frac{3\sigma}{\sqrt{n}} \tag{21.8a}$$

$$\text{UCL} = \mu + \frac{3\sigma}{\sqrt{n}} \tag{21.8b}$$

where $\mu$ = process mean; $\sigma$ = standard deviation of the process; and $n$ = sample size. The LCL and UCL values given by Eqs. (21.8) are theoretically the same values as those calculated by Eqs. (21.6). However, when first setting up the $\bar{x}$ chart for a process, the mean and standard deviation for the process variable of interest are generally not known. Accordingly, Eqs. (21.6), based on measured $\bar{x}$ and $\bar{R}$ values, can be conveniently used to compute the control chart parameters. With the control limits set at the values defined in Eqs. (21.6) or (21.7), 99.73% of the random samples drawn from a process that is in statistical control will lie inside the control limits, and only 0.27% will lie outside these control limits.

Readers will note that the standard deviation of the sample means is related to the population standard deviation by the reciprocal of the square root of $n$, the number of units in the sample: that is,

$$\sigma_{\bar{x}} = \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}} \tag{21.9}$$

where $\sigma_{\bar{x}}$ = standard deviation of the sample mean, and the other terms have been defined.

### 21.2.2 Control Charts for Attributes

Control charts for attributes monitor the number of defects present in the sample or the fraction defect rate as the plotted statistic. Examples of these kinds of attributes include: number of defects per automobile, fraction of nonconforming parts in a sample, existence or absence of flash in a plastic molding, and number of flaws in a roll of sheet steel. Inspection procedures that involve GO/NO-GO gaging are included in this group since they determine whether a part is good or bad.

The two principal types of control charts for attributes are: (1) the *p chart*, which plots the fraction defect rate in successive samples; and (2) the *c chart*, which plots the number of defects, flaws, or other nonconformities per sample.

*p Chart.* In the $p$ chart, the quality characteristic of interest is the proportion ($p$ for proportion) of nonconforming or defective units. For each sample, this proportion $p_i$ is the ratio of the number of nonconforming or defective items $d_i$ over the number of units in the sample $n$ (assume samples are of equal size in constructing and using the control chart):

$$p_i = \frac{d_i}{n} \tag{21.10}$$

where $i$ is used to identify the sample. If the $p_i$ values for a sufficient number of samples are averaged, the mean value $\bar{p}$ is a reasonable estimate of the true value of $p$ for the process. The $p$ chart is based on the binomial distribution, where $p$ is the probability of a nonconforming unit. The center in the $p$ chart is the computed value of $\bar{p}$ for $m$ samples of equal size $n$ collected while the process is operating in statistical control.

$$\bar{p} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{m} p_i}{m} \tag{21.11}$$

The control limits are computed as three standard deviations on either side of the center. Thus,

$$\text{LCL} = \bar{p} - 3\sqrt{\frac{\bar{p}(1-\bar{p})}{n}} \tag{21.12a}$$

$$\text{UCL} = \bar{p} + 3\sqrt{\frac{\bar{p}(1-\bar{p})}{n}} \tag{21.12b}$$

where the standard deviation of $\bar{p}$ in the binomial distribution is given by

$$\sigma_p = \sqrt{\frac{\bar{p}(1-\bar{p})}{n}} \tag{21.13}$$

If the value of $\bar{p}$ is relatively low and the sample size $n$ is small, then the LCL computed by the first of these equations is likely to be a negative value. In this case, let LCL $= 0$. (The fraction defect rate cannot be less than zero.)

**EXAMPLE 21.2 *p* Chart**

Ten samples ($m = 10$) of 20 parts each ($n = 20$) have been collected. In one sample there were no defects; in three samples there was one defect; in five samples there were two defects; and in one sample there were three defects. Determine the center, LCL, and UCL for the $p$ chart.

***Solution:*** The center value of the control chart can be calculated by summing the total number of defects found in all samples and dividing by the total number of parts sampled:

$$\bar{p} = \frac{1(0) + 3(1) + 5(2) + 1(3)}{10(20)} = \frac{16}{200} = 0.08 = 8\%$$

The LCL is given by Eq. (21.12a):

$$\text{LCL} = 0.08 - 3\sqrt{\frac{0.08(1-0.08)}{20}} = 0.08 - 3(0.06066) = 0.08 - 0.182 \rightarrow 0$$

The upper control limit, by Eq. (21.12b):

$$\text{UCL} = 0.08 + 3\sqrt{\frac{0.08(1-0.08)}{20}} = 0.08 + 3(0.06066) = 0.08 + 0.182 = 0.262$$

---

*c Chart.* In the $c$ chart ($c$ for count), the number of defects in the sample are plotted over time. The sample may be a single product such as an automobile, and $c$ = number of quality defects found during final inspection. Or the sample may be a length of carpeting at the factory prior to cutting, and $c$ = number of imperfections discovered per 100 m. The $c$ chart is based on the Poisson distribution, where $c$ = parameter representing the number of events occurring within a defined sample space (defects per car, imperfections per specified length of carpet). Our best estimate of the true value of $c$ is the mean value over a large number of samples drawn while the process is in statistical control:

$$\bar{c} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{m} c_i}{m} \tag{21.14}$$

This value of $\bar{c}$ is used as the center for the control chart. In the Poisson distribution, the standard deviation is the square root of parameter $c$. Thus, the control limits are:

$$LCL = \bar{c} - 3\sqrt{\bar{c}} \tag{21.15a}$$

$$UCL = \bar{c} + 3\sqrt{\bar{c}} \tag{21.15b}$$

**EXAMPLE 21.3 c Chart**

A continuous plastic extrusion process is considered to be operating in statistical control, and it is desired to develop a $c$ chart to monitor the process. Eight hundred meters of the extrudate have been examined and a total of 14 surface defects have been detected in that length. Develop the $c$ chart for the process, using defects per hundred meters as the quality characteristic of interest.

***Solution:*** The average value of the parameter $c$ can be determined using Eq. (21.14):

$$\bar{c} = \frac{14}{8} = 1.75$$

This will be used as the center for the control chart. The LCL is given by Eq. (15a):

$$LCL = 1.75 - 3\sqrt{1.75} = 1.75 - 3(1.323) = 1.75 - 3.969 \rightarrow 0$$

And the UCL, using Eq. (21.15b):

$$UCL = 1.75 + 3\sqrt{1.75} = 1.75 + 3(1.323) = 1.75 + 3.969 = 5.719$$

### 21.2.3 Interpreting the Control Charts

When control charts are used to monitor production quality, random samples are drawn from the process of the same size $n$ used to construct the charts. For $\bar{x}$ and $R$ charts, the $\bar{x}$ and $R$ values of the measured characteristic are plotted on the control chart. By convention, the points are usually connected as in our figures. To interpret the data, one looks for signs that indicate the process is not in statistical control. The most obvious sign is: (1) when $\bar{x}$ or $R$ (or both) lie outside the LCL or UCL limits. This indicates an assignable cause such as bad starting materials, new operator, wrong equipment setting, broken tooling, or similar factors. An out-of-limit $\bar{x}$ indicates a shift in the process mean. An out-of-limit $R$ shows that the variability of the process has probably changed. The usual effect is that $R$ increases, indicating variability has risen. Less obvious conditions may be revealed even though the sample points lie within $\pm 3\sigma$ limits. These conditions include: (2) trends or cyclical patterns in the data, which may mean wear or other factors that occur as a function of time; (3) sudden changes in the average values of the data; and (4) points consistently near the upper or lower limits. The same kinds of interpretations that apply to the $\bar{x}$ chart and $R$ chart are also applicable to the $p$ chart and $c$ chart.

Montgomery [6] lists a set of specific indicators that a process is likely to be out of statistical control and that corrective action should be taken. The indicators are:

1. one point that lies outside the UCL or LCL
2. two out of three consecutive points that lie beyond $\pm 2\sigma$ on one side of the center line of the control chart
3. four out of five consecutive points that lie beyond $\pm 1\sigma$ on one side of the center line of the control chart
4. eight consecutive points that lie on one side of the center line
5. six consecutive points in which each point is always higher than its predecessor or six consecutive points in which each point is always lower than its predecessor.

Control charts serve as the feedback loop in SPC, as suggested by Figure 21.4. They represent the measurement step in process control. If the control chart indicates that the process is in statistical control, then no action is taken. However, if the process is identified

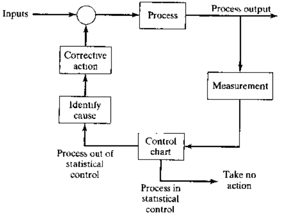



**Figure 21.4** Control charts used as the feedback loop in SPC.

as being out of statistical control, then the cause of the problem must be identified and corrective action must be taken.

## 21.3 OTHER SPC TOOLS

Although control charts are the most commonly used tool in SPC, there are other tools that are also important. Each has its own area of application. In this section, we discuss the remaining six of the magnificent seven.

### 21.3.1 Histograms

The histogram is a basic graphical tool in statistics. After the control chart, it is probably the most important member of the SPC tool kit. A *histogram* is a statistical graph consisting of bars representing different values or ranges of values, in which the length of each bar is proportional to the frequency or relative frequency of the value or range, as shown in Figure 21.5. It is a graphical display of the *frequency distribution* of the numerical data. What makes the histogram such a useful statistical tool is that it enables the analyst to quickly visualize the features of a complete set of data. These features include: (1) the shape of the distribution, (2) any central tendency exhibited by the distribution, (3) approximations of the mean and mode of the distribution, and (4) the amount of scatter or spread in the data.

**EXAMPLE 21.4 Frequency Distribution and Histogram**

Part dimension data from the same process as in Example 21.1 are displayed in the frequency distribution of Table 21.3. The data are the dimensional values of individual parts taken from the process, while the process is in statistical control. Plot the data as a histogram and draw inferences from the graph.

**TABLE 21.3** Frequency Distribution of Part Dimension Data

| *Range of Dimension* | *Frequency* | *Relative Frequency* | *Cumulative Relative Frequency* |
|---|---|---|---|
| $1.975 \le x < 1.980$ | 1 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| $1.980 \le x < 1.985$ | 3 | 0.03 | 0.04 |
| $1.985 \le x < 1.990$ | 5 | 0.05 | 0.09 |
| $1.990 \le x < 1.995$ | 13 | 0.13 | 0.22 |
| $1.995 \le x < 2.000$ | 29 | 0.29 | 0.51 |
| $2.000 \le x < 2.005$ | 27 | 0.27 | 0.78 |
| $2.005 \le x < 2.010$ | 15 | 0.15 | 0.93 |
| $2.010 \le x < 2.015$ | 4 | 0.04 | 0.97 |
| $2.015 \le x < 2.020$ | 2 | 0.02 | 0.99 |
| $2.020 \le x < 2.025$ | 1 | 0.01 | 1.00 |

***Solution:*** The frequency distribution in Table 21.3 is displayed graphically in the histogram of Figure 21.5. We can see that the distribution is normal (in all likeli-

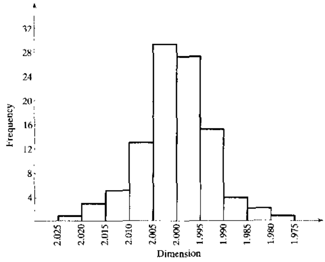



**Figure 21.5** Histogram of the data in Table 21.3.

hood), and that the mean is around 2.00. We can approximate the standard deviation to be the range of the values (2.025 − 1.975) divided by 6, based on the fact that nearly the entire distribution (99.73%) is contained within $\pm 3\sigma$ of the mean value. This gives a $\sigma$ value of around 0.008.

### 21.3.2 Pareto Charts

A *Pareto chart* is a special form of histogram, illustrated in Figure 21.6, in which attribute data are arranged according to some criterion such as cost or value. When appropriately used, it provides a graphical display of the tendency for a small proportion of a given population to be more valuable than the much larger majority. This tendency is sometimes referred to as *Pareto's Law*, which can be succinctly stated: "the vital few and the trivial many."[3] The "law" was identified by Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), an Italian economist and sociologist who studied the distribution of wealth in Italy and found that most of it was held by a small percentage of the population.

Pareto's Law applies not only to the distribution of wealth but to many other distributions as well. The law is often identified as the 80%-20% rule (although exact percent-

[3]The statement is attributed to J. Juran [5]

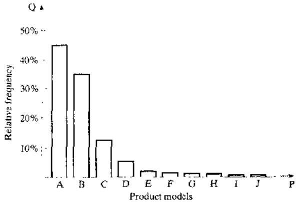



**Figure 21.6** Typical (hypothetical) Pareto distribution of a factory's production output. Although there are ten models produced, two of the models account for 80% of the total units. This chart is sometimes referred to as a *P-Q* chart, where $P$ = products and $Q$ = quantity of production.

ages may differ from 80 and 20): 80% of the wealth of a nation is in the hands of 20% of its people; 80% of inventory value is accounted for by 20% of the items in inventory; 80% of sales revenues are generated by 20% of the customers; 80% of the quality savings can be obtained from 20% of the quality problems; and 80% of a factory's production output is concentrated in only 20% of its product models (as in Figure 21.6). What is suggested by Pareto's Law is that the most attention and effort in any study or project should be focused on the smaller proportion of the population that is seen to be the most important.

### 21.3.3 Check Sheets

The *check sheet* (not to be confused with "check list") is a data gathering tool generally used in the preliminary stages of the study of a quality problem. The operator running the process (e.g., the machine operator) is often given the responsibility for recording the data on the check sheet, and the data are often recorded in the form of simple check marks.

**EXAMPLE 21.5 Check Sheet**

For the dimensional data in the frequency distribution of Table 21.3, suppose we wanted to see if there were any differences between the three shifts that are responsible for making the parts. Design a check sheet for this purpose.

***Solution:*** The check sheet is illustrated in Table 21.4. The data include the shift on which each dimensional value was produced (shifts are identified simply as 1, 2, and 3). The data in a check sheet are usually recorded as a function of time periods (days, weeks, months), as in our table.

**TABLE 21.4** Check Sheet in Which Data from the Frequency Distribution of Table 21.3 Are Recorded According to Shift (1, 2, or 3) on Which the Parts Were Made

| *Range of Dimension* | *May 5* | *May 6* | *May 7* | *May 8* | *May 9* | *Weekly Totals* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $1.975 \le x < 1.980$ | | | 3 | | | 1 |
| $1.980 \le x < 1.985$ | | 2 | | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| $1.985 \le x < 1.990$ | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| $1.990 \le x < 1.995$ | 1 2 | 11 2 3 | 1 2 | 1 2 | 1 22 | 13 |
| $1.995 \le x < 2.000$ | 11 222 3 | 11 22 3 | 111 222 3 | 11 222 3 | 11 22 3 | 29 |
| $2.000 \le x < 2.005$ | 11 22 3 | 11 22 3 | 111 22 3 | 11 222 3 | 111 22 | 27 |
| $2.005 \le x < 2.010$ | 1 2 3 | 1 2 3 | 22 3 | 1 33 | 1 2 3 | 15 |
| $2.010 \le x < 2.015$ | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 4 |
| $2.015 \le x < 2.020$ | 3 | | | 3 | | 2 |
| $2.020 \le x < 2.025$ | 3 | | | | | 1 |
| Total Parts/Day | 20 | 20 | 21 | 20 | 19 | 100 |

It is clear from the data that the third shift is responsible for much of the variability in the data. Further analysis, shown in Table 21.5, substantiates this finding. This should lead to an investigation to determine the causes of the greater variability on the third shift, with appropriate corrective action to address the problem. The result of the corrective action might be to improve the process capability of the manufacturing operation making the parts.

**TABLE 21.5** Summary of Data from Check Sheet of Table 21.4 Showing Frequency of Each Shift in Each of the Dimension Ranges

| *Range of Dimension* | *Shift 1* | *Shift 2* | *Shift 3* | *Totals* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $1.975 \le x < 1.980$ | | | 1 | 1 |
| $1.980 \le x < 1.985$ | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| $1.985 \le x < 1.990$ | 2 | | 3 | 5 |
| $1.990 \le x < 1.995$ | 6 | 6 | 1 | 13 |
| $1.995 \le x < 2.000$ | 11 | 13 | 5 | 29 |
| $2.000 \le x < 2.005$ | 12 | 11 | 4 | 27 |
| $2.005 \le x < 2.010$ | 4 | 5 | 6 | 15 |
| $2.010 \le x < 2.015$ | | | 4 | 4 |
| $2.015 \le x < 2.020$ | | | 2 | 2 |
| $2.020 \le x < 2.025$ | | | 1 | 1 |
| Weekly Total Parts/Shift | 35 | 36 | 29 | 100 |
| *Average Daily Parts/Shift* | 7.0 | 7.2 | 5.8 | |

We also note from Table 21.5 that the average daily production rate for the third shift is somewhat below the daily rate for the other two shifts. The third shift seems to be a problem that demands management attention.

Check sheets can take many different forms, depending on the problem situation and the ingenuity of the analyst. The form should be designed to allow some interpretation of results directly from the raw data, although subsequent data analysis may be necessary to recognize trends, diagnose the problem, or identify areas of further study. The following types of check sheets can be distinguished [3]:

1. *Process distribution check sheet.* This is designed to collect data on process variability. Our example check sheet in Table 21.4 is this type.
2. *Defective item check sheet.* This check sheet is intended to enumerate the variety of defects occurring, together with their frequency of occurrence.
3. *Defect location check sheet.* This is intended to identify where defects occur on the product. Its purpose is the same as the defect concentration diagram (Section 21.3.4).
4. *Defect factor check sheet.* This check sheet is used to monitor the input parameters in a process that might affect the incidence of defects. The input parameters might include equipment, operator, process cycle time, operating temperature-whatever is relevant to the process being studied.

### 21.3.4 Defect Concentration Diagrams

This is a graphical method that has been found to be useful in analyzing the causes of product or part defects. The *defect concentration diagram* is a drawing of the product with all relevant views displayed, onto which have been sketched the various defect types at the locations where they each occurred. By analyzing the defect types and corresponding locations, the underlying causes of the defects can possibly be identified.

Montgomery [6] describes a case study involving the final assembly of refrigerators that were plagued by surface defects. A defect concentration diagram (Figure 21.7) was utilized to analyze the problem. The defects were clearly shown to be concentrated around the middle section of the refrigerator. On investigation, it was learned that a belt was wrapped around each unit for material handling purposes. It became evident that the defects were caused by the belt, and corrective action was taken to improve the handling method.

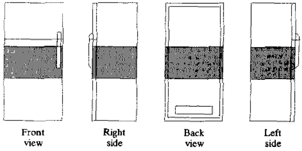



**Figure 21.7** Defect concentration diagram showing four views of refrigerator with locations of surface defects indicated in cross-hatched areas.

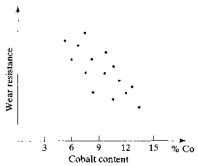



**Figure 21.8** Scatter diagram showing the effect of cobalt binder content on wear resistance of a cemented carbide cutting tool insert.

### 21.3.5 Scatter Diagrams

In many industrial problems involving manufacturing operations, it is desirable to identify a possible relationship that exists between two process variables. The scatter diagram is useful in this regard. A *scatter diagram* is simply an $x$-$y$ plot of the data taken of the two variables in question, as illustrated in Figure 21.8. The data are plotted as pairs; for each $x_i$ value, there is a corresponding $y_i$ value. The shape of the data points considered in aggregate often reveals a pattern or relationship between the two variables. For example, the scatter diagram in Figure 21.8 indicates that a negative correlation exists between cobalt content and wear resistance of a cemented carbide cutting tool. As cobalt content increases, wear resistance decreases. One must be circumspect in using scatter diagrams and in extrapolating the trends that might be indicated by the data. For instance, it might be inferred from our diagram that a cemented carbide tool with zero cobalt content would possess the highest wear resistance of all. However, cobalt serves as an essential binder in the pressing and sintering process used to fabricate cemented carbide tools, and a minimum level of cobalt is necessary to hold the tungsten carbide particles together in the final product. There are other reasons why caution is recommended in the use of the scatter diagram, since only two variables are plotted. There may be other variables in the process whose importance in determining the output is far greater than the two variables displayed.

### 21.3.6 Cause and Effect Diagrams

The *cause and effect diagram* is a graphical-tabular chart used to list and analyze the potential causes of a given problem. It is not really a statistical tool in the sense of the preceding tools. As shown in Figure 21.9, the diagram consists of a central stem leading to the effect (the problem), with multiple branches coming off the stem listing the various groups of possible causes of the problem. Because of its characteristic appearance, the cause and effect diagram is also known as a *fishbone diagram*. In application, the cause and effect diagram is developed by a quality team. The team then attempts to determine which causes are most consequential and how to take corrective action against them.

## 21.4 IMPLEMENTING STATISTICAL PROCESS CONTROL

There is more to successful implementation of SPC than the seven SPC tools. The tools provide the mechanism by which SPC can be implemented, but the mechanism requires a dri-

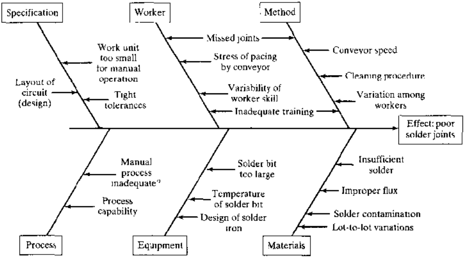



**Figure 21.9** Cause and effect diagram for a manual soldering operation. The diagram indicates the effect (the problem is poor solder joints) at the end of the arrow, and the possible causes are listed on the branches leading toward the effect.

ving force. The driving force in implementing SPC is management commitment to quality and the process of continuous improvement. Through its involvement and example, management drives the successful implementation of SPC. Although management is the most important ingredient, there are other factors that play a role. In this section, we discuss two topics related to SPC implementation: (1) elements of a successful SPC program and (2) how to carry out a quality improvement project.

### 21.4.1 Elements of a Successful SPC Program

Five elements usually present in a successful SPC program can be identified as follows in their order of importance, based on [6]:

1. *Management commitment and leadership.* This is probably the most important element. Management sets the example for others in the organization to follow. Continuous quality improvement is a management-driven process.
2. *Team approach to problem solving.* Quality problems in production usually require the attention and expertise of more than one person for their solution. It is difficult for one individual, acting alone, to make the necessary changes to solve a quality problem. Teams whose members contribute a broad pool of knowledge and skills are found to be the most effect approach to problem solving.
3. *SPC training for all employees.* Employees at all levels in the organization must be knowledgeable in the tools of SPC so that they can be applied in all functions of the enterprise. SPC training must be made available to everyone, from the chief executive officer to the starting production worker.

4. *Emphasis on continuous improvement.* By the commitment and example of management, the process of continuous improvement is pervasive throughout the organization.
5. *A recognition and communication system.* Finally, there should be a mechanism for recognizing successful SPC efforts and communicating them throughout the organization.

### 21.4.2 Accomplishing a Quality Improvement Project

Quality problems are usually attacked on a project-by-project basis by project teams. (Recall that the team approach is one of the five elements of successful SPC implementation.) The teams consist of representatives from various departments. Members are selected according to their knowledge and expertise in the problem area. They serve part-time on the project team in addition to fulfilling their regular duties. On completion of the project, the team is disbanded.

The steps in each project will vary depending on the type of quality problem being addressed. Details of the recommended approaches vary with different authors [5], [7], [8]. The following is a logical sequence of steps derived from these references: (1) select the project, (2) observe the process, (3) analyze the process and conduct experiments if appropriate, (4) formulate corrective action, and (5) implement the corrective action. These steps are discussed in Table 21.6, and we indicate where each of the seven SPC tools might be utilized in a quality improvement project.

*1. Select the Project.* Identifying an appropriate quality project is sometimes more difficult than it might seem. The problems that often stand out are ones that require immediate attention. Of course, these problems must be solved. But the significant gains in quality are often found in the chronic problems that are sometimes obscured by the more dramatic ones.

How is an appropriate quality project identified? The ideal attributes include: (1) it addresses a chronic problem; (2) the problem is significant; (3) the project is feasible and

**TABLE 21.6** Applications of the Seven SPC Tools in a Quality Improvement Project

| *Quality Improvement Project Step* | *SPC Tool* | *Other Techniques and Actions* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Select the project | Control charts<br>Pareto chart | Pareto priority index |
| 2. Observe the process | Check sheet | Check list<br>Propose theories and hypotheses |
| 3. Analyze the project | Histogram<br>Pareto chart<br>Defect concentration diagram<br>Scatter diagram<br>Cause and effect diagram | Conduct experiments<br>Computer simulations<br>Evolutionary operations on actual process<br>Literature review |
| 4. Formulate corrective action | Scatter diagram<br>Cause and effect diagram | Make recommendations<br>Management approval and authorization |
| 5. Implement corrective action | | Revise procedures<br>Manage change<br>Project assessment (audit)<br>Disband team |

it is possible to solve the problem within a reasonable time period; (4) savings should exceed project cost, where savings include intangible as well as tangible factors; and (5) it should be a learning experience in quality improvement that will be of value in future projects.

An approach described in [5] is based on Pareto analysis (Section 21.3.2). The approach was used at AT&T to evaluate and prioritize potential projects (not limited to quality projects). It makes use of a *Pareto priority index*, which is defined:

$$\mathrm{PPI} = \frac{\mathrm{E(S)}}{CT} \tag{21.16}$$

where PPI = Pareto priority index; E(S) = expected savings from the project, which equals anticipated savings multiplied by the probability of success; $C$ = cost of project; and $T$ = time to complete (yr). The candidate project(s) with the highest PPI value is (are) selected for study.

*2. Observe the Process.* This involves a preliminary study to allow the project team to learn about the process (the term "process" refers to the problem area under study, which is often a manufacturing process or an organizational procedure). The study often involves a checklist of basic questions about the process, such as those in Table 21.7.

It is during this step in the project that theories about the problem are proposed. A theory is a hypothesis put forth to explain the cause of the problem. It is a speculation about the relationships that might exist between certain observed phenomena of the process. Theories are developed by project team members and by others familiar with the problem, such as operators, line supervisors, and technical staff. They provide the basis for subsequent analysis and experimentation.

*3. Analyze the Process.* Analysis is where most of the working day of at least some of the team members is spent on the project. Through discussion and debate within the project team, some of the proposed theories are discarded while others are selected for testing. The cause and effect diagram (Section 21.3.6) is often useful in examining the various hypotheses about the problem.

To prove or disprove certain theories, experiments are often required. Experimentation involves collecting data from the process, generally under closely controlled conditions. In some cases, the experiments may be conducted on a pilot plant or computer model

**TABLE 21.7** Checklist of Questions During Observation of the Process

| |
|---|
| What are the inputs and outputs of the current operation? |
| What are the process parameters that affect quality? |
| Is the process output in conformance with engineering specification? |
| Is the process currently in statistical control? If so, what are its statistical characteristics, for example, its process mean and standard deviation? |
| What are the symptoms of the problem? Asking the operators who run the process is essential. |
| How frequently does the process go out of control? |
| What are the reasons that the process goes out of control? Develop a list of reasons. There may be one or two dominant reasons that should be examined closely. |

of the process, rather than on the process itself. This allows certain phenomena to be investigated that might be dangerous or impossible with the real process. Also, testing of the actual process may lead to disruptions in production that are deemed undesirable. Experiments are conducted in quality improvement projects with various objectives, including the following: (1) determine which factors are most important in affecting output variables of interest, (2) determine which factors are most responsible for process variability, (3) define relationships among input and output factors, and (4) drive the process output toward a more desirable level.

The first three objectives require experiments that must be carefully designed to maximize the likelihood that the desired information can be extracted from the data. Design of experiments is a complex subject in statistics that is well beyond the scope of our text, and the interested reader is referred to the literature in that field. The fourth objective can be accomplished using *evolutionary operations*, a systematic search technique developed by G. Box [1], in which small changes in input parameters are made in the process to ascertain their effect on a given process output. Based on the effect of the small changes, larger changes are then made in the inputs to improve the value of the output.

*4. Formulate Corrective Action.* Based on the results of the analysis, an action plan is formulated to solve the problem. The action plan consists of one or more recommended changes designed to improve quality. The changes may improve other performance parameters as well, such as cost and productivity. The recommended changes are specific to the problem, but typical examples include: revised work procedures to be followed by workers, additional worker training, better tooling for the process, change in raw materials, change in product design, new controls on the process, and replacement of equipment.

In most organizations, the action plan requires approval by management. The proposed changes will doubtlessly affect personnel directly involved with the process, and so management approval is needed to make the action plan official. Commitment of company resources may be required to implement the plan, and funds must be authorized by management. Even though the project team has devoted much time and effort in developing a solution to the problem, management may have a perspective not possessed by any of the team members. That perspective may mean the difference between success and failure of the plan. For these and other good reasons, the action plan must undergo a management approval procedure prior to implementation.

*5. Implementation.* Implementation means enacting the changes proposed in the corrective action plan. Aside from the hardware changes in the process (e.g., new processing equipment, better sensors), there is the human side of change that often presents greater challenges than the physical changes. In any social organization there is resistance to change. There are many suggested guidelines to follow when implementing changes that affect humans, and we properly leave these to other references.

As part of implementation, it is necessary to monitor the effect that the changes have on the process. Do the changes result in the desired improvements in quality? What are the unanticipated side effects? When it is established that the desired results have been achieved, the changes must be standardized. This simply means that the altered process becomes the new standard process. Line supervision and technical staff must be apprised of the changes. Documentation must be prepared detailing the new method. Worker training may be required. The center and control limits of the control charts may have to be adjusted in light of the improvement.

Finally, it is desirable to perform an audit of the project. How successful was the process of performing the project? How did the project team work together? What were the biggest implementation problems? What should be done differently on the next project? For an organization committed to continuous improvement, answers to these kinds of questions help to fine-tune its problem-solving skills.

## REFERENCES


[1] BOX, G. E. P., and DRAPER, N. R., *Evolutionary Operation*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1969.

[2] EVANS, J. R., and LINDSAY, W. M., *The Management and Control of Quality*, Third Edition, West Publishing Company, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1996.

[3] GOETSCH, D. L., and S. B. DAVIS, *Introduction to Total Quality*, Second Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1997.

[4] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[5] JURAN, J. M., and GRYNA, F. M., *Quality Planning and Analysis*, Third Edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1993.

[6] MONTGOMERY, D., *Introduction to Statistical Quality Control*, Third edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1996.

[7] PYZDEK, T., and BERGER, R. W., *Quality Engineering Handbook*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, and ASQC Quality Press, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1992.

[8] ROBISON, J., "Integrate Quality Cost Concepts into Team's Problem-Solving Efforts," *Quality Progress*, March 1997, pp 25-30.

[9] SUMMERS, D. C. S., *Quality*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1997.

[10] VEACH, C., "Real-Time SPC The Rubber Meets the Road," *Manufacturing Engineering*, July, 1999, pp 58-64.


## PROBLEMS

**Note:** Problems 2 and 5 require use of standard normal distribution tables not included in this text.

### Process Capability and Statistical Tolerancing

**21.1** A turning process is in statistical control and the output is normally distributed, producing parts with a mean diameter = 30.020 mm and a standard deviation = 0.040 mm. Determine the process capability.

**21.2** In Problem 21.1, the design specification on the part is that the diameter = 30.000 ± 0.150 mm. (a) What proportion of parts fall outside the tolerance limits? (b) If the process is adjusted so that its mean diameter = 30.000 mm and the standard deviation remains the same, what proportion of parts fall outside the tolerance limits?

**21.3** An automated tube bending operation produces parts with an included angle = 91.2°. The process is in statistical control, and the values of included angle are normally distributed with a standard deviation = 0.55°. The design specification on the angle = 90.0° ± 2.0°. (a) Determine the process capability. (b) If the process could be adjusted so that its mean = 90.0°, determine the value of the process capability index.

**21.4** A plastic extrusion process is in statistical control and the output is normally distributed. Extrudate is produced with a critical cross-section dimension = 28.6 mm and standard deviation = 0.53 mm. Determine the process capability.

**21.5** In Problem 21.4, the design specification on the part is that the critical cross-sectional dimension = 28.0 ± 2.0 mm. (a) What proportion of parts fall outside the tolerance limits? (b) If the process were adjusted so that its mean diameter = 28.0 mm and the standard deviation remained the same, what proportion of parts would fall outside the tolerance limits? (c) With the adjusted mean at 28.0 mm, determine the value of the process capability index.

## Control Charts

**21.6** Seven samples of five parts each have been collected from an extrusion process that is in statistical control, and the diameter of the extrudate has been measured for each part. (a) Determine the values of the center, LCL, and UCL for $\bar{x}$ and $R$ charts. The calculated values of $\bar{x}$ and $R$ for each sample are given below (measured values are in inches). (b) Construct the control charts and plot the sample data on the charts.

| $s$ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{x}$ | 1.002 | 0.999 | 0.995 | 1.004 | 0.996 | 0.998 | 1.006 |
| $R$ | 0.010 | 0.011 | 0.014 | 0.020 | 0.008 | 0.013 | 0.017 |

**21.7** Ten samples of size $n = 8$ have been collected from a process in statistical control, and the dimension of interest has been measured for each part. (a) Determine the values of the center, LCL, and UCL for the $\bar{x}$ and $R$ charts. The calculated values of $\bar{x}$ and $R$ for each sample are given below (measured values are in millimeters). (b) Construct the control charts and plot the sample data on the charts.

| $s$ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $\bar{x}$ | 9.22 | 9.15 | 9.20 | 9.28 | 9.19 | 9.12 | 9.20 | 9.24 | 9.17 | 9.23 |
| $R$ | 0.24 | 0.17 | 0.30 | 0.26 | 0.27 | 0.19 | 0.21 | 0.32 | 0.21 | 0.23 |

**21.8** In 12 samples of size $n = 7$, the average value of the sample means is $\bar{\bar{x}} = 6.860$ in for the dimension of interest, and the mean of the ranges of the samples is $\bar{R} = 0.027$ in. Determine: (a) LCL and UCL for the $\bar{x}$ chart and (b) LCL and UCL for the $R$ chart. (c) What is your best estimate of the standard deviation of the process?

**21.9** In nine samples each of size $n = 10$, the grand mean of the samples is $\bar{\bar{x}} = 100$ for the characteristic of interest, and the mean of the ranges of the samples is $\bar{R} = 8.5$. Determine: (a) LCL and UCL for the $\bar{x}$ chart and (b) LCL and UCL for the $R$ chart. (c) Based on the data given, estimate the standard deviation of the process.

**21.10** A $p$ chart is to be constructed. Six samples of 25 parts each have been collected, and the average number of defects per sample = 2.75. Determine the center, LCL, and UCL for the $p$ chart.

**21.11** Ten samples of equal size are taken to prepare a $p$ chart. The total number of parts in these ten samples was 900, and the total number of defects counted was 117. Determine the center, LCL, and UCL for the $p$ chart.

**21.12** The yield of good chips during a certain step in silicon processing of integrated circuits averages 91%. The number of chips per wafer is 200. Determine the center, LCL, and UCL for the $p$ chart that might be used for this process.

**21.13** The UCL and LCL for a $p$ chart are: LCL = 0.10 and UCL = 0.24. Determine the sample size n that is used with this control chart.

**21.14** The UCL and LCL for a $p$ chart are: LCL = 0 and UCL = 0.20. Determine the sample size $n$ that is compatible with this control chart.

**21.15** Twelve cars were inspected after final assembly. The number of defects found ranged between 87 and 139 defects per car with an average of 116. Determine the center UCL, and LCL for the $c$ chart that might be used in this situation.

**21.16** For each of the three control charts in Figure P21.16, identify whether there is evidence that the process depicted is out of control.

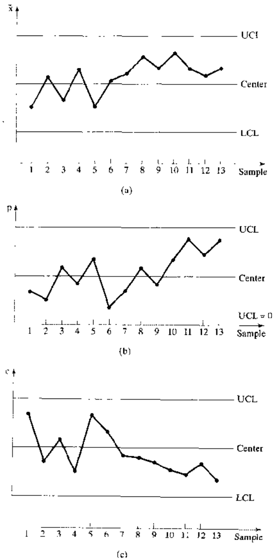



**Figure P21.16** Control charts for analysis.

### Miscellaneous

**21.17** Consider some manufacturing process with which you are familiar that manifests some chronic problem. Develop a cause and effect diagram that identifies the possible causes of the problem. This is a project that lends itself to a team activity.

**21.18** Consider some organizational procedure with which you are familiar in your company that manifests some chronic problem. Develop a cause and effect diagram that identifies the possible causes of the problem. This is a project that lends itself to a team activity.

**21.19** Six quality improvement projects are being considered for possible selection. The anticipated project cost, savings, probability of success, and time to complete are given in the accompanying table. Which project should be selected if the Pareto priority index is used as the selection criterion?

| *Project* | *Cost* | *Savings* | *Pr(Success)* | *Time to Complete* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | $20,000 | $50,000 | 0.80 | 1.5 yr |
| B | $10,000 | $34,000 | 0.90 | 1.2 yr |
| C | $35,000 | $60,000 | 0.75 | 2.0 yr |
| D | $6,000 | $25,000 | 0.90 | 1.5 yr |
| E | $25,000 | $90,000 | 0.60 | 2.5 yr |
| F | $20,000 | $80,000 | 0.85 | 0.75 yr |

chapter 22

# Inspection Principles and Practices

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



In quality control, inspection is the means by which poor quality is detected and good quality is assured. Inspection is traditionally accomplished using labor-intensive methods that are time-consuming and costly. Consequently, manufacturing lead time and product cost are increased without adding any real value. In addition, manual inspection is performed after the process, often after a significant time delay. Therefore, if a bad product has been made, it is too late to correct the defect(s) during regular processing. Parts already manufactured that do not meet specified quality standards must either be scrapped or reworked at additional cost.

New approaches to quality control are addressing these problems and drastically altering the way inspection is accomplished. The new approaches include:

- 100% automated inspection rather than sampling inspection using manual methods
- on-line sensor systems to accomplish inspection during or immediately after the manufacturing process rather than off-line inspection performed later
- feedback control of the manufacturing operation, in which process variables that determine product quality are monitored rather than the product itself
- software tools to track and analyze the sensor measurements over time for statistical process control
- advanced inspection and sensor technologies, combined with computer-based systems to automate the operation of the sensor systems.

In this chapter, we examine some of these modern approaches to inspection with an emphasis on automating the inspection function. In the following chapter, we discuss the relevant inspection technologies such as coordinate measuring machines and machine vision.

## 22.1 INSPECTION FUNDAMENTALS

The term ***inspection*** refers to the activity of examining the product, its components, subassemblies, or materials out of which it is made, to determine whether they conform to design specifications. The design specifications are defined by the product designer.

### 22.1.1 Types of Inspection

Inspections can be classified into two types, according to the amount of information derived from the inspection procedure about the item's conformance to specification:

1. ***Inspection for variables***, in which one or more quality characteristics of interest are measured using an appropriate measuring instrument or sensor. We discuss measurement principles in Section 23.1 of the following chapter.
2. ***Inspection for attributes***, in which the part or product is inspected to determine whether it conforms to the accepted quality standard. The determination is sometimes based simply on the judgment of the inspector. In other cases, the inspector uses a gage to aid in the decision. Inspection by attributes can also involve counting the number of defects in a product.

Examples of the two types of inspection are listed in Table 22.1. To relate these differences to our discussion of control charts in the previous chapter, inspection for variables uses the $\bar{x}$ chart and $R$ chart, whereas inspection for attributes uses the $p$ chart or $c$ chart.

The advantage of measuring the part characteristic is that more information is obtained from the inspection procedure about the item's conformance to design specification. A quantitative value is obtained. Data can be collected and recorded over time to observe

**TABLE 22.1** Examples of Inspection for Variables and Inspection for Attributes

| *Examples of Inspection by Variables* | *Examples of Inspection by Attributes* |
|---|---|
| Measuring the diameter of a cylindrical part | Gaging a cylindrical part with a GO/NO-GO gage to determine if it is within tolerance |
| Measuring the temperature of a toaster oven to see if it is within the range specified by design engineering | Determining the fraction defect rate of a sample of production parts |
| Measuring the electrical resistance of an electronic component | Counting the number of defects per automobile as it leaves the final assembly plant |
| Measuring the specific gravity of a fluid chemical product | Counting the number of imperfections in a production run of carpeting |

trends in the process that makes the part. The data can be used to fine-tune the process so that future parts are produced with dimensions closer to the nominal design value. In attributes inspection (e.g., when a dimension is simply checked with a gage), all that is known is whether the part is acceptable and perhaps whether it is too big or too small. On the other hand, the advantage of inspection for attributes is that it can be done quickly and therefore at lower cost. Measuring the quality characteristic is a more involved procedure and therefore takes more time.

### 22.1.2 Inspection Procedure

A typical inspection procedure performed on an individual item, such as a part, subassembly, or final product, consists of the following steps [2]:

1. ***Presentation***—The item is presented for examination.
2. ***Examination***—The item is examined for nonconforming feature(s). In inspection for variables, examination consists of measuring a dimension or other attribute of the part or product. In inspection for attributes, this involves gaging one or more dimensions or searching the item for flaws.
3. ***Decision***—Based on the examination, a decision is made whether the item satisfies the defined quality standards. The simplest case involves a binary decision, in which the item is deemed either acceptable or unacceptable. In more complicated cases, the decision may involve grading the item into one of more than two possible quality categories, such as grade A, grade B, and unacceptable.
4. ***Action***—The decision should result in some action, such as accepting or rejecting the item, or sorting the item into the most appropriate quality grade. It may also be desirable to take action to correct the manufacturing process to minimize the occurrence of future defects.

The inspection procedure is traditionally performed by a human worker (referred to as ***manual inspection***), but automated inspection systems are being increasingly used as sensor and computer technologies are developed and refined for the purpose. In some production situations only one item is produced (e.g., a one-of-a-kind machine or a prototype), and the inspection procedure is applied only to the one item. In other situations, such as batch production and mass production, the inspection procedure is repeated either on all of the items in the production run (***100% inspection***, sometimes called ***screening***) or on only a sample taken from the population of items (***sampling inspection***). Manual inspection is more likely to be used when only one item or a sample of parts from a larger batch is inspected, whereas automated systems are more common for 100% inspection in mass production.

In the ideal inspection procedure, all of the specified dimensions and attributes of the part or product would be inspected. However, inspecting every dimension is time consuming and expensive. In general, it is unnecessary. As a practical matter, certain dimensions and specifications are more important than others in terms of assembly or function of the product. These important specifications are called ***key characteristics*** (KCs). They are the specifications that should be recognized as important in design, identified as KCs on the part drawings and in the engineering specifications, paid the most attention in manufacturing, and inspected in quality control. Examples of KCs include: matching dimensions of assembled components, surface roughness on bearing surfaces, straightness and concentricity of high speed rotating shafts, and finishes of exterior surfaces of consumer products. The inspection procedure should be designed to focus on these KCs. It usually turns out that if the processes responsible for the KCs are maintained in statistical control (Section 21.1), then the other dimensions of the part will also be in statistical control. And if these less important part features deviate from their nominal values, the consequences, if any, are less severe.

### 22.1.3 Inspection Accuracy

Errors sometimes occur in the inspection procedure during the examination and decision steps. Items of good quality are incorrectly classified as not conforming to specifications, and nonconforming items are mistakenly classified as conforming. These two kinds of mistakes are called Type I and Type II errors. A ***Type I error*** occurs when an item of good quality is incorrectly classified as being defective. It is a "false alarm." A ***Type II error*** is when an item of poor quality is erroneously classified as being good. It is a "miss." These error types are portrayed graphically in Table 22.2.

Inspection errors do not always neatly follow the above classification. For example, in inspection by variables, a common inspection error consists of incorrectly measuring a part dimension. As another example, a form of inspection by attributes involves counting the number of nonconforming features on a given product, such as the number of defects on a new automobile coming off the final assembly line. An error is made if the inspector misses some of the defects. In both of these examples, an error may result in either a con-

**TABLE 22.2** Type I and Type II Inspection Errors

| Decision | Conforming Item | Nonconforming Item |
|---|---|---|
| Accept item | Good decision | Type II error<br>"Miss" |
| Reject item | Type I error<br>"False alarm" | Good decision |

forming feature being classified as nonconforming (Type I error) or a nonconforming feature being classified as conforming (Type II error).

In manual inspection, these errors result from factors such as: (1) complexity and difficulty of the inspection task, (2) inherent variations in the inspection procedure, (3) judgment required by the human inspector, (4) mental fatigue, and (5) inaccuracies or problems with the gages or measuring instruments used in the inspection procedure. When the procedure is accomplished by an automated system, inspection errors occur due to factors such as: (1) complexity and difficulty of the inspection task, (2) resolution of the inspection sensor, which is affected by "gain" and similar control parameter settings, (3) equipment malfunctions, and (4) faults or "bugs" in the computer program controlling the inspection procedure.

The term ***inspection accuracy*** refers to the capability of the inspection process to avoid these types of errors. Inspection accuracy is high when few or no errors are made. Measures of inspection accuracy are suggested by Drury [2] for the case in which parts are classified by an inspector (or automatic inspection system) into either of two categories, conforming or nonconforming. Considering this binary case, let $p_1$ = proportion of times (or probability) that a conforming item is classified as conforming, and let $p_2$ = proportion of times (or probability) that a nonconforming item is classified as nonconforming. In other words, both of these proportions (or probabilities) correspond to correct decisions. Thus, $(1 - p_1)$ = probability that a conforming item is classified as nonconforming (Type I error), and $(1 - p_2)$ = probability that a nonconforming item is classified as conforming (Type II error).

If we let $q$ = actual fraction defect rate in the batch of items, a table of possible outcomes can be constructed as in Table 22.3 to show the fraction of parts correctly and incorrectly classified and for those incorrectly classified, whether the error is Type I or Type II.

These proportions (probabilities) would have to be assessed empirically for individual inspectors by determining the proportion of correct decisions made in each of the two cases of conforming and nonconforming items in a parts batch of interest. Unfortunately, the proportions vary for different inspection tasks. The error rates are generally higher ($p_1$, $p_2$ values lower) for more difficult inspection tasks. Also, different inspectors tend to have different $p_1$ and $p_2$ rates. Typical values of $p_1$ range between 0.90 and 0.99, and typical $p_2$ values range between 0.80 and 0.90, but values as low as 0.50 for both $p_1$ and $p_2$ have been reported [2]. For human inspectors, $p_1$ is inclined to be higher than $p_2$ because inspectors are usually examining items that are mostly good quality and tend to be on the lookout for defects.

**TABLE 22.3** Table of Possible Outcomes in Inspection Procedure, Given $q$, $p_1$, and $p_2$

| | *True State of Item* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Decision* | *Conforming* | *Nonconforming* | *Total* |
| Accept item | $p_1(1 - q)$ | $(1 - p_2)q$<br>Type II error | $p_1 + q(1 - p_1 - p_2)$ |
| Reject item | $(1 - p_1)(1 - q)$<br>Type I error | $p_2q$ | $1 - p_1 - q(1 - p_1 - p_2)$ |
| Total | $(1 - q)$ | $q$ | 1.0 |

Values of $p_1$ and $p_2$ are workable measures of inspection accuracy for a human inspector or an automated inspection system. Each measure taken separately provides useful information because the $p_1$ and $p_2$ values would be expected to vary independently to some degree depending on the inspection task and the person or system performing the inspection. Nonetheless, the two values can be combined into a single measure of inspection accuracy by taking a simple average:

$$A = \frac{p_1 + p_2}{2} \tag{22.1}$$

where $A$ = measure of inspection accuracy that ranges between zero (all inspection decisions incorrect) and 1.0 (all decisions correct = perfect accuracy); $p_1$ = probability that a conforming item is classified as conforming; and $p_2$ = probability that a defective item is classified as defective, as previously defined. A practical difficulty in applying the measure is determining the true values of $p_1$ and $p_2$. These values would have to be determined by an alternative inspection process, which would itself be prone to similar errors as the first process whose accuracy is being assessed.

**EXAMPLE 22.1 Inspection Accuracy**

A human worker has inspected a batch of 100 parts, reporting a total of 12 defects in the batch. On careful reexamination, it was found that four of these reported defects were in fact good pieces (four false alarms), whereas a total of six defective units in the batch were undetected by the inspector (six misses). What is the inspector's accuracy in this instance? Specifically, what are the values of (a) $p_1$, (b) $p_2$, and (c) $A$?

***Solution:*** Of the 12 reported defects, four are good, leaving eight defects among those reported. In addition, six other defects were found among the reportedly good units. Thus, the total number of defects in the batch of 100 is $8 + 6 = 14$. This means there were $100 - 14 = 86$ good units in the batch. We can assess the values of $p_1$, $p_2$, and $A$ on the basis of these numbers.

(a) To assess $p_1$, we note that the inspector reported 12 defects, leaving 88 that were reported as acceptable. Of these 88, six were actually defects, thus leaving $88 - 6 = 82$ actual good units reported by the inspector. Thus, the proportion of good parts reported as conforming is:

$$p_1 = \frac{82}{86} = 0.9535$$

(b) There are 14 defects in the batch, of which the inspector correctly identified eight. Thus, the proportion of defects reported as nonconforming is:

$$p_2 = \frac{8}{14} = 0.5714$$

(c) The overall inspection accuracy is given by Eq. (22.1):

$$A = \frac{0.9535 + 0.5714}{2} = 0.7625$$

### 22.1.4 Inspection vs. Testing

Quality control utilizes both inspection and testing procedures to detect whether a part or product is within design specifications. Both activities are important in a company's quality control program. Whereas inspection is used to assess the quality of the product relative to design specifications, testing is a term in quality control that refers to assessment of the functional aspects of the product: Does the product operate the way it is supposed to operate? Will it continue to operate for a reasonable period of time? Will it operate in environments of extreme temperature and humidity? Accordingly, ***QC testing*** is a procedure in which the item being tested (product, subassembly, part, or material) is observed during actual operation or under conditions that might be present during operation. For example, a product might be tested by running it for a certain period of time to determine whether it functions properly. If the product successfully passes the test, it is approved for shipment to the customer. As another example, a part, or the material out of which the part is to be made, might be tested by subjecting it to a stress load that is equivalent to or greater than the load anticipated during normal service.

Sometimes the testing procedure is damaging or destructive to the item. To ensure that the majority of the items (e.g., raw materials or finished products) are of satisfactory quality, a limited number of the items are sacrificed. However, the expense of destructive testing is significant enough that great efforts are made to devise methods that do not result in the destruction of the item. These methods are referred to as ***nondestructive testing*** (NDT) and ***nondestructive evaluation*** (NDE).

Another type of testing procedure involves not only the testing of the product to see that it functions properly; it also requires an adjustment or ***calibration*** of the product that depends on the outcome of the test. During the testing procedure, one or more operating variables of the product are measured, and adjustments are made in certain inputs that influence the performance of the operating variables. For example, in the testing of certain appliances with heating elements, if the measured temperature is too high or too low after a specified time, adjustments can be made in the control circuitry (e.g., changes in potentiometer settings) to bring the temperature within the acceptable operating range.

## 22.2 SAMPLING VS. 100% INSPECTION

Our primary interest in this chapter is on inspection rather than testing. As suggested by the preceding descriptions of the two functions, inspection is more closely associated with manufacturing operations. Inspection can be performed using statistical sampling or 100%.

### 22.2.1 Sampling Inspection

Inspection is traditionally accomplished using manual labor. The work is often boring and monotonous, yet the need for precision and accuracy is great. Hours are sometimes required to measure the important dimensions of only one workpart. Because of the time and expense involved in inspection work, sampling procedures are often used to reduce the need to inspect every part. The statistical sampling procedures are known by the terms ***acceptance sampling*** or ***lot sampling***.

*Types of Sampling Plans.* There are two basic types of acceptance sampling: (1) attributes sampling and (2) variables sampling, corresponding to inspection by attributes and inspection by variables previously described (Section 22.1.1). In a ***variables sampling plan***, a random sample is taken from the population, and the quality characteristic of interest (e.g., a part dimension) is measured for each unit in the sample. These measurements are then averaged, and the mean value is compared with an allowed value for the plan. The batch is then accepted or rejected depending on the results of this comparison. The allowed value used in the comparison is chosen so that the probability that the batch will be rejected is small unless the actual quality level in the population is indeed poor.

In an ***attributes sampling plan***, a random sample is drawn from the batch, and the units in the sample are classified as acceptable or defective, depending on the quality criterion being used. The batch is accepted if the number of defects does not exceed a certain value, called the ***acceptance number***. On the other hand, if the number of defects found in the sample is greater than the acceptance number, the batch is rejected. As in variables sampling, the value of the acceptance number is selected so that the probability that the batch will be rejected is small unless the overall quality of the parts in the batch is poor.

In sampling, there is always a probability that the batch will be rejected even if the overall quality is acceptable. Similarly, there is a probability that the batch will be accepted even if the overall quality level in the batch is not acceptable. Statistical errors are a fact of life in statistical sampling. Let us explore what is meant by the word "acceptable" in the context of acceptance sampling and at the same time examine the risks associated with committing a statistical error. Our focus will be on attributes sampling, but the same basic notions apply to variables sampling. Ideally, a batch of parts would be absolutely free of defects. However, such perfection is difficult if not impossible to attain in practice. Accordingly, a certain level of quality is agreed on between the customer and the supplier as being acceptable, even though that quality is less than perfect. This is called the ***acceptable quality level*** (AQL), which is defined in terms of proportion of defects, or fraction defect rate $q_o$. Alternatively, there is another level of quality, again defined in terms of fraction defect rate $q_1$, where $q_1 > q_o$, which is agreed on by customer and supplier as being unacceptable. This $q_1$ level is called the ***lot tolerance percent defective*** (LTPD).

*Statistical Errors in Sampling.* There are two possible statistical errors that can occur in acceptance sampling. The first is rejecting a batch of product that is equal to or better than the AQL (meaning that the actual $q \leq q_o$). This is a ***Type I error***, and the probability of committing this type of error is called the ***producer's risk*** $\alpha$. The second error that can occur is accepting a batch of product whose quality is worse than the LTPD $(q \geq q_1)$. This is a ***Type II error***, and the probability of this error is called the ***consumer's risk*** $\beta$. These errors are depicted in Table 22.4. Sampling errors are not to be confused with the

**TABLE 22.4** Type I and Type II Sampling Errors

| Decision | Acceptable Batch | Unacceptable Batch |
|---|---|---|
| Accept batch | Good decision | Type II error<br>Consumer's risk ($\beta$) |
| Reject batch | Type I error<br>Producer's risk ($\alpha$) | Good decision |

inspection errors previously described in our discussion of inspection accuracy (Section 22.1.3). Sampling errors occur because only a fraction of the total population has been inspected. We are at the mercy of the laws of probability as to whether the sample is an accurate reflection of the population. Inspection errors, on the other hand, occur when an individual item is wrongly classified as being defective when it is good (Type I error) or good when it is defective (Type II error).

Design of an acceptance sampling plan involves determining values of the sample size $Q_s$ and the acceptance number $N_a$ that provide the agreed-on AQL and LTPD, together with the associated probabilities $\alpha$ and $\beta$ (producer's and consumer's risks). Procedures for determining $Q_s$ and $N_a$ based on AQL, LTPD, $\alpha$, and $\beta$ are described in texts on quality control, such as [3], and [4]. Also, standard sampling plans have been developed, such as MIL-STD-105D (also known as ANSI/ASQC Z1.4, the U.S. standard, and ISO/DIS-2859, the international standard).

*Operating Characteristic Curve.* Much information about a sampling plan can be obtained from its operating characteristic curve (OC curve). The ***operating characteristic curve*** for a given sampling plan gives the probability of accepting a batch as a function of the possible fraction defect rates that might exist in the batch. The general shape of the OC curve is shown in Figure 22.1. In effect, the OC curve indicates the degree of protection provided by the sampling plan for various quality levels of incoming lots. If the incoming batch has a high quality level (low $q$), then the probability of acceptance is high. If the quality level of the incoming batch is poor (high $q$), then the probability of acceptance is low.

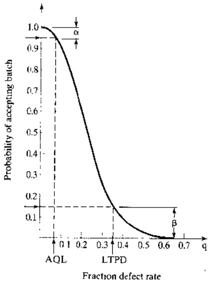



**Figure 22.1** The operating characteristic (OC) curve for a given sampling plan shows the probability of accepting the lot for different fraction defect rates of incoming batches.

When a batch is rejected as a result of a sampling procedure, several possible actions might be taken. One possibility is to send the parts back to the supplier. If there is an immediate need for the parts in production, this action may be impractical. A more appropriate action may be to inspect the batch 100% and sort out the defects, which are sent back to the supplier for replacement or credit. A third possible action is to sort out the defects and rework or replace them at the supplier's expense. Whatever the action, rejecting a batch leads to corrective action that has the effect of improving the overall quality of the batch exiting the inspection operation. A given sampling plan can be described by its ***average outgoing quality*** curve (AOQ curve), the typical shape of which is illustrated in Figure 22.2. The AOQ curve shows the average quality of batches passing through the sampling inspection plan as a function of incoming lot quality (before inspection). As one would expect, when the incoming quality is good (low $q$), the average outgoing quality is good (low AOQ). When the incoming quality is poor (high $q$), the AOQ is also low because there is a strong probability of rejecting the batch, with the resulting action that defectives in the batch are sorted out and replaced with good parts. It is in the intermediate range, between the AQL and LTPD, that the outgoing batch quality of the sampling plan is the poorest. As shown in our plot, the highest AOQ level will be found at some intermediate value of $q$, and this AOQ is called the ***average outgoing quality limit*** (AOQL) of the plan.

### 22.2.2 100% Manual Inspection

In sampling inspection, the sample size is often small compared with the size of the population. The sample size may represent only 1% or fewer of the number of parts in the batch. Because only a portion of the items in the population is inspected in a statistical sampling procedure, there is a risk that some defective parts will slip through the inspection screen. As indicated in our preceding discussion of average outgoing quality, one of the objectives in statistical sampling is to define the expected risk, that is, to determine the average fraction defect rate that will pass through the sampling inspection procedure over the long run, under the assumption that the manufacturing process remains in statistical control.

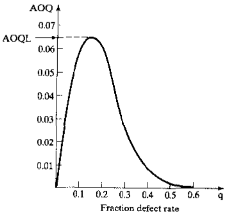



**Figure 22.2** Average outgoing quality (AOQ) curve for a sampling plan.

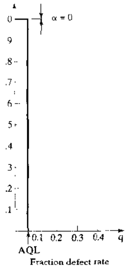



**Figure 22.3** Operating characteristic curve of a 100% inspection plan.

The frequency with which samples are taken, the sample size, and the permissible quality level (AQL) are three important factors that affect the level of risk involved. But the fact remains that something less than 100% good quality must be tolerated as a price to be paid for using statistical sampling procedures.

In principle, the only way to achieve 100% acceptable quality is to use 100% inspection. It is instructive to compare the OC curve of a 100% inspection plan, shown in Figure 22.3, with the OC curve of a sampling plan as in Figure 22.1. The advantage of 100% inspection is that the probability the batch will be accepted is 1.0 if its quality is equal to or better than the AQL and zero if the quality is lower than the AQL. One might logically argue that the term "acceptable quality level" has less meaning in 100% inspection, since a target of zero defects should be attainable if every part in the batch is inspected; in other words, the AQL should be set at $q = 0$. However, one must distinguish between the output of the manufacturing process that makes the parts and the output of the inspection procedure that sorts the parts. It may be possible to separate out all of the defects in the batch so that only good parts remain after inspection (AOQ = zero defects), whereas the manufacturing process still produces defects at a certain fraction defect rate $q$ ($q > 0$).

Theoretically, 100% inspection allows only good quality parts to pass through the inspection procedure. However, when 100% inspection is done manually, two problems arise: First, the obvious problem is the expense involved. Instead of dividing the time of inspecting the sample over the number of parts in the production run, the inspection time per piece is applied to every part. The inspection cost sometimes exceeds the cost of making the part. Second, with 100% manual inspection, there is the problem of inspection accuracy (Section 22.1.3). There are almost always errors associated with 100% inspection (Type I and II errors), especially when the inspection procedure is performed by human inspectors. Because of these human errors, 100% inspection using manual methods is no guarantee of 100% good quality product.

## 22.3 AUTOMATED INSPECTION

An alternative to manual inspection is automated inspection. Automation of the inspection procedure will almost always reduce inspection time per piece, and automated machines are not given to the fatigue and mental errors suffered by human inspectors. Economic justification of an automated inspection system depends on whether the savings in labor cost and improvement in accuracy will more than offset the investment and/or development costs of the system.

***Automated inspection*** can be defined as the automation of one or more of the steps involved in the inspection procedure. There are a number of alternative ways in which automated or semiautomated inspection can be implemented:

1. Automated ***presentation*** of parts by an automatic handling system with a human operator still performing the ***examination*** and ***decision*** steps.
2. Automated ***examination*** and ***decision*** by an automatic inspection machine, with manual loading (***presentation***) of parts into the machine.
3. Completely automated inspection system in which parts ***presentation***, ***examination***, and ***decision*** are all performed automatically.

In the first case, the inspection procedure is performed by a human worker, with all of the possible errors in this form of inspection. In cases (2) and (3), the actual inspection operation is accomplished by an automated system. These latter cases are our primary interest here.

As in manual inspection, automated inspection can be performed using statistical sampling or 100%. When statistical sampling is used, sampling errors are possible.

With either sampling or 100% inspection, automated systems can commit inspection errors, just as human inspectors can make such errors. For simple inspection tasks, such as automatic gaging of a single dimension on a part, automated systems operate with high accuracy (low error rate). As the inspection operation becomes more complex and difficult, the error rate tends to increase. Some machine vision applications (Section 23.5) fall into this category; for example, detecting defects in integrated circuit chips or printed circuit boards. It should be mentioned that these inspection tasks are also complex and difficult for human workers, and this is one of the reasons for developing automated inspection systems that can do the job.

As before, inspection errors can be classified as Type I or Type II. A Type I error occurs when the automated system indicates a defect when no defect is really present, and a Type II error occurs when the system misses a real defect. Some automated inspection systems can be adjusted in terms of their sensitivity for detecting the defect they are designed to find. This is accomplished by means of a "gain" adjustment or similar control. When the sensitivity adjustment is low, the probability of a Type I error is low but the probability of a Type II error is high. When the sensitivity adjustment is increased, the probability of a Type I error increases, whereas the probability of a Type II error decreases. This relationship is portrayed in Figure 22.4. Because of these errors, 100% automated inspection cannot guarantee 100% good quality product.

The full potential of automated inspection is best achieved when it is integrated into the manufacturing process, when 100% inspection is used, and when the results of the procedure lead to some positive action. The positive actions can take either or both of two possible forms, as illustrated in Figure 22.5:

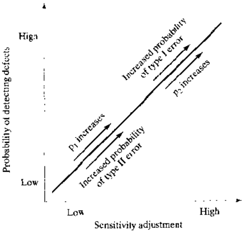



**Figure 22.4** Relationship between sensitivity of an automated inspection system and the probability of Type I and Type II errors: $p_1$ = the probability that a conforming item is correctly classified, and $p_2$ = the probability that a nonconforming item is correctly classified.

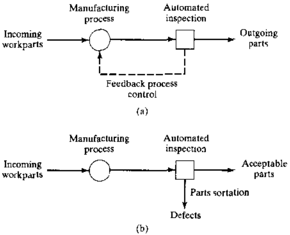



**Figure 22.5** Action steps resulting from automated inspection: (a) feedback process control and (b) sortation of parts into two or more quality levels.

(a) ***Feedback process control.*** In this case, data are fed back to the preceding manufacturing process responsible for the quality characteristics being evaluated or gaged in the inspection operation. The purpose of feedback is to allow compensating adjustments to be made in the process to reduce variability and improve quality. If the measurements from the automated inspection indicate that the output of the process is beginning to drift toward the high side of the tolerance (e.g., tool wear might cause a part dimension to increase over time), corrections can be made in the input parameters to bring the output back to the nominal value. In this way, average quality is maintained within a smaller variability range than is possible with sampling inspection methods. In effect, process capability is improved.

(b) ***Parts sortation.*** In this case, the parts are sorted according to quality level: acceptable versus unacceptable quality. There may be more than two levels of quality appropriate for the process (e.g., acceptable, reworkable, and scrap). Sortation and inspection may be accomplished in several ways. One alternative is to both inspect and sort at the same station. Other installations locate one or more inspections along the processing line, with a single sortation station near the end of the line. Inspection data are analyzed and instructions are forwarded to the sortation station indicating what action is required for each part.

## 22.4 WHEN AND WHERE TO INSPECT

Inspection can be performed at any of several places in production: (1) receiving inspection, when raw materials and parts are received from suppliers, (2) at various stages of manufacture, and (3) before shipment to the customer. In this section our principal focus is on case (2), that is, when and where to inspect during production.

### 22.4.1 Off-Line and On-Line Inspection

The timing of the inspection procedure in relation to the manufacturing process is an important consideration in quality control. Three alternative situations can be distinguished, shown in Figure 22.6: (a) off-line inspection, (b) on-line/in-process inspection, and (c) on-line/post-process inspection.

*Off-Line Inspection.* ***Off-line inspection*** is performed away from the manufacturing process, and there is generally a time delay between processing and inspection. Off-line inspection is often accomplished using statistical sampling methods. Manual inspection is common. Factors that tend to promote the use of off-line inspection include: (1) variability of the process is well within design tolerance, (2) processing conditions are stable and the risk of significant deviations in the process is small, and (3) cost of inspection is high relative to the cost of a few defective parts. The disadvantage of off-line inspection is that the parts have already been made by the time poor quality is detected. When sampling is used, an additional disadvantage is that defective parts can pass through the sampling procedure.

*On-Line Inspection.* The alternative to off-line inspection is on-line inspection, in which the procedure is performed when the parts are made, either as an integral step in the processing or assembly operation, or immediately afterward. Two on-line inspection procedures can be distinguished: on-line/in-process and on-line/post-process, illustrated in Figure 22.6(b) and (c).

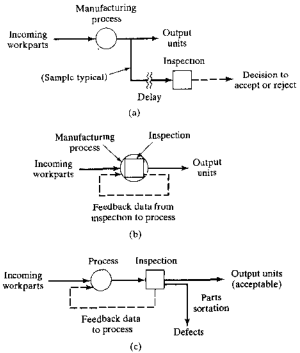



**Figure 22.6** Three inspection alternatives: (a) off-line inspection, (b) on-line/in-process inspection, and (c) on-line/post-process inspection.

***On-line/in-process inspection*** is achieved by performing the inspection procedure during the manufacturing operation. As the parts are being made, the inspection procedure is measuring or gaging the parts simultaneously. The benefit of in-process inspection is that it may be possible to influence the operation that is making the current part, thereby correcting a potential quality problem before the part is completed. When on-line/in-process inspection is performed manually, it means that the worker who is performing the manufacturing process is also performing the inspection procedure. For automated manufacturing systems, this on-line inspection method is typically done on a 100% basis using automated sensor methods. Technologically, automated on-line/in-process inspection of the product is usually difficult and expensive to implement. As an alternative, on-line/post-process procedures are often used.

With ***on-line/post-process inspection***, the measurement or gaging procedure is accomplished immediately following the production process. Even though it follows the process, it is still considered an on-line method because it is integrated with the manufacturing workstation, and the results of the inspection can immediately influence the production operation. The limitation of on-line/post-process inspection is that the part has already been made, and it is therefore impossible to make corrections that will influence its processing. The best that can be done is to influence the production of the next part.

On-line/post-process inspection can be performed as either a manual or an automated procedure. When accomplished manually, it can be accomplished using either sampling or 100% inspection (with all of the risks associated with 100% manual inspection). Gaging of part dimensions at the production machine with go/no-go gages is a common example of on-line/post-process inspection. When on-line/post-process inspection is automated, it is typically performed on a 100% basis. Whether manual or automated, statistical process control techniques (Chapter 21) are useful for analyzing the data generated by the inspection procedure.

Either form of on-line inspection should drive some action in the manufacturing operation, either feedback process control or parts sortation. If on-line inspection results in no action, then off-line inspection might as well be utilized instead of on-line technologies.

### 22.4.2 Product Inspection vs. Process Monitoring

In the preceding discussion of inspection issues, we have implicitly assumed that it was the product itself that was being measured or gaged, either during or after the manufacturing process. An alternative approach is to measure the process rather than the product, that is, to monitor the key parameters of the manufacturing process that determine product quality. The advantage of this approach is that an on-line/in-process measurement system is much more likely to be practicable for process variables than for product variables. Such a measurement procedure could be readily incorporated into an on-line feedback control system, permitting any required corrective action to be taken while the product is still being processed and theoretically preventing defective units from being made. If entirely reliable, this arrangement would avoid, or at least reduce, subsequent off-line inspection of the actual product.

Use of process monitoring as an alternative to product inspection relies on the assumption of ***deterministic manufacturing***. This means that a fairly exact cause-and-effect relationship exists between the process parameters that can be measured, and the quality characteristics that must be maintained within tolerance. Accordingly, by controlling the process parameters, indirect control of product quality is achieved. The assumption of deterministic manufacturing is most applicable under the following circumstances: (1) the process is well behaved, meaning that it is ordinarily in statistical control and that deviations from this normal condition are rare; (2) process capability is good, meaning that the standard deviation of each process variable of interest under normal operating conditions is small; and (3) the process has been studied to establish the cause-and-effect relationships between process variables and product quality characteristics and that mathematical models of these relationships have been derived.

Although the approach of controlling product quality indirectly through the use of process monitoring is uncommon in piece parts production, it is quite prevalent in the continuous process industries such as chemicals and petroleum. In these continuous processes, it is usually difficult to directly measure the product quality characteristics of interest, except by periodic sampling. To maintain uninterrupted control over product quality, the related process parameters are monitored and regulated continuously. Typical production variables in the process industries include temperature, pressure, flow rates, and similar variables that can easily be measured (chemical engineers might dispute how easily these variables can be measured) and can readily be combined into mathematical equations to predict product parameters of interest. Variables in discrete product manufacturing are generally more difficult to measure, and mathematical models that relate them to product quality are not as easy to derive. Examples of process variables in the parts production industries include [1]: tool wear, deflection of production machinery components, part deflection during processing, vibration frequencies and amplitudes of machinery, and temperature profiles of production machinery and piece parts during processing.

### 22.4.3 Distributed Inspection vs. Final Inspection

When inspection stations are located along the line of work flow in a factory, this is referred to as ***distributed inspection***. In its most extreme form, inspection and sortation operations are located after every processing step. However, a more common and cost-effective approach is for inspections to be strategically placed at critical points in the manufacturing sequence, with several manufacturing operations between each inspection. The function of a distributed inspection system is to identify defective parts or products soon after they have been made so that the defects can be excluded from further processing. The goal of this inspection strategy is to prevent unnecessary cost from being added to defective units. This is especially relevant in assembled products where many components are combined into a single entity that cannot easily be taken apart. If one defective component would render the assembly defective, then it is obviously better to catch the defect before it is assembled. These situations are found in electronics manufacturing operations. Printed circuit board (PCB) assembly is a good example. An assembled PCB may consist of 100 or more electronic components that have been soldered to the base board. If only one of the components is defective, the entire board may be useless unless repaired at substantial additional cost. In these kinds of cases, it is important to discover and remove the defects from the production line before further processing or assembly is accomplished. 100% on-line automated inspection is most appropriate in these situations.

Another approach, sometimes considered an alternative to distributed inspection, is ***final inspection***, which involves one comprehensive inspection procedure on the product immediately before shipment to the customer. The motivation behind this approach is that it is more efficient, from an inspection viewpoint, to perform all of the inspection tasks in one step, rather than distribute them throughout the plant. Final inspection is more appealing to the customer because, in principle, if done effectively, it offers the greatest protection against poor quality.

However, exclusive implementation of the final inspection approach (without some intermediate inspection of the product as it is being made) is potentially very expensive to the producer for two reasons: (1) the wasted cost of defective units made in early processing steps being processed in subsequent operations and (2) the cost of final inspection itself. The first issue, cost of processing defective units, has been discussed. The second issue, inspection cost, will benefit from elaboration. Final inspection, when performed on a 100% basis, can be very costly since every unit of product is subjected to an inspection procedure that must be designed to detect all possible defects. The procedure often requires functional testing as well as inspection. If performed manually on a 100% basis, as at least a portion of the inspection and testing procedure is likely to be done, it is subject to the risks of 100% manual inspection (Section 22.2.2). Because of these costs and risks, the producer often resorts to sampling inspection, with the associated statistical risks of defective product slipping around the sample to the customer (Section 22.2.1). Thus, final product inspection is potentially costly or potentially ineffective or both.

Quality conscious manufacturers combine the two strategies. Distributed inspection is used for operations in the plant with high defect rates to prevent processing of bad parts in later operations and to ensure that only good components are assembled in the product; and some form of final inspection is used on the finished units to ensure that only the highest quality product is delivered to the customer.

## 22.5 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION

Mathematical models can be developed to analyze certain performance aspects of production and inspection. In this section, we examine three areas: (1) effect of defect rate on production quantities in a series of production operations, (2) final inspection versus distributed inspection, and (3) when to inspect and when not to inspect.

### 22.5.1 Effect of Defect Rate in Serial Production

Let us define the basic element in the analysis as the unit operation for a manufacturing process, illustrated in Figure 22.7. In the figure, the process is depicted by a node, the input to which is a starting quantity of raw material. Let $Q_o$ = the starting quantity or batch size to be processed. The process has a certain fraction defect rate $q$ (stated another way, $q$ = probability of producing a defective piece each cycle of operation), so the quantity of good pieces produced is diminished in size as follows:

$$Q = Q_o(1 - q) \tag{22.2}$$

where $Q$ = quantity of good products made in the process, $Q_o$ = original or starting quantity, and $q$ = fraction defect rate. The number of defects is given by:

$$D = Q_o q \tag{22.3}$$

where $D$ = number of defects made in the process.

Most manufactured parts require more than one processing operation. The operations are performed in sequence on the parts, as depicted in Figure 22.8. Each process has a fraction

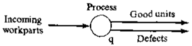



**Figure 22.7** The unit operation for a manufacturing process, represented as an input-output model in which the process has a certain fraction defect rate.

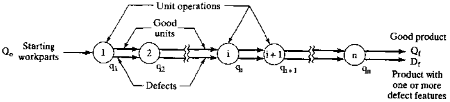



**Figure 22.8** A sequence of $n$ unit operations used to produce a part. Each process has a certain fraction defect rate.

tion defect rate $q_i$, so the final quantity of defect-free parts made by a sequence of $n$ unit operations is given by:

$$Q_f = Q_o \prod_{i=1}^{n}(1 - q_i) \tag{22.4}$$

where $Q_f$ = final quantity of defect-free units produced by the sequence of $n$ processing operations, and $Q_o$ is the starting quantity. If all $q_i$ are equal, which is unlikely but nevertheless convenient for conceptualization and computation, then the preceding equation becomes:

$$Q_f = Q_o(1 - q)^n \tag{22.5}$$

where $q$ = fraction defect rate for all $n$ processing operations. The total number of defects produced by the sequence is most easily computed as:

$$D_f = Q_o - Q_f \tag{22.6}$$

where $D_f$ = total number of defects produced.

**EXAMPLE 22.2 Compounding Effect of Defect Rate in a Sequence of Operations**

A batch of 1000 raw work units is processed through ten operations, each of which has a fraction defect rate of 0.05. How many defect-free units and how many defects are in the final batch?

***Solution:*** Eq. (22.5) can be used to determine the quantity of defect-free units in the final batch.

$$Q_f = 1000(1 - .05)^{10} = 1000(0.95)^{10} = 1000\,(0.59874) = 599 \text{ good units}$$

The number of defects is given by Eq. (22.6):

$$D_f = 1000 - 599 = 401 \text{ defective units.}$$

---

The binomial expansion can be used to determine the allocation of defects associated with each processing operation $i$. Given that $q_i$ = probability of a defect being produced in operation $i$, let $p_i$ = probability of a good unit being produced in the sequence; thus, $p_i + q_i = 1$. Expanding this for $n$ operations, we have

$$\prod_{i=1}^{n}(p_i + q_i) = 1 \tag{22.7}$$

To illustrate, consider the case of two operations in sequence ($n = 2$). The binomial expansion yields the following expression:

$$(p_1 + q_1)(p_2 + q_2) = p_1 p_2 + p_1 q_2 + p_2 q_1 + q_1 q_2$$

where $p_1 p_2$ = proportion of defect-free parts, $p_1 q_2$ = proportion of parts that have no defects from operation 1 but a defect from operation 2, $p_2 q_1$ = proportion of parts that have no defects from operation 2 but a defect from operation 1, and $q_1 q_2$ = proportion of parts that have both types of defect.

### 22.5.2 Final Inspection vs. Distributed Inspection

The preceding model portrays a sequence of operations, each with its own fraction defect rate, whose output forms a distribution of parts possessing either (1) no defects or (2) one or more defects, depending on how the defect rates from the different unit operations combine. The model makes no provision for separating the good units from the defects; thus, the final output is a mixture of the two categories. This is a problem. To deal with the problem, let us expand our model to include inspection operations, either one final inspection at the end of the sequence or distributed inspection, in which each production step is followed by an inspection.

*Final Inspection.* In the first case, one final inspection and sortation operation is located at the end of the production sequence, as represented by the square in Figure 22.9. In this case, the output of the process is 100% inspected to identify and separate defective units. The inspection screen is assumed to be 100% accurate, meaning that there are no Type I or Type II inspection errors.

The probabilities in this new arrangement are pretty much the same as before. Defects are still produced. The difference is that the defective units $D_f$ have been completely and accurately isolated from the good units $Q_f$ by the final inspection procedure. Obviously, there is a cost associated with the inspection and sortation operation that is added to the regular cost of processing. The costs of processing and then sorting a batch of $Q_o$ parts as indicated in Figure 22.9 can be expressed as follows:

$$C_b = Q_o \sum_{i=1}^{n} C_{pri} + Q_o C_{sf} = Q_o\left( \sum_{i=1}^{n} C_{pri} + C_{sf} \right) \tag{22.8}$$

where $C_b$ = cost of processing and sorting the batch, $Q_o$ = number of parts in the starting batch, $C_{pri}$ = cost of processing a part at operation $i$, and $C_{sf}$ = cost of the final inspection and sortation per part. The processing cost $C_{pr}$ is applicable to every unit for each of the $n$ operations; hence the summation from 1 to $n$. The final inspection is done once for each unit. We have neglected consideration of material cost. For the special case in which every processing cost is equal ($C_{pri} = C_{pr}$ for all $i$), we have

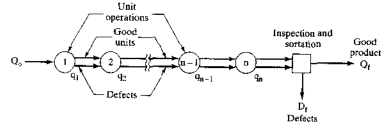



**Figure 22.9** A sequence of $n$ unit operations with one final inspection and sortation operation to separate the defects.

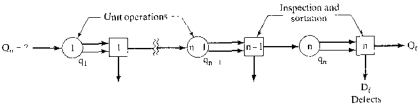



**Figure 22.10** Distributed inspection, consisting of a sequence of unit operations with an inspection and sortation after each operation.

$$C_b = Q_o(nC_{pr} + C_{sf}) \tag{22.9}$$

Note that the fraction defect rate does not figure into total cost in either of these equations, since no defective units are sorted from the batch until after the final processing operation. Therefore, every unit in $Q_o$ is processed through all operations, whether it is good or defective, and every unit is inspected and sorted.

*Distributed Inspection.* Next, let us consider a distributed inspection strategy, in which every operation in the sequence is followed by an inspection and sortation step, as seen in Figure 22.10. In this arrangement, the defects produced in each processing step are sorted from the batch immediately after they are made, so that only good parts are permitted to advance to the next operation. In this way, no defective units are processed in subsequent operations, thereby saving the processing cost of those units. Our model of distributed inspection must take the defect rate at each operation into account as follows:

$$C_b = Q_o(C_{pr1} + C_{s1}) + Q_o(1 - q_1)(C_{pr2} + C_{s2}) + Q_o(1 - q_1)(1 - q_2)(C_{pr3} + C_{s3}) + \dots + Q_o\prod_{i=1}^{n-1}(1 - q_i)(C_{prn} + C_{sn}) \tag{22.10}$$

where $C_{s1}, C_{s2}, \dots, C_{si}, \dots, C_{sn}$ = costs of inspection and sortation at each station, respectively. In the special case where $q_i = q$, $C_{pri} = C_{pr}$, and $C_{si} = C_s$ for all $i$, the above equation simplifies to:

$$C_b = Q_o(1 + (1 - q) + (1 - q)^2 + \dots + (1 - q)^{n-1})(C_{pr} + C_s) \tag{22.11}$$

**EXAMPLE 22.3 Final Inspection vs. Distributed Inspection**

Two inspection alternatives are to be compared for a processing sequence consisting of ten operations: (1) one final inspection and sortation operation following the tenth processing operation and (2) distributed inspection with an inspection and sortation operation after each of the ten processing operations. The batch size $Q_o$ = 1000 pieces. The cost of each processing operation $C_{pr}$ = \$1.00. The fraction defect rate at each operation $q$ = 0.05. The cost of the single final inspection and sortation operation in alternative (1) is $C_{sf}$ = \$2.50. The cost of each inspection and sortation operation in alternative (2) is $C_s$ = \$0.25. Compare total processing and inspection costs for the two cases.

***Solution:*** For the final inspection alternative, we can use Eq. (22.9) to determine the batch cost:

$$C_b = 1000(10 \times 1.00 + 2.50) = 1000(12.50) = \$12{,}500$$

For the distributed inspection alternative, we can use Eq. (22.11) to solve for the batch cost:

$$C_b = 1000(1 + (.95) + (.95)^2 + ..+(.95)^9)(1.00 + 0.25)$$
$$= 1000(8.0252)(1.25) = \$10{,}032$$

---

We see that the cost of distributed inspection is less for the cost data given in Example 22.3. A savings of \$2468 or nearly 20% is achieved by using distributed inspection. The reader might question why the cost of one final inspection (\$2.50) is so much more than the cost of an inspection in distributed inspection (\$0.25). We offer both a logical answer and a practical answer to the question. The logical answer goes like this: Each processing step produces its own unique defect feature (at fraction defect rate q), and the inspection procedure must be designed to inspect for that feature. For ten processing operations with ten different defect features, the cost to inspect for these features is the same whether the inspection is accomplished after each processing step or all at once after the final processing step. If the cost of inspecting for each defect feature is \$0.25, it follows that the cost of inspecting for all ten defect features is simply 10(\$0.25) = \$2.50. In general, this relationship can be expressed:

$$C_{sf} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} C_{si} \tag{22.12}$$

For the special case where all $C_{si}$ are equal ($C_{si} = C_s$ for all $i$), as in Example 22.3,

$$C_{sf} = n\,C_s \tag{22.13}$$

Given this multiplicative relationship between the single final inspection cost and the unit inspection cost in distributed inspection, it is readily seen that the total cost advantage of distributed inspection in our example problem derives entirely from the fact that the number of parts that are processed and inspected is reduced after each processing step due to the sortation of defective parts from the batch during production rather than afterward.

Notwithstanding the logic of Eqs. (22.12) and (22.13), we are sure that in practice there is some economy in performing one inspection procedure at a single location, even if the procedure includes scrutinizing the product for ten different defect features. Thus, the actual final inspection cost per unit $C_{sf}$ is likely to be less than the sum of the unit costs in distributed inspection. Nevertheless, the fact remains that distributed inspection and sortation reduces the number of units processed, thus avoiding the waste of valuable production resources on the processing of defective units.

*Partially Distributed Inspection.* A distributed inspection strategy can be followed in which inspections are located between groups of processes rather than after every processing step as in Example 22.3. If there is any economy in performing multiple inspections at a single location, as argued in the preceding paragraph, then this might be a worthwhile way to exploit this economy while preserving at least some of the advantages of distributed inspection. Let us use Example 22.4 to illustrate the grouping of unit operations for inspection purposes. As expected, the total batch cost lies between the two cases of fully distributed inspection and final inspection for the data in our example.

**EXAMPLE 22.4 Partially Distributed Inspection**

For comparison, let us use the same sequence of ten processing operations as before, where the fraction defect rate of each operation is $q = 0.05$. Instead of inspecting and sorting after every operation, the ten operations will be divided into groups of five, with inspections after operations 5 and 10. Following the logic of Eq. (22.13), the cost of each inspection will be five times the cost of inspecting for one defect feature; that is, $C_{s5} = C_{s10} = 5(\$0.25) = \$1.25$ per unit inspected. Processing cost per unit for each process remains the same as before at $C_{pr} = \$1.00$, and $Q_o = 1000$ units.

***Solution:*** The batch cost is the processing cost for all 1000 pieces for the first five operations, after which the inspection and sortation procedure separates the defects produced in those first five operations from the rest of the batch. This reduced batch quantity then proceeds through operations 6-10, followed by the second inspection and sortation procedure. The equation for this is the following:

$$C_b = Q_o\left(\sum_{i=1}^{5} C_{pri} + C_{s5}\right) + Q_o\prod_{i=1}^{5}(1 - q_i)\left(\sum_{i=6}^{10} C_{pri} + C_{s10}\right) \quad (22.14)$$

Since all $C_{pri}$ are equal ($C_{pri} = C_{pr}$ for all $i$), and all $q$ are equal ($q_i = q$ for all $i$), this equation can be simplified to:

$$C_b = Q_o(5C_{pr} + C_{s5}) + Q_o(1 - q)^5(5C_{pr} + C_{s10}) \quad (22.15)$$

Using our values for this example, we have

$$C_b = 1000(5 \times 1.00 + 1.25) + 1000(.95)^5(5 \times 1.00 + 1.25)$$
$$= 1000(6.25) + 1000(0.7738)(6.25) = \$11{,}086$$

---

This is a savings of \$1414 or 11.3% compared with the \$12,500 cost of one final inspection. Note that we have been able to achieve a significant portion of the total savings from fully distributed inspection by using only two inspection stations rather than ten. Our savings here of \$1414 is about 57% of the \$2468 savings from the previous example, with only 20% of the inspection stations. This suggests that it may not be advantageous to locate an inspection operation after every production step, but instead to place them after groups of operations. The "law of diminishing returns" is applicable in distributed inspection.

### 22.5.3 Inspection or No Inspection

A relatively simple model for deciding whether to inspect at a certain point in the production sequence is proposed in Juran and Gryna [3]. The model uses the fraction defect rate in the production batch, the inspection cost per unit inspected, and the cost of damage that one defective unit would cause if it were not inspected. The total cost per batch of 100% inspection can be formulated as follows:

$$C_b(100\% \text{ inspection}) = Q\,C_s \tag{22.16}$$

where $C_b$ = total cost for the batch under consideration, $Q$ = quantity of parts in the batch, and $C_s$ = inspection and sortation cost per part. The total cost of no inspection, which leads to a damage cost for each defective unit in the batch, would be:

$$C_b(\text{no inspection}) = Q\,q\,C_d \tag{22.17}$$

where $C_b$ = batch cost, as before; $Q$ = number of parts in the batch; $q$ = fraction defect rate; and $C_d$ = damage cost for each defective part that proceeds to subsequent processing or assembly. This damage cost may be high, for example, in the case of an electronics assembly where one defective component might render the entire assembly defective and rework would be expensive.

Finally, if sampling inspection is used on the batch, we must include the sample size and the probability that the batch will be accepted by the inspection sampling plan that is used. This probability can be obtained from the OC curve (Figure 22.1) for a given fraction defect rate $q$. The resulting expected cost of the batch is the sum of three terms: (1) cost of inspecting the sample of size $Q_s$, (2) expected damage cost of those parts that are defective if the sample passes inspection, and (3) expected cost of inspecting the remaining parts in the batch if the sample does not pass inspection. In equation form,

$$C_b(\text{sampling}) = C_s Q_s + (Q - Q_s)qC_d P_a + (Q - Q_s)C_s(1 - P_a) \tag{22.18}$$

where $C_b$ = batch cost, $C_s$ = cost of inspecting and sorting one part, $Q_s$ = number of parts in the sample, $Q$ = batch quantity, $q$ = fraction defect rate, $C_d$ = damage cost per defective part, and $P_a$ = probability of accepting the batch based on the sample.

A simple decision rule can be established to decide whether to inspect the batch. The decision is based on whether the expected fraction defect rate in the batch is greater than or less than a critical defect level $q_c$, which is the ratio of the inspection cost to the damage cost. This critical value represents the break-even point between inspection or no inspection. In equation form, $q_c$ is defined as follows:

$$q_c = \frac{C_s}{C_d} \tag{22.19}$$

where $C_s$ = cost of inspecting and sorting one part, and $C_d$ = damage cost per defective part. If, based on past history with the component, the batch fraction defect rate q is less than this critical level, then no inspection is indicated. On the other hand, if it is expected that the fraction defect rate will be greater than $q_c$, then the total cost of production and inspection will be less if 100% inspection and sortation is performed prior to subsequent processing.

**EXAMPLE 22.5 Inspection or No Inspection**

A production run of 10,000 parts has been completed and a decision is needed whether to 100% inspect the batch. Past history with this part suggests that the fraction defect rate is around 0.03. Inspection cost per part is \$0.25. If the batch is passed on for subsequent processing, the damage cost for each defective unit in the batch is \$10.00. Determine: (a) batch cost for 100% inspection and

(b) batch cost if no inspection is performed. (c) What is the critical fraction defect value for deciding whether to inspect?

***Solution:*** (a) Batch cost for 100% inspection is given by Eq. (22.16):

$$C_b(100\% \text{ inspection}) = Q\,C_s = 10{,}000\ (\$0.25) = \$2{,}500$$

(b) Batch cost for no inspection can be calculated by Eq. (22.17):

$$C_b(\text{no inspection}) = Q\,q\,C_d = 10{,}000\ (0.03)(\$10.00) = \$3{,}000$$

(c) The critical fraction defect value for deciding whether to inspect is determined from Eq. (22.19):

$$q_c = \frac{C_s}{C_d} = \frac{0.25}{10.00} = 0.025$$

Since the anticipated defect rate in the batch is $q = 0.03$, the decision should be to inspect. Note that this decision is consistent with the two batch costs calculated for no inspection and 100% inspection. The lowest cost is attained when 100% inspection is used.

---

**EXAMPLE 22.6 Cost of Sampling Inspection**

Given the data from the preceding example, suppose that sampling inspection is being considered as an alternative to 100% inspection. The sampling plan calls for a sample of 100 parts to be drawn at random from the batch. Based on the OC curve for this sampling plan, the probability of accepting the batch is 92% at the given defect rate of $q = 0.03$. Determine the batch cost for sampling inspection.

***Solution:*** The batch cost for sampling inspection is given by Eq. (22.18):

$$C_b(\text{sampling}) = C_sQ_s + (Q - Q_s)qC_dP_a + (Q - Q_s)C_s(1 - P_a)$$

$$= \$0.25(100) + (10{,}000 - 100)(0.03)(\$10.00)(0.92) + (10{,}000 - 100)(\$0.25)(1 - 0.92)$$

$$= \$25.00 + 2732.40 + 198.00 = \$2955.40$$

---

The significance of Example 22.6 must not be overlooked. The total cost of sampling inspection for our data is greater than the cost of 100% inspection and sortation. If only the cost of the inspection procedure is considered, then sampling inspection is much less expensive ($25 versus $2500). But if total costs, which include the damage that results from defects passing through sampling inspection, are considered, then sampling inspection is not the least cost inspection alternative. We might consider the question: what if the ratio $\frac{C_s}{C_d}$ in Eq. (22.19) had been greater than the fraction defect rate of the batch, in other words, the opposite of the case in Examples 22.5 and 22.6? The answer is that if $q_c$ were greater than the batch defect rate q, then the cost of no inspection would be less than the cost of 100% inspection, and the cost of sampling inspection would again lie between the two cost values. The cost of sampling inspection will always lie between the cost of 100% inspection and no inspection, whichever of these two alternatives is greater. If this argument is followed to its logical end, then the conclusion is that either no inspection or 100% inspection is preferred over sampling inspection, and it is just a matter of deciding whether none or all is the better alternative.

### 22.5.4 What the Equations Tell Us

Several lessons can be inferred from the above mathematical models and examples. These lessons should be useful in designing inspection systems for production.

- Distributed inspection/sortation reduces the total number of parts processed in a sequence of production operations compared with one final inspection at the end of the sequence. This reduces waste of processing resources.
- Partially distributed inspection is less effective than fully distributed inspection at reducing the waste of processing resources. However, if there is an economic advantage in combining several inspection steps at one location, then partially distributed inspection may reduce total batch costs compared with fully distributed inspection.
- The "law of diminishing returns" operates in distributed inspection systems, meaning that each additional inspection station added in distributed inspection yields less savings than the previous station added, other factors being equal.
- As the ratio of unit processing cost to unit inspection cost increases, the advantage of distributed inspection over final inspection increases.
- Inspections should be performed immediately following processes that have a high fraction defect rate.
- Inspections should be performed prior to high cost processes.
- When expected damage cost (of those defects that pass around the inspection plan when the batch is accepted) and expected cost of inspecting the entire batch (when the batch is rejected) are considered, sampling inspection is not the lowest cost inspection alternative. Either no inspection or 100% inspection is a more appropriate alternative, depending on the relative values of inspection/sortation cost and damage cost for a defective unit that proceeds to the next stage of processing.

## REFERENCES

[1] BARKMAN, W. E., *In-Process Quality Control for Manufacturing*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1989.

[2] DRURY, C. G., "Inspection Performance," *Handbook of Industrial Engineering*, Second Edition, G. Salvendy, Editor, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1992, pp 2282–2314.

[3] JURAN, J. M., and GRYNA, F. M., *Quality Planning and Analysis*, Third Edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1993.

[4] MONTGOMERY, D. C., *Introduction to Statistical Quality Control*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1985.

[5] MURPHY, S. D., *In-Process Measurement and Control*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1990.

[6] STOLL, *Quality Control in Automation*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1985.

[7] TANNOCK, J. D. T., *Automating Quality Systems*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1992.

[8] WICK, C., and VEILLEUX, R. F., *Tool and Manufacturing Engineers Handbook* (Fourth edition), Volume IV, *Quality Control and Assembly*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1987, Section 1.

[9] WINCHELL, W., *Inspection and Measurement*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1996.

[10] J. YURKO, "The Optimal Placement of Inspections Along Production Lines," *Masters Thesis*, Industrial Engineering Department, Lehigh University, 1986.

## PROBLEMS

### Inspection Accuracy

**22.1** An inspector reported a total of 18 defects out of a total batch size of 250 parts. On closer examination, it was determined that five of these reported defects were in fact good pieces, whereas a total of nine defective units were undetected by the inspector. What is the inspector's accuracy in this instance? Specifically, what are the values of (a) $p_1$, (b) $p_2$, and (c) $A$? (d) What was the true fraction defect rate $q$?

**22.2** For the preceding problem, develop a table of outcomes similar in format to Table 22.3. The entries in the table should represent the probabilities of the various possible outcomes in the inspection operation.

**22.3** For Example 22.1, develop a table of outcomes similar in format to Table 22.3. The entries will be the probabilities of the various possible outcomes in the inspection operation.

**22.4** An inspector's accuracy has been assessed as follows: $p_1 = 0.94$ and $p_2 = 0.80$. The inspector is given the task of inspecting a batch of 200 parts and sorting out the defects from good units. If the actual defect rate in the batch is $q = 0.04$, determine: (a) the expected number of Type I and (b) Type II errors the inspector will make. (c) What is the expected fraction defect rate that the inspector will report at the end of the inspection task?

**22.5** An inspector must 100% inspect a production batch of 500 parts using a gaging method. If the actual fraction defect rate in the batch is $q = 0.02$, and the inspector's accuracy is given by $p_1 = 0.96$ and $p_2 = 0.84$, determine: (a) the number of defects the inspector can be expected to report and (b) the expected number of Type I and (c) Type II errors the inspector will make.

### Effect of Fraction Defect Rate

**22.6** A batch of 10,000 raw work units is processed through 15 operations, each of which has a fraction defect rate of 0.03. How many defect-free units and how many defects are in the final batch?

**22.7** A silicon wafer has a total of 400 integrated circuits (ICs) at the beginning of its fabrication sequence. A total of 20 operations are used to complete the ICs, 5% of which are damaged at each operation. The damages compound, meaning that an IC that is already damaged has the same probability of being damaged by a subsequent process as a previously undamaged IC. How many defect-free ICs remain at the end of the fabrication sequence?

**22.8** A batch of workparts is processed through a sequence of nine processing operations that have fraction defect rates of 0.03, 0.05, 0.02, 0.04, 0.06, 0.01, 0.03, 0.04, and 0.07, respectively. A total of 5000 completed parts are produced by the sequence. What was the starting batch quantity?

**22.9** A production line consists of six workstations, as shown in Figure P22.9. The six stations are as follows: (1) first manufacturing process, scrap rate is $q_1 = 0.10$; (2) inspection for first process, separates all defects from first process; (3) second manufacturing process, scrap rate is $q_3 = 0.20$; (4) inspection for second process, separates all defects from second process; (5) rework, repairs defects from second process, recovering 70% of the defects from the preceding operation and leaving 30% of the defects as still defective; (6) third manufacturing process, scrap rate $q_6$ = zero. If the output from the production line is to be 100,000 defect-free units, what quantity of raw material units must be launched onto the front of the line?

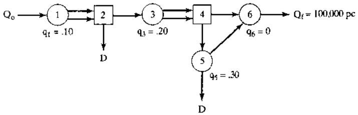



**Figure P22.9** Production line for Problem 22.9.

**22.10** A certain industrial process can be depicted by Figure P22.10. Operation 1 is a disassembly process in which each unit of raw material is separated into one unit each of parts A and B. These parts are then processed separately in operations 2 and 3, respectively, which have scrap rates of $q_2 = 0.05$ and $q_3 = 0.10$. Inspection stations 4 and 5 sort good units from bad for the two parts. Then the parts are reassembled in operation 6, which has a fraction defect rate $q_6 = 0.15$. Final inspection station 7 sorts good units from bad. The desired final output quantity is 100,000 units. (a) What is the required starting quantity (into operation 1) to achieve this output? (b) Will there be any leftover units of parts A or B, and if so, how many?

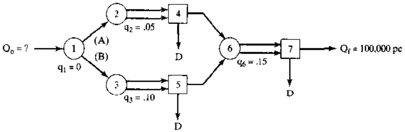



**Figure P22.10** Production line for Problem 22.10.

**22.11** A certain component is produced in three sequential operations. Operation 1 produces defects at a rate $q_1 = 5\%$. Operation 2 produces defects at a rate $q_2 = 8\%$. Operation 3 produces defects at a rate $q_3 = 10\%$. Operations 2 and 3 can be performed on units that are already defective. If 10,000 starting parts are processed through the sequence, (a) how many units are expected to be defect free, (b) how many units are expected to have exactly one defect, and (c) how many units are expected to have all three defects?

**22.12** An industrial process can be depicted as in Figure P22.12. Two components are made, respectively, by operations 1 and 2, and then assembled together in operation 3. Scrap rates are as follows: $q_1 = 0.20$, $q_2 = 0.10$, and $q_3 = 0$. Input quantities of raw components at operations 1 and 2 are 25,000 and 20,000, respectively. One of each component is required in the assembly operation. The trouble is that defective components can be assembled just as easily as good components, so inspection and sortation is required in operation 4. Determine: (a) how many defect-free assemblies will be produced, (b) how many assemblies will be made with one or more defective components, and (c) will there be any leftover units of either component, and if so, how many?

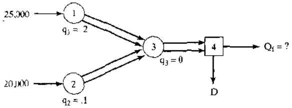



**Figure P22.12** Production line for Problem 22.12.

## Inspection Costs

**22.13** Two inspection alternatives are to be compared for a processing sequence consisting of 20 operations performed on a batch of 100 starting parts: (1) one final inspection and sortation operation following the last processing operation and (2) distributed inspection with an inspection and sortation operation after each processing operation. The cost of each processing operation $C_{pr}$ = \$1.00 per unit processed. The fraction defect rate at each operation $q = 0.03$. The cost of the single final inspection and sortation operation in alternative (1) is $C_{sf}$ = \$2.00 per unit. The cost of each inspection and sortation operation in alternative (2) is $C_s$ = \$0.10 per unit. Compare total processing and inspection costs per batch for the two cases.

**22.14** In the preceding problem, instead of inspecting and sorting after every operation, the 20 operations will be divided into groups of five, with inspections after operations 5, 10, 15, and 20. Following the logic of Eq. (22.12), the cost of each inspection will be five times the cost of inspecting for one defect feature; that is, $C_{s5} = C_{s10} = C_{s15} = C_{s20} = 5(\$0.10) = \$0.50$ per unit inspected. Processing cost per unit for each operation remains the same as before at $C_{pr}$ = \$1.00, and $Q_o$ = 100 parts. What is the total processing and inspection cost per batch for this partially distributed inspection system?

**22.15** A processing sequence consists of ten operations, each of which is followed by an inspection and sortation operation to detect and remove defects generated in the processing operation. Defects in each process occur at a rate of $q = 0.04$. Each processing operation costs \$1.00 per unit processed, and the inspection/sortation operation costs \$0.30 per unit. (a) Determine the total processing and inspection costs for this distributed inspection system. (b) A proposal is being considered to combine all of the inspections into one final inspection and sortation station following the last processing operation. Determine the cost per unit of this final inspection and sortation station that would make the total cost of this system equal to that of the distributed inspection system.

**22.16** This problem is intended to show the merits of a partially distributed inspection systems in which inspections are placed after processing steps that generate a high fraction defect rate. The processing sequence consists of eight operations with fraction defect rates for each operation as follows:

| Operation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Defect rate $q$ | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.11 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.11 |

Three alternatives are to be compared: (1) fully distributed inspection, with an inspection after every operation; (2) partially distributed inspection, with inspections following operations 4 and 8 only; and (3) one final inspection station after operation 8. All inspections include sortations. In alternative (2), the inspection procedures are each designed to detect all of the defects for the preceding four operations. The cost of processing is $C_{pr}$ = \$1.00 for each of operations 1–8. Inspection/sortation costs for each alternative are given in the following table. Compare total processing and inspection costs for the three cases.

| *Alternative* | *Inspection and Sortation Cost* |
|---|---|
| (1) | $C_s$ = \$0.10 per unit for each or the eight inspection stations |
| (2) | $C_s$ = \$0.40 per unit for each or the two inspection stations |
| (3) | $C_s$ = \$0.80 per unit for the one final inspection station |

## Inspection or No Inspection

**22.17** A batch of 1000 parts has been produced and a decision is needed whether to 100% inspect the batch. Past history with this part suggests that the fraction defect rate is around 0.02. Inspection cost per part is \$0.20. If the batch is passed on for subsequent processing, the damage cost for each defective unit in the batch is \$8.00. Determine: (a) batch cost for 100% inspection and (b) batch cost if no inspection is performed. (c) What is the critical fraction defect value for deciding whether to inspect?

**22.18** Given the data from the preceding problem, sampling inspection is being considered as an alternative to 100% inspection. The sampling plan calls for a sample of 50 parts to be drawn at random from the batch. Based on the OC curve for this sampling plan, the probability of accepting the batch is 95% at the given defect rate of $q = 0.02$. Determine the batch cost for sampling inspection.

chapter 23

# Inspection Technologies

## CHAPTER CONTENTS

The inspection procedures described in the previous chapter are enabled by various sensors, instruments, and gages. Some of these inspection techniques involve manually operated devices that have been used for more than a century; for example, micrometers, calipers, protractors, and go/no-go gages. Other techniques are based on modern technologies such as coordinate measuring machines and machine vision. These newer techniques require computer systems to control their operation and analyze the data collected. The computer-based technologies allow the inspection procedures to be automated. In some cases they permit 100% inspection to be accomplished economically.

Our coverage in this chapter will emphasize these modern technologies. Let us begin by discussing a prerequisite topic in inspection technology: metrology.

## 23.1 INSPECTION METROLOGY[1]

***Measurement*** is a procedure in which an unknown quantity is compared to a known standard, using an accepted and consistent system of units. The measurement may involve a simple linear rule to scale the length of a part, or it may require measurement of force versus deflection during a tension test. Measurement provides a numerical value of the quantity of interest, within certain limits of accuracy and precision. It is the means by which ***inspection for variables*** is accomplished (Section 22.1.1).

***Metrology*** is the science of measurement. The science is concerned with seven basic quantities: length, mass, time, electric current, temperature, luminous intensity, and matter. From these basic quantities, other physical quantities are derived, such as area, volume, velocity, acceleration, force, electric voltage, energy, and so forth. In manufacturing metrology, our main concern is usually with measuring the length quantity in the many ways in which it manifests itself in a part or product. These include length, width, depth, diameter, straightness, flatness, and roundness. Even surface roughness (Section 23.5) is defined in terms of length quantities.

### 23.1.1 Characteristics of Measuring Instruments

All measuring instruments possess certain characteristics that make them useful in the particular applications they serve. Primary among these are accuracy and precision, but other features include speed of response, operating range, and cost. The attributes are discussed in this section. They can be used as criteria in selecting a measuring device. No measuring instrument scores perfect marks in all of the criteria. Compromises are required in choosing a device for a given application, emphasizing those criteria that are most important.

*Accuracy and Precision.* Measurement ***accuracy*** is the degree to which the measured value agrees with the true value of the quantity of interest. A measurement procedure is accurate when it is absent of systematic errors. ***Systematic errors*** are positive or negative deviations from the true value that are consistent from one measurement to the next.

***Precision*** is a measure of repeatability in a measurement process. Good precision means that random errors in the measurement procedure are minimized. Random errors are often due to human participation in the measurement process. Examples include vari-

[1] This section is based on Groover [10], Section 41.1.

ations in the setup, imprecise reading of the scale, round-off approximations, and so on. Nonhuman contributors to random error include changes in temperature, gradual wear and/or misalignment in the working elements of the device, and other variations. It is generally assumed that ***random errors*** obey a normal statistical distribution whose mean is zero and whose standard deviation $\sigma$ indicates the amount of dispersion that exists in the measurement. The normal distribution has certain well defined properties, including the fact that 99.73% of the population is included within $\pm 3\sigma$ of the population mean. A measuring instrument's precision is often defined as $\pm 3\sigma$.

The distinction between accuracy and precision is depicted in Figure 23.1. In (a), the random error in the measurement is large, indicating low precision; but the mean value of the measurement coincides with the true value, indicating high accuracy. In (b), the measurement error is small (good precision), but the measured value differs substantially from the true value (low accuracy). And in (c), both accuracy and precision are good.

No measuring instrument can be built that has perfect accuracy (no systematic error) and perfect precision (no random error). Perfection in measurement, as in anything else, is impossible. Accuracy of the instrument is maintained by proper and regular calibration (explained below). Precision is achieved by selecting the proper instrument technology for the application. A guideline often applied to determine the right level of precision is the ***rule of 10***, which means that the measuring device must be ten times more precise than the specified tolerance. Thus, if the tolerance to be measured is $\pm 0.25$ mm ($\pm 0.010$ in), then the measuring device must have a precision of $\pm 0.025$ mm ($\pm 0.001$ in).

*Other Features of Measuring Instruments.* Another aspect of a measuring instrument is its capacity to distinguish very small differences in the quantity of interest. The indication of this characteristic is the smallest variation of the quantity that can be detected by the instrument. The terms ***resolution*** and ***sensitivity*** are generally used for this attribute of a measuring device. Other desirable features of a measuring instrument include: stability, speed of response, wide operating range, high reliability, and low cost.

Some measurements, especially in a manufacturing environment, must be made quickly. The ability of a measuring instrument to indicate the quantity in minimum time lag is called its ***speed of response***. Ideally, the time lag should be zero; however, this is an impossible ideal. For an automatic measuring device, speed of response is usually taken to be

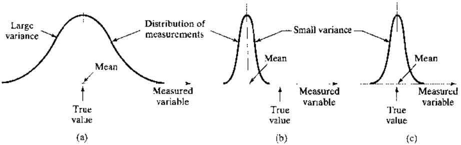



**Figure 23.1** Accuracy versus precision in measurement: (a) high accuracy but low precision, (b) low accuracy but high precision, and (c) high accuracy and high precision.

the time lapse between when the quantity of interest changes and the device is able to indicate the change within a certain small percentage of the true value.

The measuring instrument should possess a ***wide operating range***, that is its capability to measure the physical variable throughout the entire span of practical interest to the user. ***High reliability***, which can be defined as the absence of frequent malfunctions and failures of the device, and ***low cost*** are of course desirable attributes of any engineering equipment.

*Analog Versus Digital Instruments.* An ***analog measuring instrument*** provides an output that is analog; that is, the output signal of the instrument varies continuously with the variable being measured. Because the output varies continuously, it can take on any of an infinite number of possible values over the range in which it is designed to operate. Of course, when the output is read by the human eye, there are limits on the resolution that can be discriminated. When analog measuring devices are used for process control, the common output signal is voltage. Since most modern process controllers are based on the digital computer, the voltage signal must be converted to digital form by means of an ***analog-to-digital converter*** (ADC, Section 5.3).

A ***digital measuring instrument*** provides an output that is digital; that is, it can assume any of a discrete number of incremental values corresponding to the value of the quantity being measured. The number of possible output values is finite. The digital signal may consist of a set of parallel bits in a storage register or a series of pulses that can be counted. When parallel bits are used, the number of possible output values is determined by the number of bits as follows:

$$n_o = 2^B \tag{23.1}$$

where $n_o$ = number of possible output values of the digital measuring device; and $B$ = number of bits in the storage register. The resolution of the measuring instrument is given by:

$$\text{MR} = \frac{L}{n_o - 1} = \frac{L}{2^B - 1} \tag{23.2}$$

where MR = measurement resolution, the smallest increment that can be distinguished by the device; $L$ = its measuring range; and $B$ = number of bits used by the device to store the reading, as before. Although a digital measuring instrument can provide only a finite number of possible output values, this is hardly a limitation in practice, since the storage register can be designed with a sufficient number of bits to achieve the required resolution of most any application.

Digital measuring devices are finding increased utilization in industrial practice for two good reasons: (1) the ease with which they can be read when used as stand-alone instruments; and (2) the capability of most digital devices to be directly interfaced with a digital computer, hence avoiding the need for analog-to-digital conversion.

*Calibration.* Measuring devices must be calibrated periodically. ***Calibration*** is a procedure in which the measuring instrument is checked against a known standard. For example, calibrating a thermometer might involve checking its reading in boiling (pure) water at standard atmospheric pressure, under which conditions the temperature is known to be 100°C (212°F). The calibration procedure should include checking the instrument over its entire operating range. The known standard should be used only for calibration purposes; it should not serve as a spare shop floor instrument when an extra is needed.

For convenience, the calibration procedure should be as quick and uncomplicated as possible. Once calibrated, the instrument should be capable of retaining its calibration – continuing to measure the quantity without deviating from the standard for an extended period of time. This capability to retain calibration is called ***stability***, and the tendency of the device to gradually lose its accuracy relative to the standard is called ***drift***. Reasons for drift include factors such as (1) mechanical wear, (2) dirt and dust, (3) fumes and chemicals in the environment, and (4) effects of aging of the materials out of which the instrument is made. Good coverage of the measurement calibration issue is provided in Morris [14].

### 23.1.2 Measurement Standards and Systems

A common feature of any measurement procedure is comparison of the unknown value with a known standard. Two aspects of a standard are critical: (1) it must be constant; it must not change over time; and (2) it must be based on a system of units that is consistent and accepted by users. In modern times, standards for length, mass, time, electric current, temperature, light, and matter are defined in terms of physical phenomena that can be relied upon to remain unchanged. These standards are defined by international agreement. For the edification and amusement of our readers, we present these standards in Table 23.1.

Two systems of units have evolved into predominance in the world: (1) the U.S. customary system (U.S.C.S.); and (2) the International System of Units (or SI, for Le Système International d'Unites), more popularly known as the metric system (Historical Note 23.1). Both of these systems are well-known. We use both in parallel throughout this book. The metric system (Table 23.1) is widely accepted in nearly every part of the industrialized world except the United States, which has stubbornly clung to its U.S.C.S. Gradually, the United States is going metric and adopting the SI.

**TABLE 23.1** Standard Units for Basic Physical Quantities (System Internationale)

| *Quantity* | *Standard Unit* | *Symbol* | *Standard Unit Defined* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Length | **Meter** | m | The distance traveled by light in a vacuum in 1/299,792,458 of a second. |
| Mass | **Kilogram** | kg | A cylinder of platinum-iridium alloy that is kept by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures in Paris. A "duplicate" is retained by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) near Washington, DC. |
| Time | **Second** | s | Duration of 9,192,631,770 cycles of the radiation associated with a change in energy level of the cesium atom. |
| Electric current | **Ampere** | A | Magnitude of current which, when flowing through each of two long parallel wires a distance of 1 m apart in free space, results in a magnetic force between the wires of $2 \times 10^{-7} N$ for each meter of length. |
| Thermo-dynamic temperature | **Kelvin** | K | The kelvin temperature scale has its zero point at absolute zero and has a fixed point of 273.15 K at the triple point of water, which is the temperature and pressure at which ice, liquid water, and water vapor are in equilibrium. The Celsius temperature scale is derived from the kelvin as $C = K - 273.15$. |
| Light intensity | **Candela** | cd | Defined as the luminous intensity of 1/600,000 of a square meter of a radiating cavity at the melting temperature of platinum (1769°C). |
| Matter | **Mole** | mol | Defined as the number of atoms in 0.012 kg mass of carbon 12. |

## Historical Note 23.1 Measurement systems

Measurement systems in ancient civilizations were based on dimensions of the human body. Egyptians developed the cubit as a linear measurement standard around 3000 B.C., which was widely used in the ancient world. The ***cubit*** was defined as the length of a human arm and hand from elbow to fingertip. Although seemingly fraught with difficulties due to variations in arm lengths, the cubit was standardized in the form of master cubit of granite. This standard cubit, 524 mm (26.6 in), was used to produce other cubit sticks throughout Egypt The standard cubit was divided into ***digits*** (a human finger width), with 28 digits per cubit. Four digits equaled a ***palm***, and five a ***hand***. Thus, a system of measures and standards was developed in the ancient world.

Ultimately, domination of the ancient Mediterranean world passed to the Greeks and then to the Romans. The basic linear measure of the Greeks was the ***finger***, and 16 fingers equaled 1 ***foot***. The Romans adopted and adapted the Greek system, specifically the foot, dividing it into 12 parts or ***inches*** (***unciae***, as the Romans called them). The Romans defined 5 feet as a ***pace*** and 5000 feet as a ***mile***. (How did we end up with 5280 feet in a mile?)

During medieval Europe, various national and regional measurement systems developed, many of them based on the Roman standards. Two primary systems emerged in the western world, the English system and the metric system. The English system defined the yard "as the distance from the thumb-tip to the end of the nose of English King Henry I" [21]. The yard was divided into 3 feet and this in turn into 12 inches. Since the American colonies were tied to England, it was natural for the United States to adopt the same system of measurements at the time of its independence. This became the U.S. Customary System (U.S.C.S.).

The initial proposal for a metric system is credited to Vicar G. Mouton in Lyon, France around 1670. His proposal included three important attributes that were subsequently incorporated into the metric standards: (1) The basic unit was defined in terms of a measurement of Earth, which was presumed constant—his proposed length measure was based on the length of an arc of one minute of longitude; (2) the units were subdivided decimally; and (3) rational prefixes for the units. Mouton's proposal was discussed and debated among scientists in France for the next 125 years. One of the results of the French Revolution was the adoption of the metric system of weights and measures (in 1795). The basic unit of length was the meter, which was then defined as 1/10,000,000 of the length of the meridian between the North Pole and the Equator and passing through Paris (but of course). Multiples and subdivisions of the meter were based on Greek prefixes.

Dissemination of the metric system throughout Europe during the early 1800s was encouraged by the military successes of French armies under Napoleon. In other parts of the world, adoption of the metric system occurred over many years and was often motivated by significant political changes; this was the case in Japan, China, Russia, and Latin America. An act of British Parliament in 1963 redefined the English system of weights and measures in terms of metric units and mandated a changeover to metric two years later, thus aligning Britain with the rest of Europe. This left the United States as the only major industrial nation that was nonmetric.

In 1960, an international conference on weights and measures held in Paris reached agreement on new standards based on the metric system. Thus the metric system became the Systemes International d'Unites (SI). The previous definition of the meter that had been adopted at the time of the French Revolution ($10^{-7}$ times the polar quadrant of Earth) was abandoned, and a new standard meter was defined as $1.65076373 \times 10^6$ wavelengths of the radiation from Krypton 86 in a vacuum. In 1983, the meter was again redefined in its present form, shown in Table 23.1.

## 23.2 CONTACT VS. NONCONTACT INSPECTION TECHNIQUES

Inspection techniques can be divided into two broad categories: (1) contact inspection and (2) noncontact inspection. In contact inspection, physical contact is made between the object and the measuring or gaging instrument, whereas in noncontact inspection no physical contact is made.

### 23.2.1 Contact Inspection Techniques

***Contact inspection*** involves the use of a mechanical probe or other device that makes contact with the object being inspected. The purpose of the probe is to measure or gage the object in some way. By its nature, contact inspection is usually concerned with some physical dimension of the part. Accordingly, these techniques are widely used in the manufacturing industries, in particular in the production of metal parts (machining, stamping, and other metalworking processes). The principal contact inspection technologies are:

- Conventional measuring and gaging instruments, manual and automated
- Coordinate measuring machines (CMMs) and related techniques
- Stylus type surface texture measuring machines

Conventional measuring and gaging techniques and coordinate measuring machines measure dimensions and related specifications. Surface texture measuring machines measure surface characteristics such as roughness and waviness.

Conventional techniques and CMMs compete with each other in the measurement and inspection of part dimensions. The general application ranges for the different types of inspection and measurement equipment are presented in the *PQ* chart of Figure 23.2, where *P* and *Q* refer to the variety and quantity of parts inspected.

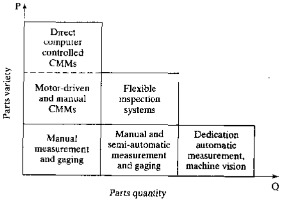



**Figure 23.2** PQ chart indicating most appropriate measurement equipment as a function of parts variety and quantity (adapted from [2]).

Reasons why these contact inspection methods are technologically and commercially important include the following:

- They are the most widely used inspection technologies today.
- They are accurate and reliable.
- In many cases, they represent the only methods available to accomplish the inspection.

### 23.2.2 Noncontact Inspection Technologies

***Noncontact inspection*** methods utilize a sensor located at a certain distance from the object to measure or gage the desired features. The noncontact inspection technologies can be classified into two categories: (1) optical and (2) nonoptical. ***Optical inspection technologies*** make use of light to accomplish the measurement or gaging cycle. The most important optical technology is machine vision; however, other optical techniques are important in certain industries. ***Nonoptical inspection technologies*** utilize energy forms other than light to perform the inspection; these other energies include various electrical fields, radiation (other than light), and ultrasonics.

Noncontact inspection offers certain advantages over contact inspection techniques. The advantages include:

- Avoidance of damage to the surface that might result from contact inspection.
- Inherently faster inspection cycle times. The reason is that contact inspection procedures require the contacting probe to be positioned against the part, which takes time. Most of the noncontact methods use a stationary probe that does not need repositioning for each part.
- Noncontact methods can often be accomplished on the production line without the need for any additional handling of the parts, whereas special handling and positioning of the parts is usually required in contact inspection.
- Increased opportunity for 100% automated inspection. Faster inspection cycle times and reduced need for special handling means that 100% inspection is more feasible with noncontact methods.

A comparison of some of the features of the various contact and noncontact inspection technologies is presented in Table 23.2.

## 23.3 CONVENTIONAL MEASURING AND GAGING TECHNIQUES[2]

Conventional measuring and gaging techniques use manually operated devices for linear dimensions such as length, depth, and diameter, as well as features such as angles, straightness, and roundness. ***Measuring devices*** provide a quantitative value of the part feature of interest, while ***gages*** determine whether the part feature (usually a dimension) falls within a certain acceptable range of values. Measuring requires more time to accomplish but provides more information about the part feature. Gaging can be accomplished more quickly but does not provide as much information. Both techniques are widely used for post-process inspection of piece parts in manufacturing.

[2]This section is based on Groover [10], Section 41.3.

**TABLE 23.2** Comparison of Resolution and Relative Speed of Several Inspection Technologies

| *Inspection Technology* | *Typical Resolution* | *Relative Speed of Application* |
|---|---|---|
| Conventional instruments: | | |
| Steel rule | 0.25 mm (0.01 in) | Medium speed (medium cycle time) |
| Vernier caliper | 0.025 mm (0.001 in) | Slow speed (high cycle time) |
| Micrometer | 0.0025 mm (0.0001 in) | Slow speed (high cycle time) |
| Coordinate measuring machine | 0.0005 mm (0.00002 in)* | Slow cycle time for single measurement. High speed for multiple measurements on same object. |
| Machine vision | 0.25 mm (0.01 in)** | High speed (very low cycle time per piece) |

*Also see Table 23.5 for other parameters on coordinate measuring machines.

** Precision in machine vision is highly dependent on the camera lens system and magnification used in the applications.

Measuring devices tend to be used on a sampling inspection basis. Some devices are portable and can be used at the production process. Others require ***bench setups*** that are remote from the process, where the measuring instruments can be set up accurately on a flat reference surface, called a ***surface plate***. Gages are used either for sampling or 100% inspection. They tend to be more portable and lend themselves to application at the production process. Certain measuring and gaging techniques can be incorporated into automated inspection systems, to permit feedback control of the process, or for statistical process control purposes.

The ease of use and precision of measuring instruments and gages have been enhanced in recent years by electronics. ***Electronic gages*** are a family of measuring and gaging instruments based on transducers capable of converting a linear displacement into a proportional electrical signal. The electrical signal is then amplified and transformed into a suitable data format such as a digital readout. For example, modern micrometers and graduated calipers are available with a digital display of the measurement of interest. These instruments are easier to read and eliminate much of the human error associated with reading conventional graduated devices. Transducers used in electronic gages include: linear variable differential transformers (LVDT), strain gages, inductance bridges, variable capacitors, and piezoelectric crystals. The transducer is contained in a gaging head designed for the application.

Applications of electronic gages have grown rapidly in recent years, driven by advances in microprocessor technology. They are steadily replacing many of the conventional measuring and gaging devices. Advantages of electronic gages include: (1) good sensitivity, accuracy, precision, repeatability, and speed of response; (2) ability to sense very small dimensions – down to 1 microinch (0.025 micron); (3) ease of operation; (4) reduced human error; (5) electrical signal can be displayed in various formats; and (6) capability to be interfaced with computer systems for data processing.

For reference, we list the common conventional measuring instruments and gages with brief descriptions in Table 23.3. It is not our purpose in this book to provide an exhaustive discussion of these devices. A comprehensive survey can be found in books on metrology, such as [5] or [3], or for a more concise treatment [10]. Our purpose here is to focus on more modern technologies, such as coordinate measuring machines.

**TABLE 23.3** Common Conventional Measuring Instruments and Gages (Adapted from [10])—Some of These Devices Can Be Incorporated into Automated Inspection Systems

| *Instrument and Description* |
|---|
| ***Steel rule*** – Linear graduated measurement scale used to measure linear dimensions. Available in various lengths, typically ranging from 150 to 1000 mm, with graduations of 1 or 0.5 mm. (U.S.C.S. rules available from 6 to 36 in, with graduations of 1/32 in or 0.01 in.) |
| ***Calipers*** – Family of graduated and nongraduated measuring devices consisting of two legs joined by a hinge mechanism. The ends of the legs contact the surfaces of the object to provide a comparative measure. Can be used for internal (e.g., inside diameter) or external (e.g., outside diameter) measurements. |
| ***Slide caliper*** – Steel rule to which two jaws are added, one fixed and the other movable. Jaws are forced to contact part surfaces to be measured, and the location of the movable jaw indicates the dimension of interest. Can be used for internal or external measurements. |
| ***Vernier caliper*** – Refinement of the slide caliper, in which a vernier scale is used to obtain more precise measurements (as close as 0.001 in are readily possible). |
| ***Micrometer*** – Common device consisting of a spindle and C-shaped anvil (similar to a C-clamp). The spindle is closed relative to the fixed anvil by means of a screw thread to contact the surfaces of the object being measured. A vernier scale is used to obtain precisions of 0.01 mm in S.I. (0.0001 in in U.S.C.S.). Available as ***outside micrometers, inside micrometers***, or ***depth micrometers***. Also available as electronic gages to obtain a digital readout of the dimension of interest. |
| ***Dial indicator*** – Mechanical gage that converts and amplifies the linear movement of a contact pointer into rotation of a dial needle. The dial is graduated in units of 0.01 mm in S.I. (0.001 in in U.S.C.S.). Can be used to measure straightness, flatness, squareness, and roundness. |
| ***Gages*** – Family of gages, usually of the go/no-go type, that check whether a part dimension lies within acceptable limits defined by tolerance specified in part drawing. Includes: (1) ***snap gages*** for external dimensions such as a thickness, (2) ***ring gages*** for cylindrical diameters, (3) ***plug gages*** for hole diameters, and (4) ***thread gages***. |
| ***Protractor*** – Device for measuring angles. ***Simple protractor*** consists of a straight blade and a semicircular head graduated in angular units (e.g., degrees). ***Bevel protractor*** consists of two straight blades that pivot one to the other; the pivot mechanism has a protractor scale to measure the angle of the two blades. |

## 23.4 COORDINATE MEASURING MACHINES

***Coordinate metrology*** is concerned with the measurement of the actual shape and dimensions of an object and comparing these with the desired shape and dimensions, as might be specified on a part drawing. In this connection, coordinate metrology consists of the evaluation of the location, orientation, dimensions, and geometry of the part or object. A ***coordinate measuring machine*** (CMM) is an electromechanical system designed to perform coordinate metrology. A CMM consists of a contact probe that can be positioned in three-dimensional (3-D) space relative to the surfaces of a workpart; and the $x$, $y$, and $z$ coordinates of the probe can be accurately and precisely recorded to obtain dimensional data concerning the part geometry. See Figure 23.3. The technology of CMMs dates from the mid-1950s (Historical Note 23.2).

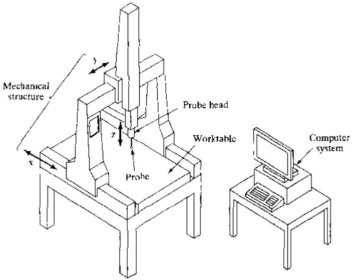



**Figure 23.3** Coordinate measuring machine.

### Historical Note 23.2 *Coordinate measuring machines [2]*

In the mid-1950s, applications of numerical control (NC) technology were growing (Historical Note 6.1). A part that took hours to produce by conventional machining methods could be machined in minutes on an NC machine. The problem was that it still required hours to inspect the part by traditional measuring techniques. Among those who recognized this problem was Harry Ogden, chief engineer at Ferranti, Ltd., a company producing NC machines in Scotland. To address the problem, Ogden developed an inspection machine in 1956, which is considered to be the first coordinate measuring machine (CMM). It consisted of a freely moving measuring probe with electronic numerical display to indicate the location of the probe in $x$-$y$ coordinates. It had $x$ and $y$ movements of 610 mm (24 in) and 381 mm (15 in), respectively. It used a tapered probe tip and provided a measuring accuracy of 0.025 mm (0.001 in). The machine was called the Ferranti Inspection Machine.

Among the attendees at the International Machine Tool Show in Paris in 1959 was George Knopf, General Manager of the Industrial Controls Division of Bendix Corp. in the United States. While touring the show, Knopf visited the Ferranti exhibit and noted with great interest the two-axis CMM among the Ferranti products on display. Recognizing the potential of the machine, Knopf flew from the show to the Ferranti plant in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he started negotiations that led to an exclusive contract for Bendix to sell Ferranti CMMs in North America. Ferranti machines were exhibited by Bendix at the National Machine Tool Show in Chicago in 1960.

The first Ferranti CMM sold in the United States was to Western Electric Company plant in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The machine was used to replace manual inspection techniques. Accurate records were kept on relative inspection times, manual techniques versus the CMM. Inspection times were reduced from 20 minutes to 1 minute. The merit of the CMM was demonstrated, and the market for the CMM was established.

In 1961, responsibility for marketing Ferranti CMMs was assigned to Sheffield Corp., a division of Bendix that had been acquired in 1956. Between 1961 and 1964, more than 250

CMMs were sold by Sheffield. The tradename ***Cordax*** (which stands for coordinate axes) was adopted. An agreement with Ferranti was reached for Sheffield to produce CMMs in the United States. New Cordax models were introduced. CMM sales were growing, and other companies were entering the market, including DEA (Digital Electronic Automation, an Italian firm) in 1965 and Carl Zeiss (a German firm) in 1973. Zeiss is credited with developing the first three-axis CMM. The first touch-trigger probe was developed in England in 1972. Computer software was developed for CMMs to perform probe offset compensation and to calculate geometric features. Improvements in CMM technology continue today.

To accomplish measurements in 3-D, a basic CMM is composed of the following components:

- probe head and probe to contact the workpart surfaces
- mechanical structure that provides motion of the probe in three Cartesian axes and displacement transducers to measure the coordinate values of each axis

In addition, many CMMs have the following components:

- drive system and control unit to move each of the three axes
- digital computer system with application software

In this section, we discuss (1) the construction features of a CMM; (2) operation and programming of the machine; (3) the kinds of application software that enable it to measure more than just $x$-$y$-$z$ coordinates; (4) applications and benefits of the CMM over manual inspection; (5) flexible inspection systems, an enhancement of the CMM; and (6) use of contact inspection probes on machine tools.

### 23.4.1 CMM Construction

In the construction of a CMM, the probe is fastened to a mechanical structure that allows movement of the probe relative to the part. The part is usually located on a worktable that is connected to the structure. Let us examine the two basic components of the CMM: (1) its probe and (2) its mechanical structure.

*Probe.* The contact probe is a key component of a CMM. It indicates when contact has been made with the part surface during measurement. The tip of the probe is usually a ruby ball. Ruby is a form of corundum (aluminum oxide), whose desirable properties in this application include high hardness for wear resistance and low density for minimum inertia. Probes can have either a single tip, as in Figure 23.4(a), or multiple tips as in Figure 23.4(b).

Most probes today are ***touch-trigger probes***, which actuate when the probe makes contact with the part surface. Commercially available touch-trigger probes utilize any of various triggering mechanisms, including the following:

- The trigger is based on a highly sensitive electrical contact switch that emits a signal when the tip of the probe is deflected from its neutral position.
- The trigger actuates when electrical contact is established between the probe and the (metallic) part surface.

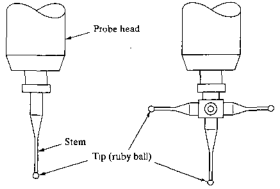



**Figure 23.4** Contact probe configurations: (a) single tip and (b) multiple tips.

- The trigger uses a piezoelectric sensor that generates a signal based on tension or compression loading of the probe.

Immediately after contact is made between the probe and the surface of the object, the coordinate positions of the probe are accurately measured by displacement transducers associated with each of the three linear axes and recorded by the CMM controller. Common displacement transducers used on CMMs include optical scales, rotary encoders, and magnetic scales [2]. Compensation is made for the radius of the probe tip, as indicated in our Example 23.1, and any limited overtravel of the probe quill due to momentum is neglected. After the probe has been separated from the contact surface, it returns to its neutral position.

**EXAMPLE 23.1 Dimensional Measurement with Probe Tip Compensation**

The part dimension $L$ in Figure 23.5 is to be measured. The dimension is aligned with the $x$-axis, so it can be measured using only $x$-coordinate locations. When the probe is moved toward the part from the left, contact made at $x = 68.93$ is recorded (mm). When the probe is moved toward the opposite side of the part

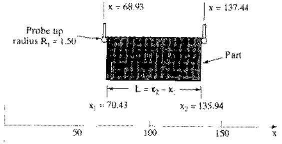



**Figure 23.5** Setup for CMM measurement in Example 23.1.

from the right, contact made at $x = 137.44$ is recorded. The probe tip diameter is 3.00 mm. What is the dimension $L$?

***Solution:*** Given that the probe tip diameter $D_t = 3.00$ mm, the radius $R_t = 1.50$ mm. Each of the recorded $x$ values must be corrected for this radius.

$$x_1 = 68.93 + 1.50 = 70.43 \text{ mm}$$

$$x_2 = 137.44 - 1.50 = 135.94 \text{ mm}$$

$$L = x_1 - x_2 = 135.94 - 70.43 = 65.51 \text{ mm}$$

---

*Mechanical Structure* There are various physical configurations for achieving the motion of the probe, each with its relative advantages and disadvantages. Nearly all CMMs have a mechanical configuration that fits into one of the following six types, illustrated in Figure 23.6:

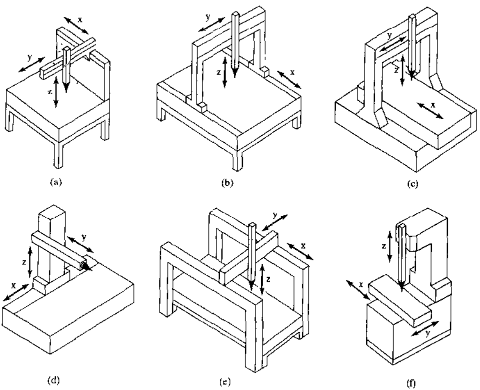



**Figure 23.6** Six types of CMM construction: (a) cantilever, (b) moving bridge, (c) fixed bridge, (d) horizontal arm (moving ram type), (e) gantry, and (f) column.

(a) ***Cantilever.*** In the cantilever configuration, illustrated in Figure 23.6(a), the probe is attached to a vertical quill that moves in the $z$–axis direction relative to a horizontal arm that overhangs a fixed worktable. The quill can also be moved along the length of the arm to achieve $y$–axis motion, and the arm can be moved relative to the worktable to achieve $x$–axis motion. The advantages of this construction are: (1) convenient access to the worktable, (2) high throughput—the rate at which parts can be mounted and measured on the CMM, (3) capacity to measure large workparts (on large CMMs), and (4) relatvely small floor space requirements. Its disadvantage is lower rigidity than most other CMM constructions.

(b) ***Moving bridge.*** In the moving bridge design, Figure 23.6(b), the probe is mounted on a bridge structure that is moved relative to a stationary table on which is positioned the part to be measured. This provides a more rigid structure than the cantilever design, and its advocates claim that this makes the moving bridge CMM more accurate. However, one of the problems encountered with the moving bridge design is ***yawing*** (also known as ***walking***), in which the two legs of the bridge move at slightly different speeds, resulting in twisting of the bridge. This phenomenon degrades the accuracy of the measurements. Yawing is reduced on moving bridge CMMs when dual drives and position feedback controls are installed for both legs. The moving bridge design is the most widely used in industry. It is well suited to the size range of parts commonly encountered in production machine shops.

(c) ***Fixed bridge.*** In this configuration, Figure 23.6(c), the bridge is attached to the CMM bed, and the worktable is moved in the $x$-direction beneath the bridge. This construction eliminates the possibility of yawing, hence increasing rigidity and accuracy. However, throughput is adversely affected because of the additional mass involved to move the heavy worktable with part mounted on it.

(d) ***Horizontal arm.*** The horizontal arm configuration consists of a cantilevered horizontal arm mounted to a vertical column. The arm moves vertically and in and out to achieve $y$-axis and $z$-axis motions. To achieve $x$-axis motion, either the column is moved horizontally past the worktable (called the ***moving ram*** design), or the worktable is moved past the column (called the ***moving table*** design). The moving ram design is illustrated in Figure 23.6(d). The cantilever design of the horizontal arm configuration makes it less rigid and therefore less accurate than other CMM structures. On the positive side, it allows good accessibility to the work area. Large horizontal arm machines are suited to the measurement of automobile bodies, and some CMMs are equipped with ***dual arms*** so that independent measurements can be taken on both sides of the car body at the same time.

(e) ***Gantry.*** This construction, illustrated in Figure 23.6(e), is generally intended for inspecting large objects. The probe quill ($z$–axis) moves relative to the horizontal arm extending between the two rails of the gantry. The workspace in a large gantry type CMM can be as great as 25 m (82 ft) in the $x$-direction by 8 m (26 ft) in the $y$-direction by 6 m (20 ft) in the $z$-direction.

(f) ***Column.*** This configuration, in Figure 23.6(f), is similar to the construction of a machine tool. The $x$- and $y$-axis movements are achieved by moving the worktable, while the probe quill is moved vertically along a rigid column to achieve $z$-axis motion.

In all of these constructions, special design features are used to build high accuracy and precision into the frame. These features include precision rolling-contact bearings and hydrostatic air–bearings, installation mountings to isolate the CMM and reduce vibrations in the factory from being transmitted through the floor, and various schemes to counterbalance the overhanging arm in the case of the cantilever construction [4], [17].

### 23.4.2 CMM Operation and Programming

Positioning the probe relative to the part can be accomplished in several ways, ranging from manual operation to direct computer control (DCC). Computer-controlled CMMs operate much like CNC machine tools, and these machines must be programmed. In this section, we consider: (1) types of CMM controls and (2) programming of computer-controlled CMMs.

*CMM Controls.* The methods of operating and controlling a CMM can be classified into four main categories: (1) manual drive, (2) manual drive with computer-assisted data processing, (3) motor drive with computer-assisted data processing, and (4) DCC with computer-assisted data processing.

In a ***manual drive*** CMM, the human operator physically moves the probe along the machine's axes to make contact with the part and record the measurements. The three orthogonal slides are designed to be nearly frictionless to permit the probe to be free floating in the $x$-, $y$-, and $z$-directions. The measurements are provided by a digital readout, which the operator can record either manually or with paper printout. Any calculations on the data (e.g., calculating the center and diameter of a hole) must be made by the operator.

A CMM with ***manual drive and computer-assisted data processing*** provides some data processing and computational capability for performing the calculations required to evaluate a given part feature. The types of data processing and computations range from simple conversions between U.S. customary units and metric to more complicated geometry calculations, such as determining the angle between two planes. The probe is still free floating to permit the operator to bring it into contact with the desired part surfaces.

A ***motor-driven CMM with computer-assisted data processing*** uses electric motors to drive the probe along the machine axes under operator control. A joystick or similar device is used as the means of controlling the motion. Features such as low-power stepping motors and friction clutches are utilized to reduce the effects of collisions between the probe and the part. The motor drive can be disengaged to permit the operator to physically move the probe as in the manual control method. Motor-driven CMMs are generally equipped with data processing to accomplish the geometric computations required in feature assessment.

A CMM with ***direct computer control*** (DCC) operates like a CNC machine tool. It is motorized, and the movements of the coordinate axes are controlled by a dedicated computer under program control. The computer also performs the various data processing and calculation functions and compiles a record of the measurements made during inspection. As with a CNC machine tool, the DCC CMM requires part programming.

*DCC Programming.* There are two principle methods of programming a DCC measuring machine: (1) manual leadthrough and (2) off-line programming. In the ***manual leadthrough*** method, the operator leads the CMM probe through the various motions required in the inspection sequence, indicating the points and surfaces that are to be measured and recording these into the control memory. This is similar to the robot programming technique of the same name (Section 7.6.1). During regular operation, the CMM controller plays back the program to execute the inspection procedure.

***Off-line programming*** is accomplished in the manner of computer-assisted NC part programming. The program is prepared off-line based on the part drawing and then downloaded to the CMM controller for execution. The programming statements for a computer-controlled CMM include motion commands, measurement commands, and report formatting commands. The motion commands are used to direct the probe to a desired inspection location, in the same way that a cutting tool is directed in a machining operation. The measurement statements are used to control the measuring and inspection functions of the machine, calling the various data processing and calculation routines into play. Finally, the formatting statements permit the specification of the output reports to document the inspection.

An enhancement of off-line programming is ***CAD programming*** [2], in which the measurement cycle is generated from CAD (Computer-Aided Design, Chapter 24) geometric data representing the part rather than from a hard copy part drawing. Off-line programming on a CAD system is facilitated by the ***Dimensional Measuring Interface Standard*** (DMIS). DMIS is a protocol that permits two-way communication between CAD systems and CMMs. Use of the DMIS protocol has the following advantages [2]: (1) It allows any CAD system to communicate with any CMM; (2) it reduces software development costs for CMM and CAD companies because only one translator is required to communicate with the DMIS; (3) users have greater choice in selecting among CMM suppliers; and (4) user training requirements are reduced.

### 23.4.3 Other CMM Software

***CMM software*** is the set of programs and procedures (with supporting documentation) used to operate the CMM and its associated equipment. In addition to part programming software used for programming DCC machines, discussed above, other software is also required to achieve full functionality of a CMM. Indeed, it is software that has enabled the CMM to become the workhorse inspection machine that it is. Additional software can be divided into the following categories [2]: (1) core software other than DCC programming, (2) post-inspection software, and (3) reverse engineering and application-specific software.

*Core Software Other than DCC Programming.* ***Core software*** consists of the minimum basic programs required for the CMM to function, excluding part programming software, which applies only to DCC machines. This software is generally applied either before or during the inspection procedure. Core programs normally include the following:

- ***Probe calibration.*** This function is required to define the parameters of the probe (such as tip radius, tip positions for a multi-tip probe, and elastic bending coefficients of the probe) so that coordinate measurements can be automatically compensated for the probe dimensions when the tip contacts the part surface, avoiding the necessity to perform probe tip calculations as in Example 23.1. Calibration is usually accomplished by causing the probe to contact a cube or sphere of known dimensions.
- ***Part coordinate system definition.*** This software permits measurements of the part to be made without requiring a time-consuming part alignment procedure on the CMM worktable. Instead of physically aligning the part to the CMM axes, the measurement axes are mathematically aligned relative to the part.

- ***Geometric feature construction.*** This software addresses the problems associated with geometric features whose evaluation requires more than one point measurement. These features include flatness, squareness, determining the center of a hole or the axis of a cylinder, and so on. The software integrates the multiple measurements so that a given geometric feature can be evaluated. Table 23.4 lists a number of the common geometric features, indicating how the features might be assessed by the CMM software. Examples 23.2 and 23.3 illustrate the application of two of the feature evaluation techniques. For increased statistical reliability, it is common to measure more than the theoretically minimum number of points needed to assess the feature and to use curve-fitting algorithms (such as least squares) in calculating the best estimate of the geometric feature's parameters. A review of CMM form-fitting algorithms is presented in Lin et al. [13].
- ***Tolerance analysis.*** This software allows measurements taken on the part to be compared to the dimensions and tolerances specified on the engineering drawing.

**TABLE 23.4** Geometric Features Requiring Multiple Point Measurements to Evaluate—Subroutines for Evaluating These Features Are Commonly Available Among CMM Software

***Dimensions.*** A dimension of a part can be determined by taking the difference between the two surfaces defining the dimension. The two surfaces can be defined by a point location on each surface. In two axes ($x$-$y$), the distance L between two point locations $(x_1, y_1)$ and $(x_2, y_2)$ is given by

$$L = \pm\sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2} \tag{23.3}$$

In three axes ($x$-$y$-$z$), the distance $L$ between two point locations $(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ and $(x_2, y_2, z_2)$ is given by

$$L = \pm\sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2 + (z_2 - z_1)^2} \tag{23.4}$$

See Example 23.1.

***Hole location and diameter.*** By measuring three points around the surface of a circular hole, the "best-fit" center coordinates $(a, b)$ of the hole and its radius $R$ can be computed. The diameter = twice the radius. In the $x$-$y$ plane, the coordinate values of the three point locations are used in the following equation for a circle to set up three equations with three unknowns:

$$(x - a)^2 + (y - b)^2 = R^2 \tag{23.5}$$

where $a$ = $x$-coordinate of the hole center, $b$ = $y$-coordinate of the hole circle, and $R$ = radius of the hole circle. Solving the three equations yields the values of $a$, $b$, and $R$. $D = 2R$. See Example 23.2.

***Cylinder axis and diameter.*** This is similar to the preceding problem except that the calculation deals with an outside surface rather than an internal (hole) surface.

***Sphere center and diameter.*** By measuring four points on the surface of a sphere, the best-fit center coordinates $(a, b, c)$ and the radius $R$ (diameter $D = 2R$) can be calculated. The coordinate values of the four point locations are used in the following equation for a sphere to set up four equations with four unknowns:

$$(x - a)^2 + (y - b)^2 + (z - c)^2 = R^2 \tag{23.6}$$

where $a$ = $x$-coordinate of the sphere, $b$ = $y$-coordinate of the sphere, $c$ = $z$-coordinate of the sphere, and $R$ = radius of the sphere. Solving the four equations yields the values of $a$, $b$, $c$, and $R$.

***Definition of a line in x-y plane.*** Based on a minimum of two contact points on the line, the best-fit line is determined. For example, the line might be the edge of a straight surface. The coordinate values of the two point locations are used in the following equation for a line to set up two equations with two unknowns:

*(continued on next page)*

**TABLE 23.4** *Continued*

$$x + Ay + B = 0 \tag{23.7}$$

where $A$ is a parameter indicating the slope of the line in the $y$-axis direction and $B$ is a constant indicating the $x$-axis intercept. Solving the two equations yields the values of $A$ and $B$, which defines the line. This form of equation can be converted into the more familiar conventional equation of a straight line, which is

$$y = mx + b \tag{23.8}$$

where slope $m = -1/A$ and $y$-intercept $b = -B/A$.

***Angle between two lines.*** Based on the conventional form equations of the two lines, that is, Eq. (23.8), the angle between the two lines relative to the positive $x$-axis is given by:

$$\text{Angle between line 1 and line 2} = \alpha\text{-}\beta \tag{23.9}$$

where $\alpha = \tan^{-1}(m_1)$, where $m_1$ = slope of line 1; and $\beta = \tan^{-1}(m_2)$, where $m_2$ = slope of line 2.

***Definition of a plane.*** Based on a minimum of three contact points on a plane surface, the best-fit plane is determined. The coordinate values of the three point locations are used in the following equation for a plane to set up three equations with three unknowns:

$$x + Ay + Bz + C = 0 \tag{23.10}$$

where $A$ and $B$ are parameters indicating the slopes of the plane in the $y$- and $z$-axis directions, and $C$ is a constant indicating the $x$-axis intercept. Solving the three equations yields the values of $A$, $B$, and $C$, which defines the plane.

***Flatness.*** By measuring more than three contact points on a supposedly plane surface, the deviation of the surface from a perfect plane can be determined.

***Angle between two planes.*** The angle between two planes can be found by defining each of two planes using the plane definition method above and calculating the angle between them.

***Parallelism between two planes.*** This is an extension of the previous function. If the angle between two planes is zero, then the planes are parallel. The degree to which the planes deviate from parallelism can be determined.

***Angle and point of intersection between two lines.*** Given two lines known to intersect (e.g., two edges of a part that meet in a corner), the point of intersection and the angle between the lines can be determined based on two points measured for each line (a total of four points).

**EXAMPLE 23.2 Computing a Linear Dimension**

The coordinates at the two ends of a certain length dimension of a machined component have been measured by a CMM. The coordinates of the first end are (23.47, 48.11, 0.25), and the coordinates of the opposite end are (73.52, 21.70, 60.38), where the units are millimeters. The given coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. Determine the length dimension that would be computed by the CMM software.

***Solution:*** Using Eq. (23.4) in Table 23.4, we have

$$L = \sqrt{(23.47 - 73.52)^2 + (48.11 - 21.70)^2 + (0.25 - 60.38)^2}$$
$$= \sqrt{(-50.05)^2 + (26.41)^2 + (-60.13)^2}$$
$$= \sqrt{2505.0025 + 697.4881 + 3615.6169} = \sqrt{6818.1075} = \mathbf{82.57\ mm}$$

**EXAMPLE 23.3 Determining the Center and Diameter of a Drilled Hole**

Three point locations on the surface of a drilled hole have been measured by a CMM in the $x$-$y$ axes. The three coordinates are: (34.41, 21.07), (55.19, 30.50), and (50.10, 13.18) mm. The given coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. Determine: (a) coordinates of the hole center and (b) hole diameter, as they would be computed by the CMM software.

***Solution:*** To determine the coordinates of the hole center, we must establish three equations patterned after Eq. (23.5) in Table 23.4:

$$(34.41 - a)^2 + (21.07 - b)^2 = R^2 \tag{i}$$

$$(55.19 - a)^2 + (30.50 - b)^2 = R^2 \tag{ii}$$

$$(50.10 - a)^2 + (13.18 - b)^2 = R^2 \tag{iii}$$

Expanding each of the equations, we have:

$$1184.0481 - 68.82a + a^2 + 443.9449 - 42.14b + b^2 = R^2 \tag{i}$$

$$3045.9361 - 110.38a + a^2 + 930.25 - 61b + b^2 = R^2 \tag{ii}$$

$$2510.01 - 100.2a + a^2 + 173.7124 - 26.36b + b^2 = R^2 \tag{iii}$$

Setting Eq. (i) = Eq. (ii):

$$\begin{aligned} 1184.0481 - 68.82a + a^2 + 443.9449 - 42.14b + b^2 &= \\ 3045.9361 - 110.38a + a^2 + 930.25 - 61b + b^2 & \qquad \text{(iv)} \end{aligned}$$

$$1627.993 - 68.82a - 42.14b = 3976.1861 - 110.38a - 61b$$

$$-2348.1931 + 41.56a + 18.86b = 0$$

$$18.86b = 2348.1931 + 41.56a$$

$$b = 124.5065 - 2.2036a \tag{iv}$$

Now setting Eq. (ii) = Eq. (iii):

$$\begin{aligned} 3045.9361 - 110.38a + a^2 + 930.25 - 61b + b^2 &= \\ 2510.01 - 100.2a + a^2 + 173.7124 - 26.36b + b^2 & \qquad \text{(v)} \end{aligned}$$

$$3976.1861 - 110.38a - 61b = 2683.7224 - 100.2a - 26.36b$$

$$1292.4637 - 10.18a - 34.64b = 0$$

$$10.18a = 1292.4637 - 34.64b$$

$$a = 126.9611 - 3.4027b \tag{v}$$

Substituting Eq. (iv) for $b$:

$$a = 126.9611 - 3.4027(124.5065 - 2.2036a)$$

$$a = 126.9611 - 423.6645 + 7.4983a$$

$$6.4983a - 296.7034 \qquad a = 45.6586 \rightarrow 45.66$$

The value of $a$ can now be substituted into Eq. (iv):

$$b = 124.5065 - 2.2036(45.6586) \qquad b = 23.8932 \rightarrow 23.89$$

Now using the values of $a$ and $b$ in Eq. (i) to find $R$ (Eqs. (ii) and (iii) could also be used), we have:

$$R^2 = (34.41 - 45.6586)^2 + (21.07 - 23.8932)^2$$

$$= (-11.2486)^2 + (-2.8232)^2 = 126.531 + 7.970 = 134.501$$

$$R = \sqrt{134.501} = 11.60 \text{ mm} \qquad D = 23.20 \text{ mm}$$

---

*Post-Inspection Software.* ***Post-inspection software*** is composed of the set of programs that are applied after the inspection procedure. Such software often adds significant utility and value to the inspection function. Among the programs included in this group are the following:

- ***Statistical analysis.*** This software is used to carry out any of various statistical analyses on the data collected by the CMM. For example, part dimension data can be used to assess ***process capability*** (Section 21.1.2) of the associated manufacturing process or for ***statistical process control*** (Sections 21.2 and 21.3). Two alternative approaches have been adopted by CMM makers in this area. The first approach is to provide software that creates a database of the measurements taken and facilitates exporting of the database to other software packages. What makes this feasible is that the data collected by a CMM are already coded in digital form. This approach permits the user to select among many statistical analysis packages that are commercially available. The second approach is to include a statistical analysis program among the software supplied by the CMM builder. This approach is generally quicker and easier, but the range of analyses available is not as great.
- ***Graphical data representation.*** The purpose of this software is to display the data collected during the CMM procedure in a graphical or pictorial way, thus permitting easier visualization of form errors and other data by the user.

*Reverse Engineering and Application-Specific Software.* ***Reverse engineering*** software is designed to take an existing physical part and construct a computer model of the part geometry based on a large number of measurements of its surface by a CMM. This is currently a developing area in CMM and CAD software. The simplest approach is to use the CMM in the manual mode of operation, in which the operator moves the probe by hand and scans the physical part to create a digitized three-dimensional (3-D) surface model. Manual digitization can be quite time-consuming for complex part geometries. More automated methods are being developed, in which the CMM explores the part surfaces with little or no human intervention to construct the 3-D model. The challenge here is to minimize the exploration time of the CMM, yet capture the details of a complex surface contour and avoid collisions that would damage the probe. In this context, it should be mentioned that significant potential exists for using noncontacting probes (such as lasers) in reverse engineering applications.

***Application-specific software*** refers to programs written for certain types of parts and/or products and whose applications are generally limited to specific industries. Several important examples are [2], [3]:

- ***Gear checking.*** These programs are used on a CMM to measure the geometric features of a gear, such as tooth profile, tooth thickness, pitch, and helix angle.
- ***Thread checking.*** These are used for inspection of cylindrical and conical threads.
- ***Cam checking.*** This specialized software is used to evaluate the accuracy of physical cams relative to design specifications.
- ***Automobile body checking.*** This software is designed for CMMs used to measure sheet metal panels, subassemblies, and complete car bodies in the automotive industry. Unique measurement issues arise in this application that distinguish it from the measurement of machined parts. These issues include: (1) large sheet metal panels lack rigidity, (2) compound curved surfaces are common, (3) surface definition cannot be determined without a great number of measured points.

Also included in the category of application-specific software are programs to operate accessory equipment associated with the CMM. Examples of accessory equipment requiring its own application software include: probe changers, rotary worktables used on the CMM, and automatic part loading and unloading devices.

### 23.4.4 CMM Applications and Benefits

Many of the applications of CMMs have been suggested by our previous discussion of CMM software. The most common applications are off-line inspection and on-line/post-process inspection (Section 22.4.1). Machined components are frequently inspected using CMMs. One common application is to check the first part machined on a numerically controlled machine tool. If the first part passes inspection, then the remaining parts produced in the batch are assumed to be identical to the first. Gears and automobile bodies are two examples previously mentioned in the context of application-specific software (Section 23.4.3).

Inspection of parts and assemblies on a CMM is generally accomplished using sampling techniques. CMMs are sometimes used for 100% inspection if the inspection cycle is compatible with the production cycle (it often takes less time to produce a part than it does to inspect it) and the CMM can be dedicated to the process. Whether used for 100% inspection or sampling inspection, the CMM measurements are frequently used for statistical process control.

Other CMM applications include audit inspection and calibration of gages and fixtures. ***Audit inspection*** refers to the inspection of incoming parts from a vendor to ensure that the vendor's quality control systems are reliable. This is usually done on a sampling basis. In effect, this application is the same as post-process inspection. ***Gage and fixture calibration*** involves the measurement of various gages, fixtures, and other inspection and production tooling to validate their continued use.

One of the factors that makes a CMM so useful is its accuracy and repeatability. Typical values of these measures are given in Table 23.5 for a moving bridge CMM. It can be seen that these performance measures degrade as the size of the machine increases.

Coordinate measuring machines are most appropriate for applications possessing the following characteristics (summarized in the checklist of Table 23.6 for potential users to evaluate their inspection operations in terms of CMM suitability):

1. ***Many inspectors performing repetitive manual inspection operations.*** If the inspection function represents a significant labor cost to the plant, then automating the inspection procedures will reduce labor cost and increase throughput.

**TABLE 23.5** Typical Accuracy and Repeatability Measures for Two Different Sizes of CMM; Data Apply to a Moving Bridge CMM

| *CMM Feature* | | *Small CMM* | *Large CMM* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Measuring range: | *x* | 650 mm (25.6 in) | 900 mm (35.4 in) |
| | *y* | 600 mm (23.6 in) | 1200 mm (47.2 in) |
| | *z* | 500 mm (19.7 in) | 850 mm (33.5 in) |
| Accuracy: | *x* | 0.004 mm (0.00016 in) | 0.006 mm (0.00024 in) |
| | *y* | 0.004 mm (0.00016 in) | 0.007 mm (0.00027 in) |
| | *z* | 0.0035 mm (0.00014 in) | 0.0065 mm (0.00026 in) |
| Repeatability | | 0.0035 mm (0.00014 in) | 0.004 mm (0.00016 in) |
| Resolution | | 0.0005 mm (0.00002 in) | 0.0005 mm (0.00002 in) |

*Source*: [3].

**TABLE 23.6** Checklist to Determine Suitability of CMMs for Potential Applications—The More Check Marks in the YES Column, the More Likely That CMM Technology Is Appropriate

| *Inspection Characteristic* | **NO** *(Few or No Applications* | **YES** *(Many Applications)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Many inspectors performing repetitive manual inspection operations. | | |
| 2. Post-process inspection. | | |
| 3. Measurement of geometric features requiring multiple contact points. | | |
| 4. Multiple inspection setups are required if parts are manually inspected. | | |
| 5. Complex part geometry. | | |
| 6. High variety of parts to be inspected. | | |
| 7. Repeat orders. | | |
| Total check marks in each column. | | |

2. ***Post-process inspection***. CMMs are applicable only to inspection operations performed after the manufacturing process.
3. ***Measurement of geometric features requiring multiple contact points***. These kinds of features are identified in Table 23.4, and available CMM software facilitates evaluation of these features.
4. ***Multiple inspection setups are required if parts are manually inspected***. Manual inspections are generally performed on surface plates using gage blocks, height gages, and similar devices, and a different setup is often required for each measurement.

The same group of measurements on the part can usually be accomplished in one setup on a CMM.

5. ***Complex part geometry***. If many measurements are to be made on a complex part, and many contact locations are required, then the cycle time of a DCC CMM will be significantly less than the corresponding time for a manual procedure.
6. ***High variety of parts to be inspected.*** A DCC CMM is a programmable machine, capable of dealing with high parts variety.
7. ***Repeat orders.*** Using a DCC CMM, once the part program has been prepared for the first part, subsequent parts from repeat orders can be inspected using the same program.

When applied in the appropriate parts quantity-parts variety range, the advantages of using CMMs over manual inspection methods are [17]:

- ***Reduced inspection cycle time.*** Because of the automated techniques included in the operation of a CMM, inspection procedures are speeded and labor productivity is improved. A DCC CMM is capable of accomplishing many of the measurement tasks listed in Table 23.4 in one-tenth the time or less, compared with manual techniques. Reduced inspection cycle time translates into higher throughput.
- ***Flexibility.*** A CMM is a general-purpose machine that can be used to inspect a variety of different part configurations with minimal changeover time. In the case of the DCC machine, where programming is performed off-line, changeover time on the CMM involves only the physical setup.
- ***Reduced operator errors.*** Automating the inspection procedure has the obvious effect of reducing human errors in measurements and setups.
- ***Greater inherent accuracy and precision.*** A CMM is inherently more accurate and precise than the manual surface plate methods that are traditionally used for inspection.
- ***Avoidance of multiple setups.*** Traditional inspection techniques often require multiple setups to measure multiple part features and dimensions. In general, all measurements can be made in a single setup on a CMM, thereby increasing throughput and measurement accuracy.

The technology of CMMs has spawned other contact inspection methods. We discuss two of these extensions in the following Sections: flexible inspection systems and inspection probes.

### 23.4.5 Flexible Inspection Systems

A flexible inspection system (FIS) takes the versatility of the CMM one step further. In concept, the FIS is related to a CMM in the way a flexible manufacturing system (FMS) is related to a machining center. A ***flexible inspection system*** is defined as a highly automated inspection workcell consisting of one or more CMMs and other types of inspection equipment plus the parts handling systems needed to move parts into, within, and out of the cell. Robots might be used to accomplish some of the parts-handling tasks in the system. As with the FMS, all of the components of the FIS are computer controlled.

An example of an FIS at Boeing Aerospace Company is reported in Schaffer [19]. As illustrated in the layout in Figure 23.7, the system consists of two DCC CMMs, a robotic inspection station, an automated storage system, and a storage-and-retrieval cart that interconnects the various components of the cell. A staging area for loading and unloading pallets into and out of the cell is located immediately outside the FIS. The CMMs in the cell

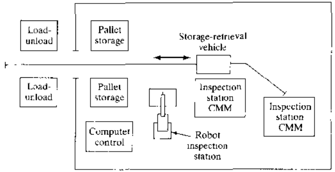



**Figure 23.7** Layout plan of flexible inspection system (FIS).

perform dimensional inspection based on programs prepared off-line. The robotic station is equipped with an ultrasonic inspection probe to check skin thickness of hollow wing sections for Boeing's aerospace products.

### 23.4.6 Inspection Probes on Machine Tools

In recent years there has been a significant growth in the use of tactile probes as on-line inspection systems in machine tool applications. These probes are mounted in toolholders, inserted into the machine tool spindle, stored in the tool drum, and handled by the automatic tool changer in the same way that cutting tools are handled. When mounted in the spindle, the machine tool is controlled very much like a CMM. Sensors in the probe determine when contact has been made with the part surface. Signals from the sensor are transmitted by any of several means (e.g., direct electrical connection, induction-coil, infrared data transmission) to the controller that performs the required data processing to interpret and utilize the signal.

Touch-sensitive probes are sometimes referred to as in-process inspection devices, but by our definitions they are on-line/post-process devices (Section 22.4.1) because they are employed immediately following the machining operation rather than during cutting. However, these probes are sometimes used between machining steps in the same setup; for example, to establish a datum reference either before or after initial machining so that subsequent cuts can be accomplished with greater accuracy. Some of the other calculation features of machine-mounted inspection probes are similar to the capabilities of CMMs with computer-assisted data processing. The features include: determining the centerline of a cylindrical part or a hole and determining the coordinates of an inside or outside corner.

One of the controversial aspects of machine-mounted inspection probes is that the same machine tool making the part is also performing the inspection. The argument against this is that certain errors inherent in the cutting operation will also be manifested in the measuring operation. For example, if there is misalignment between the machine tool axes, thus producing out-of-square parts, this condition will not be identified by the machine-mounted probe because the movement of the probe is affected by the same axis misalignment. To generalize, errors that are common to both the production process and the measurement procedure will go undetected by a machine-mounted inspection probe. These errors include [2]: machine tool geometry errors (such as the axis misalignment problem identified above), thermal distortions in the machine tool axes, and errors in any thermal correction procedures applied to the machine tool. Errors that are not common to both systems should be detectable by the measurement probe. These measurable errors include tool and/or toolholder deflection, workpart deflection, tool offset errors, and effects of tool wear on the workpart. In practice, the use of machine-mounted inspection probes has proved to be effective in improving quality and saving time as an alternative to expensive off-line inspection operations.

## 23.5 SURFACE MEASUREMENT[3]

The measurement and inspection technologies discussed in Sections 23.3 and 23.4 are concerned with evaluating dimensions and related characteristics of a part or product. Another measurable attribute of a part or product is its surface. The measurement of surfaces is usually accomplished by instruments that use a contacting stylus. Hence, surface metrology is most appropriately included within the scope of contact inspection technologies.

### 23.5.1 Stylus Instruments

Stylus-type instruments are commercially available to measure surface roughness. In these electronic devices, a cone-shaped diamond stylus with point radius of about 0.005 mm (0.0002 in) and 90° tip angle is traversed across the test surface at a constant slow speed. The operation is depicted in Figure 23.8. As the stylus head moves horizontally, it also moves vertically to follow the surface deviations. The vertical movements are converted into an electronic signal that represents the topography of the surface along the path taken by the stylus. This can be displayed as either: (1) a profile of the surface or (2) an average roughness value.

***Profiling devices*** use a separate flat plane as the nominal reference against which deviations are measured. The output is a plot of the surface contour along the line traversed by the stylus. This type of system can identify roughness, waviness, and other measures of the test surface. By traversing successive lines parallel and closely spaced with each other, a "topographical map" of the surface can be created.

***Averaging devices*** reduce the vertical deviations to a single value of surface roughness. As illustrated in Figure 23.9, ***surface roughness*** is defined as the average of the vertical deviations from the nominal surface over a specified surface length. An arithmetic average (AA) is generally used, based on the absolute values of the deviations. In equation form,

$$R_a = \int_0^L \frac{|y|}{L} dx \tag{23.11}$$

where $R_a$ = arithmetic mean value of roughness (m, in); $y$ = vertical deviation from the nominal surface converted to absolute value (m, in); and $L$ = sampling distance, called the ***cutoff length***, over which the surface deviations are averaged. The distance $L_m$ in Figure 23.9 is the total measurement distance that is traced by the stylus. A stylus-type averaging device performs Eq. (23.11) electronically. To establish the nominal reference plane, the de-

[3] Portions of this section are based on Groover [10], Section 5.2 and 41.4.1.

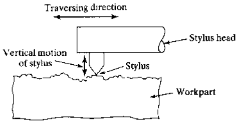



**Figure 23.8** Sketch illustrating the operation of stylus-type instrument. Stylus head traverses horizontally across surface, while stylus moves vertically to follow surface profile. Vertical movement is converted into either: (1) a profile of the surface or (2) the average roughness value (source: [10]).

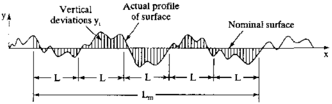



**Figure 23.9** Deviations from nominal surface used in the definition of surface roughness (source: [10]).

vice uses skids riding on the actual surface. The skids act as a mechanical filter to reduce the effect of waviness in the surface.

One of the difficulties in surface roughness measurement is the possibility that waviness can be included in the measurement of $R_a$. To deal with this problem, the cutoff length is used as a filter that separates waviness from roughness deviations. As defined above, the cutoff length is a sampling distance along the surface. It can be set at any of several values on the measurement device, usually ranging between 0.08 mm (0.0030 in) and 2.5 mm (0.10 in). A cutoff length shorter than the waviness width eliminates the vertical deviations associated with waviness and only includes those associated with roughness. The most common cutoff length used in practice is 0.8 mm (0.030 in). The cutoff length should be set at a value that is at least 2.5 times the distance between successive roughness peaks. The measuring length $L_m$ is normally set at about five times the cutoff length.

An approximation of Eq. (23.11), perhaps easier to visualize, is given by:

$$R_a = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} |y_i|}{n} \tag{23.12}$$

where $R_a$ has the same meaning as above; $y_i$ = vertical deviations identified by the subscript $i$, converted to absolute value (m, in); and $n$ = the number of deviations included in $L$. We have indicated the units in these equations to be meters (inches). However, the scale of the deviations is very small, so more appropriate units are microns, which equal $10^{-6}$ m or $10^{-3}$ mm, or microinches, which equal $10^{-6}$ in. These are the units commonly used to express surface roughness.

Surface roughness suffers the same kinds of deficiencies of any single measure used to assess a complex physical attribute. One deficiency is that it fails to account for the lay of the surface pattern; thus, surface roughness may vary significantly depending on the direction in which it is measured. These kinds of issues are addressed in books that deal specifically with surface texture and its characterization and measurement, such as [15].

### 23.5.2 Other Surface Measuring Techniques

Two additional methods for measuring surface roughness and related characteristics are available. One is a contact procedure of sorts, while the other is a noncontact method. We mention them here for completeness of coverage.

The first technique involves a subjective comparison of the part surface with standard surface finish blocks that are produced to specified roughness values. In the United States, these blocks have surfaces with roughness values of 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, and 128 microinches. To estimate the roughness of a given test specimen, the surface is compared to the standard both visually and by using a "fingernail test." In this test, the user gently scratches the surfaces of the specimen and the standard, judging which standard is closest to the specimen. Standard test surfaces are a convenient way for a machine operator to obtain an estimate of surface roughness. They are also useful for product design engineers in judging what value of surface roughness to specify on the part drawing. The drawback of this method is its subjectivity.

Most other surface measuring instruments employ optical techniques to assess roughness. These techniques are based on light reflectance from the surface, light scatter or diffusion, and laser technology. They are useful in applications where stylus contact with the surface is undesirable. Some of the techniques permit very high speed operation, thus making 100% parts inspection feasible. However, the optical techniques yield values that do not always correlate well with roughness measurements made by stylus-type instruments.

## 23.6 MACHINE VISION

***Machine vision*** can be defined as the acquisition of image data, followed by the processing and interpretation of these data by computer for some useful application. Machine vision (also called ***computer vision,*** since a digital computer is required to process the image data) is a rapidly growing technology, with its principal applications in industrial inspection. In this section, we examine how machine vision works and its applications in QC inspection and other areas.

Vision systems are classified as being either 2-D or 3-D. Two-dimensional systems view the scene as a 2-D image. This is quite adequate for most industrial applications, since many situations involve a 2-D scene. Examples include dimensional measuring and gaging, verifying the presence of components, and checking for features on a flat (or semiflat) surface. Other applications require 3-D analysis of the scene, and 3-D vision systems are required for this purpose. Sales of 2-D vision systems outnumber those of 3-D systems by

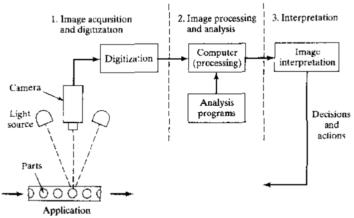



**Figure 23.10** Basic functions of a machine vision system.

more than ten to one [7]. Our discussion will emphasize the simpler 2-D systems, although many of the techniques used for 2–D are also applicable in 3–D vision work.

The operation of a machine vision system can be divided into the following three functions: (1) image acquisition and digitization, (2) image processing and analysis, and (3) interpretation. These functions and their relationships are illustrated schematically in Figure 23.10.

### 23.6.1 Image Acquisition and Digitization

Image acquisition and digitization is accomplished using a video camera and a digitizing system to store the image data for subsequent analysis. The camera is focused on the subject of interest, and an image is obtained by dividing the viewing area into a matrix of discrete picture elements (called pixels), in which each element has a value that is proportional to the light intensity of that portion of the scene. The intensity value for each pixel is converted into its equivalent digital value by an ADC (Section 5.3). The operation of viewing a scene consisting of a simple object that contrasts substantially with its background, and dividing the scene into a corresponding matrix of picture elements, is depicted in Figure 23.11.

The figure illustrates the likely image obtained from the simplest type of vision system, called a binary vision system. In ***binary vision***, the light intensity of each pixel is ultimately reduced to either of two values, white or black, depending on whether the light intensity exceeds a given threshold level. A more sophisticated vision system is capable of distinguishing and storing different shades of gray in the image. This is called a ***gray-scale system***. This type of system can determine not only an object's outline and area characteristics, but also its surface characteristics such as texture and color. Gray–scale vision systems typically use 4, 6, or 8 bits of memory. Eight bits corresponds to $2^8 = 256$ intensity levels, which is generally more levels than the video camera can really distinguish and certainly more than the human eye can discern.

Each set of digitized pixel values is referred to as a frame. Each frame is stored in a computer memory device called a ***frame buffer***. The process of reading all the pixel values

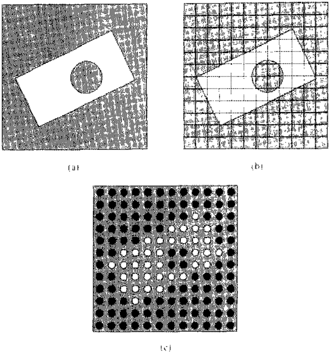



**Figure 23.11** Dividing the image into a matrix of picture elements, where each element has a light intensity value corresponding to that portion of the image: (a) the scene; (b) $12 \times 12$ matrix superimposed on the scene; and (c) pixel intensity values, either black or white, for the scene.

in a frame is performed with a frequency of 30 times per second (typical in the United States, 25 times per second in European vision systems).

*Types of Cameras.* Two types of cameras are used in machine vision applications: vidicon cameras (the type used for television) and solid-state cameras. ***Vidicon cameras*** operate by focusing the image onto a photoconductive surface and scanning the surface with an electron beam to obtain the relative pixel values. Different areas on the photoconductive surface have different voltage levels corresponding to the light intensities striking the areas. The electron beam follows a well-defined scanning pattern, in effect dividing the surface into a large number of horizontal lines, and reading the lines from top-to-bottom. Each line is in turn divided into a series of points. The number of points on each line, multiplied by the number of lines, gives the dimensions of the pixel matrix shown in Figure 23.11. During the scanning process, the electron beam reads the voltage level of each pixel.

***Solid-state cameras*** operate by focusing the image onto a 2-D array of very small, finely spaced photosensitive elements. The photosensitive elements form the matrix of pixels shown in Figure 23.11. An electrical charge is generated by each element according to the intensity of light striking the element. The charge is accumulated in a storage device consisting of an array of storage elements corresponding one–to–one with the photosensitive picture elements. These charge values are read sequentially in the data processing and analysis function of machine vision.

Comparing the vidicon camera and solid–state camera, the latter possesses several advantages in industrial applications. It is physically smaller and more rugged, and the image produced is more stable. The vidicon camera suffers from distortion that occurs in the image of a fast-moving object because of the time lapse associated with the scanning electron beam as it reads the pixel levels on the photoconductive surface. The relative advantages of the solid–state cameras have resulted in the growing dominance of their use in machine vision systems. Types of solid–state cameras include: (1) charge–coupled–device (CCD), (2) charge-injected device (CID), and (3) charge-priming device (CPD). These types are compared in [8].

Typical square pixel arrays are $256 \times 256$, $512 \times 512$, and $1024 \times 1024$ picture elements. Other arrays include $240 \times 320$, $500 \times 582$, and $1035 \times 1320$ pixels [24]. The ***resolution*** of the vision system is its ability to sense fine details and features in the image. Resolution depends on the number of picture elements used; the more pixels designed into the vision system, the higher its resolution. However, the cost of the camera increases as the number of pixels is increased. Even more important, the time required to sequentially read the picture elements and process the data increases as the number of pixels grows. The following example illustrates the problem.

**EXAMPLE 23.4 Machine Vision**

A video camera has a $512 \times 512$ pixel matrix. Each pixel must be converted from an analog signal to the corresponding digital signal by an ADC. The analog-to-digital conversion process takes 0.1 microseconds ($0.1 \times 10^{-6}$sec) to complete, including the time to move between pixels. How long will it take to collect the image data for one frame, and is this time compatible with processing at the rate of 30 frames per second?

***Solution:*** There are $512 \times 512 = 262{,}144$ pixels to be scanned and converted. The total time to complete the analog-to-digital conversion process is

$$(262{,}144 \text{ pixels})(0.1 \times 10^{-6} \text{ sec}) = 0.0262 \text{ sec}$$

At a processing rate of 30 frames per second, the processing time for each frame is 0.0333 sec, which is significantly longer than the 0.0262 sec required to perform the 262,144 analog-to-digital conversions.

---

*Illumination.* Another important aspect of machine vision is illumination. The scene viewed by the vision camera must be well illuminated, and the illumination must be constant over time. This almost always requires that special lighting be installed for a machine vision application rather than rely on ambient lighting in the facility.

Five categories of lighting can be distinguished for machine vision applications, as depicted in Figure 23.12: (a) front lighting, (b) back lighting, (c) side lighting, (d) structured lighting, and (e) strobe lighting. These categories represent differences in the positions of the light source relative to the camera as much as they do differences in lighting technologies. The lighting technologies include incandescent lamps, fluorescent lamps, sodium vapor lamps, and lasers.

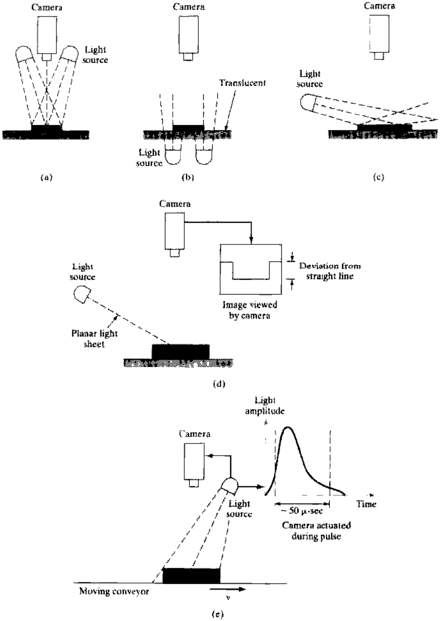



**Figure 23.12** Types of illumination in machine vision: (a) front lighting, (b) back lighting, (c) side lighting, (d) structured lighting using a planar sheet of light, and (e) strobe lighting.

In *front lighting*, the light source is located on the same side of the object as the camera. This produces a reflected light from the object that allows inspection of surface features such as printing on a label and surface patterns such as solder lines on a printed circuit board. In *back lighting*, the light source is placed behind the object being viewed by the camera. This creates a dark silhouette of the object that contrasts sharply with the light background. This type of lighting can be used for binary vision systems to inspect for part dimensions and to distinguish between different part outlines. *Side lighting* causes irregularities in an otherwise plane smooth surface to cast shadows that can be identified by the vision system. This can be used to inspect for defects and flaws in the surface of an object.

*Structured lighting* involves the projection of a special light pattern onto the object to enhance certain geometric features. Probably the most common structured light pattern is a planar sheet of highly focused light directed against the surface of the object at a certain known angle, as in Figure 23.12(d). The sheet of light forms a bright line where the beam intersects the surface. In our sketch, the vision camera is positioned with its line of sight perpendicular to the surface of the object, so that any variations from the general plane of the part appear as deviations from a straight line. The distance of the deviation can be determined by optical measurement, and the corresponding elevation differences can be calculated using trigonometry.

In *strobe lighting*, the scene is illuminated by a short pulse of high-intensity light, which causes a moving object to appear stationary. The moving object might be a part moving past the vision camera on a conveyor. The pulse of light can last 5–500 microseconds [8]. This is sufficient time for the camera to capture the scene, although the camera actuation must be synchronized with that of the strobe light.

### 23.6.2 Image Processing and Analysis

The second function in the operation of a machine vision system is image processing and analysis. As indicated by Example 23.4, the amount of data that must be processed is significant. The data for each frame must be analyzed within the time required to complete one scan (1/30 sec). A number of techniques have been developed for analyzing the image data in a machine vision system. One category of techniques in image processing and analysis is called segmentation. *Segmentation* techniques are intended to define and separate regions of interest within the image. Two of the common segmentation techniques are thresholding and edge detection. *Thresholding* involves the conversion of each pixel intensity level into a binary value, representing either white or black. This is done by comparing the intensity value of each pixel with a defined threshold value. If the pixel value is greater than the threshold, it is given the binary bit value of white, say 1; if less than the defined threshold, then it is given the bit value of black, say 0. Reducing the image to binary form by means of thresholding usually simplifies the subsequent problem of defining and identifying objects in the image. *Edge detection* is concerned with determining the location of boundaries between an object and its surroundings in an image. This is accomplished by identifying the contrast in light intensity that exists between adjacent pixels at the borders of the object. A number of software algorithms have been developed for following the border around the object.

Another set of techniques in image processing and analysis that normally follows segmentation is *feature extraction*. Most machine vision systems characterize an object in the image by means of the object's features. Some of the features of an object include the object's area, length, width, diameter, perimeter, center of gravity, and aspect ratio. Feature extraction methods are designed to determine these features based on the area and boundaries of the object (using thresholding, edge detection, and other segmentation techniques). For example, the area of the object can be determined by counting the number of white (or black) pixels that make up the object. Its length can be found by measuring the distance (in terms of pixels) between the two extreme opposite edges of the part.

### 23.6.3 Interpretation

For any given application, the image must be interpreted based on the extracted features. The interpretation function is usually concerned with recognizing the object, a task termed object recognition or ***pattern recognition***. The objective in these tasks is to identify the object in the image by comparing it with predefined models or standard values. Two commonly used interpretation techniques are template matching and feature weighting. ***Template matching*** is the name given to various methods that attempt to compare one or more features of an image with the corresponding features of a model or template stored in computer memory. The most basic template matching technique is one in which the image is compared, pixel by pixel, with a corresponding computer model. Within certain statistical tolerances, the computer determines whether the image matches the template. One of the technical difficulties with this method is the problem of aligning the part in the same position and orientation in front of the camera, to allow the comparison to be made without complications in image processing.

***Feature weighting*** is a technique in which several features (e.g., area, length, and perimeter) are combined into a single measure by assigning a weight to each feature according to its relative importance in identifying the object. The score of the object in the image is compared with the score of an ideal object residing in computer memory to achieve proper identification.

### 23.6.4 Machine Vision Applications

The reason for interpreting the image is to accomplish some practical objective in an application. Machine vision applications in manufacturing divide into three categories: (1) inspection, (2) identification, and (3) visual guidance and control.

*Inspection.* By far, quality control ***inspection*** is the biggest category. Estimates are that inspection constitutes about 80% of machine vision applications [22]. Machine vision installations in industry perform a variety of automated inspection tasks, most of which are either on-line/in-process or on-line/post-process. The applications are almost always in mass production where the time required to program and set up the vision system can be spread over many thousands of units. Typical industrial inspection tasks include the following:

- ***Dimensional measurement.*** These applications involve determining the size of certain dimensional features of parts or products usually moving at relatively high speeds on a moving conveyor. The machine vision system must compare the features (dimensions) with the corresponding features of a computer-stored model and determine the size value.
- ***Dimensional gaging.*** This is similar to the preceding except that a gaging function rather than a measurement is performed.

- ***Verification of the presence of components*** in an assembled product. Machine vision has proved to be an important element in flexible automated assembly systems.
- ***Verification of hole location and number of holes*** in a part. Operationally, this task is similar to dimensional measurement and verification of components.
- ***Detection of surface flaws and defects.*** Flaws and defects on the surface of a part or material often reveal themselves as a change in reflected light. The vision system can identify the deviation from an ideal model of the surface.
- ***Detection of flaws in a printed label.*** The defect can be in the form of a poorly located label or poorly printed text, numbering, or graphics on the label.

All of the preceding inspection applications can be accomplished using 2-D vision systems. Certain applications require 3-D vision, such as scanning the contour of a surface, inspecting cutting tools to check for breakage and wear, and checking solder paste deposits on surface mount circuit boards. Three-dimensional systems are being used increasingly in the automotive industry to inspect surface contours of parts such as body panels and dashboards. Vision inspection can be accomplished at much higher speeds than the traditional method of inspecting these components, which involves the use of CMMs.

*Other Machine Vision Applications.* Part *identification* applications are those in which the vision system is used to recognize and perhaps distinguish parts or other objects so that some action can be taken. The applications include part sorting, counting different types of parts flowing past along a conveyor, and inventory monitoring. Part identification can usually be accomplished by 2-D vision systems. Reading of 2-D bar codes and character recognition (Sections 12.3.3 and 12.3.4) represent additional identification applications performed by 2-D vision systems.

***Visual guidance and control*** involves applications in which a vision system is teamed with a robot or similar machine to control the movement of the machine. Examples of these applications include seam tracking in continuous arc welding, part positioning and/or reorientation, bin picking, collision avoidance, machining operations, and assembly tasks. Most of these applications require 3-D vision.

## 23.7 OTHER OPTICAL INSPECTION METHODS

Machine vision is a well-publicized technology, perhaps because it is similar to one of the important human senses. Its potential for applications in industry is very high. However, there are also other optical sensing techniques that are used for inspection. Our discussion in this section surveys these technologies. The dividing line between machine vision and these techniques is sometimes blurred (excuse the pun). The distinction is that machine vision tends to imitate the capabilities of the human optical sensory system, which includes not only the eyes but also the complex interpretive powers of the brain. The reader will note that the techniques in this section have a much simpler mode of operation.

*Scanning Laser Systems.* The unique feature of a laser (***laser*** stands for *l*ight ***a***mplification by ***s***timulated ***e***mission of ***r***adiation) is that it uses a coherent beam of light that can be projected with minimum diffusion. Because of this feature, lasers have been used in a number of industrial processing and measuring applications. High-energy laser beams

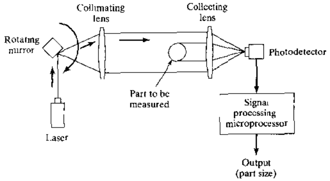



**Figure 23.13** Diagram of scanning laser device.

are used for welding and cutting of materials, and low-energy lasers are utilized in various measuring and gaging situations.

The scanning laser device falls into the latter category. As shown in the diagram of Figure 23.13, the scanning laser uses a laser beam that is deflected by a rotating mirror to produce a beam of light that can be focused to sweep past an object. A photodetector on the far side of the object senses the light beam except for the time period during the sweep when it is interrupted by the object. This time period can be measured with great accuracy and related to the size of the object in the path of the laser beam. The scanning laser beam device can complete its measurement in a very short time cycle. Hence, the scheme can be applied in high-production on-line/post-process inspection or gaging. A microprocessor counts the time interruption of the scanning laser beam as it sweeps past the object, makes the conversion from time to a linear dimension, and signals other equipment to make adjustments in the manufacturing process and/or activate a sortation device on the production line. The applications of the scanning laser technique include rolling mill operations, wire extrusion, and machining and grinding processes.

*Linear Array Devices.* The operation of a linear array for automated inspection is similar in some respects to machine vision, except that the pixels are arranged in only one dimension rather than two. A schematic diagram showing one possible arrangement of a linear array device is presented in Figure 23.14. The device consists of a light source that emits a planar sheet of light directed at an object. On the opposite side of the object is a

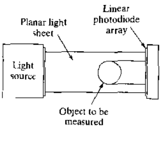



**Figure 23.14** Operation of a linear array measuring device.

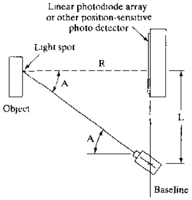



**Figure 23.15** Principle of optical triangulation sensing.

linear array of closely spaced photo diodes. Typical numbers of diodes in the array are 256, 1024, and 2048 [24]. The sheet of light is blocked by the object, and this blocked light is measured by the photo diode array to indicate the object's dimension of interest.

The linear array measuring scheme has the advantages of simplicity, accuracy, and speed. It has no moving parts and is claimed to possess a resolution as small as 50 millionths of an inch [20]. It can complete a measurement in a much smaller time cycle than either machine vision or the scanning laser beam technique.

*Optical Triangulation Techniques.* Triangulation techniques are based on the trigonometric relationships of a right triangle. Triangulation is used for range-finding, that is, determining the distance or range of an object from two known points. Use of the principle in an optical measuring system is explained with reference to Figure 23.15. A light source (typically a laser) is used to focus a narrow beam at an object to form a spot of light on the object. A linear array of photo diodes or other position-sensitive optical detector is used to determine the location of the spot. The angle $A$ of the beam directed at the object is fixed and known and so is the distance $L$ between the light source and the photosensitive detector. Accordingly, the range $R$ of the object from the base line defined by the light source and the photosensitive detector in Figure 23.15 can be determined as a function of the angle from trigonometric relationships as follows:

$$R = L \cot A \tag{23.13}$$

## 23.8 NONCONTACT NONOPTICAL INSPECTION TECHNIQUES

In addition to noncontact optical inspection methods, there are also a variety of nonoptical techniques used for inspection tasks in manufacturing. Examples include sensor techniques based on electrical fields, radiation, and ultrasonics. This section briefly reviews these technologies as they might be used for inspection.

*Electrical Field Techniques.* Under certain conditions, an electrical field can be created by an electrically active probe. The field is affected by an object in the vicinity of the probe. Examples of electrical fields include reluctance, capacitance, and inductance. In the typical application, the object (workpart) is positioned in a defined relation with respect to the probe. By measuring the effect of the object on the electrical field, an indirect measurement or gaging of certain part characteristics can be made, such as dimensional features, thickness of sheet material, and in some cases, flaws (cracks and voids below the surface) in the material.

*Radiation Techniques.* Radiation techniques utilize X-ray radiation to accomplish noncontact inspection procedures on metals and weld-fabricated products. The amount of radiation absorbed by the metal object can be used to indicate thickness and presence of flaws in the metal part or welded section. An example is the use of X-ray inspection techniques to measure thickness of sheet metal made in a rolling mill. The inspection is performed as an on-line/post-process procedure, with information from the inspection used to make adjustments in the opening between rolls in the rolling mill.

*Ultrasonics Inspection Methods.* Ultrasonic techniques make use of very high frequency sound (greater than 20,000 Hz) for various inspection tasks. Some of the techniques are performed manually, whereas others are automated. One of the automated methods involves the analysis of ultrasonic waves that are emitted by a probe and reflected off the object to be inspected. In the setup of the inspection procedure, an ideal test part is placed in front of the probe to obtain a reflected sound pattern. This sound pattern becomes the standard against which production parts are later compared. If the reflected pattern from a given production part matches the standard (within an allowable statistical variation), the part is considered acceptable; otherwise, it is rejected. One technical problem with this technique involves the presentation of production parts in front of the probe. To avoid extraneous variations in the reflected sound patterns, the parts must always be placed in the same position and orientation relative to the probe.

## REFERENCES


[1] ARONSON, R. B., "Shop-Hardened CMMs," *Manufacturing Engineering*, April 1998, pp 62–68.

[2] BOSCH, A., Editor, *Coordinate Measuring Machines and Systems*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1995.

[3] BROWN & SHARPE, *Handbook of Metrology*, North Kingston, Rhode Island, 1992.

[4] DOEBLIN, E. O., *Measurement Systems: Applications and Design*, Fourth Edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1990.

[5] FARAGO, F. T., *Handbook of Dimensional Measurement*, Second Edition, Industrial Press Inc., New York, 1982.

[6] FARNUM, G. T., "Measuring with Lasers," *Manufacturing Engineering*, February 1986, pp 47–51.

[7] FORCINIO, H., "Machine Vision Moves Beyond Inspection," *Managing Automation*, October 1996, pp 65–71.

[8] GALBIATI, L. J., Jr., *Machine Vision and Digital Image Processing Fundamentals*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1990.

[9] GROOVER, M. P., M. WEISS, R. N. NAGEL, and N. G. ODREY, *Industrial Robotics: Technology, Programming, and Applications*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, 1986, Chapter 7.

[10] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing-Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[11] HOGARTH, S., "Machines with Visison," *Manufacturing Engineering*, April, 1999, pp 100–107.

[12] KUBEL, E., "Machine Vision: Eyes for Industry," *Manufacturing Engineering*, April, 1998, pp 42–51.

[13] LIN, S-S., P. VARGHESE, C ZHANG, and H-P. B. WANG, "A Comparative Analysis of CMM Form-Fitting Algorithms," *Manufacturing Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 1995, p 47–58.

[14] MORRIS, A. S., *Measurement and Calibration for Quality Assurance*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1991.

[15] MUMMERY, L., *Surface Texture Analysis - The Handbook*, Hommelwerke Gmbh, Germany, 1990.

[16] SAUNDERS, M., "Keeping in Touch with Probing," *Manufacturing Engineering*, October, 1998, pp 52–58.

[17] SCHAFFER, G. H., "Taking the Measure of CMMs," Special Report 749, *American Machinist*, October 1982, pp 145–160.

[18] SCHAFFER, G. H., Machine Vision: A Sense for CIM," Special Report 767, *American Machinist*, June 1984, pp 101–120.

[19] SCHAFFER, G. H., "Integrating QA: Closing the CIM Loop," Special Report 775, *American Machinist*, April 1985, pp. 137–160.

[20] Sheffield Measurement Division, *66 Centuries of Measurement*, Cross & Trecker Corporation, Dayton, Ohio, 1984.

[21] S. STARRETT COMPANY, *Tools and Rules*, Athol, Massachusetts, 1992.

[22] TANNOCK, J. D. T., *Automating Quality Systems*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1992.

[23] TORRAS, C., Editor, *Computer Vision: Theory and Industrial Applications*, Springer-Verlag, New York, 1992.

[24] VERNON, D., *Machine Vision-Automated Visual Inspection and Robot Vision*, Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd., London, 1991.

[25] WICK, C., and VEILLEUX, R. F., Editors, *Tool and Manufacturing Engineers Handbook* (Fourth edition), Volume IV, *Quality Control and Assemly*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1987.

## PROBLEMS

### Coordinate Metrology

**Note:** For ease of computation, numerical values in the following problems are given at a lower level of precision than most CMMs would be capable of.

**23.1** The coordinates at the two ends of a certain length dimension have been measured by a CMM. The coordinates of the first end are (120.5, 50.2, 20.2), and the coordinates of the opposite end are (23.1, 11.9, 20.3), where the units are millimeters. The given coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. Determine the length dimension that would be computed by the CMM software.

**23.2** Two point locations corresponding to a certain length dimension have been measured by a CMM in the $x$-$y$ plane. The coordinates of the first end are (12.511, 2.273), and the coordinates of the opposite end are (4.172, 1.985), where the units are inches. The coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. Determine the length dimension that would be computed by the CMM software.

**23.3** Three point locations on the surface of a drilled hole have been measured by a CMM in the $x$-$y$ axes. The three coordinates are: (16.42, 17.17), (20.20, 11.85), and (24.08, 16.54), where the units are millimeters. These coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. Determine: (a) the coordinates of the hole center and (b) the hole diameter, as they would be computed by the CMM software.

**23.4** Three point locations on the surface of a cylinder have been measured by a CMM. The cylinder is positioned so that its axis is perpendicular to the $x$-$y$ plane. The three coordinates in the $x$-$y$ axes are: (5.242, 0.124), (0.325, 4.811), and (−4.073, −0.544), where the units are inches. The coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. Determine: (a) the coordinates of the cylinder axis and (b) the cylinder diameter, as they would be computed by the CMM software.

**23.5** Two points on a line have been measured by a CMM in the $x$-$y$ plane. The point locations have the following coordinates: (12.257, 2.550) and (3.341, −10.294), where the units are inches, and the coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. Find the equation for the line in the form of Eq. (23.7).

**23.6** Two points on a line are measured by a CMM in the $x$-$y$ plane. The points have the following coordinates: (100.24, 20.57) and (50.44, 60.46), where the units are millimeters. The given coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. Determine the equation for the line in the form of Eq. (23.7).

**23.7** The coordinates of the intersection of two lines are to be determined using a CMM to define the equations for the two lines. The two lines are the edges of a certain machined part, and the intersection represents the corner where the two edges meet. Both lines lie in the $x$-$y$ plane. Measurements are in inches. Two points are measured on the first line to have coordinates of (5.254, 10.430) and (10.223, 6.052). Two points are measured on the second line to have coordinates of (6.101, 0.657) and (8.970, 3.824). The coordinate values have been corrected for probe radius. (a) Determine the equations for the two lines in the form of Eq. (23.7). (b) What are the coordinates of the intersection of the two lines? (c) The edges represented by the two lines are specified to be perpendicular to each other. Find the angle between the two lines to determine if the edges are perpendicular.

**23.8** Two of the edges of a rectangular part are represented by two lines in the $x$-$y$ plane on a CMM worktable, as illustrated in Figure P23.8. It is desired to mathematically redefine the coordinate system so that the two edges are used as the $x$- and $y$-axes, rather than the regular $x$-$y$ axes of the CMM. To define the new coordinate system, two paramaters must be determined: (a) the origin of the new coordinate system must be located in the existing CMM

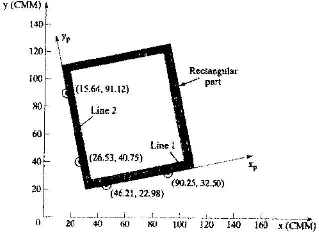



**Figure P23.8** Overhead view of part relative to CMM axes.

axis system, and (b) the angle of the $x$-axis of the new coordinate system must be determined relative to the CMM $x$-axis. Two points on the first edge (line 1) have been measured by the CMM, and the coordinates are (46.21, 22.98) and (90.25, 32.50), where the units are millimeters. Also, two points on the second edge (line 2) have been measured by the CMM and the coordinates are (26.53, 40.75) and (15.64, 91.12). The coordinates have been corrected for the radius of the probe. Find (a) the coordinates of the new origin relative to the CMM origin and (b) degrees of rotation of the new $x$-axis relative to the CMM $x$-axis. (c) Are the two lines (part edges) perpendicular?

**23.9** Three point locations on the flat surface of a part have been measured by a CMM. The three point locations are (225.21, 150.23, 40.17), (14.24, 140.92, 38.29), and (12.56, 22.75, 38.02), where the units are millimeters. The coordinates have been corrected for probe radius. (a) Determine the equation for the plane in the form of Eq. (23.10). (b) To assess flatness of the surface, a fourth point is measured by the CMM. If its coordinates are (120.22, 75.34, 39.26), what is the vertical deviation of this point from the perfectly flat plane determined in (a)?

### Optical Inspection Technologies

**23.10** A solid-state camera has a 256 × 256-pixel matrix. The ADC takes 0.20 microseconds ($0.20 \times 10^{-6}$ sec) to convert the analog charge signal for each pixel into the corresponding digital signal. If there is no time loss in switching between pixels, determine the following: (a) How much time is required to collect the image data for one frame? (b) Is the time determined in part (a) compatible with the processing rate of 30 frames per second?

**23.11** The pixel count on the photoconductive surface of a vidicon camera is 500 × 582. Each pixel is converted from an analog voltage signal to the corresponding digital signal by an ADC. The conversion process takes 0.08 microseconds ($0.08 \times 10^{-6}$ sec) to complete. In addition to the ADC process, it takes 1.0 microsecond to move from one horizontal line of pixels to the one below. Given these times, how long will it take to collect and convert the image data for one frame? Can this be done 30 times per second?

**23.12** A high-resolution solid state camera is to have a 1035 × 1320-pixel matrix. An image processing rate of 30 times per second must be achieved, or 0.0333 sec per frame. To allow for time lost in other data processing per frame, the total ADC time per frame must be 80% of the 0.0333 sec, or 0.0267 sec. To be compatible with this speed, in what time period must the analog-to-digital conversion be accomplished per pixel?

**23.13** A CCD camera system has 512 × 512 picture elements. All pixels are converted sequentially by an ADC and read into the frame buffer for processing. The machine vision system will operate at the rate of 30 frames per second. However, to allow time for data processing of the contents of the frame buffer, the analog-to-digital conversion of all pixels by the ADC must be completed in 1/80 sec. Assuming that 10 nanoseconds ($10 \times 10^{-9}$ sec.) are lost in switching from one pixel to the next, determine the time required to carry out the analog-to-digital conversion process for each pixel, in nanoseconds.

**23.14** A scanning laser device, similar to the one shown in Figure 23.13, is to be used to measure the diameter of shafts that are ground in a centerless grinding operation. The part has a diameter of 0.475 in with a tolerance of ±0.002 in. The four-sided mirror of the scanning laser beam device rotates at 250 rev/min. The collimating lens focuses 30° of the sweep of the mirror into a swath that is 1.000-in wide. It is assumed that the light beam moves at a constant speed across this swath. The photodetector and timing circuitry is capable of resolving time units as fine as 100 nanoseconds ($100 \times 10^{-9}$ sec). This resolution should be equivalent to no more than 10% of the tolerance band (0.004 in). (a) Determine the interruption time of the scanning laser beam for a part whose diameter is equal to the nominal size. (b) How much of a difference in interruption time is associated with the tolerance of ±0.002 in? (c) Is the resolution of the photodetector and timing circuitry sufficient to achieve the 10% rule on the tolerance band?

**23.15** Triangulation computations are to be used to determine the distance of parts moving on a conveyor. The setup of the optical measuring apparatus is as illustrated in the text in Figure 23.15. The angle between the beam and the surface of the part is 25°. Suppose for one given part passing on the conveyor the baseline distance is 6.55 in, as measured by the linear photosensitive detection system. What is the distance of this part from the baseline?

# PART V
# Manufacturing Support Systems

## chapter 24

# Product Design and CAD/CAM in the Production System

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**



This final part of the book is concerned with manufacturing support systems that operate at the enterprise level, as indicated in Figure 24.1. The ***manufacturing support systems*** are the procedures and systems used by the firm to manage production and solve the technical and logistics problems associated with designing the products, planning the processes, ordering materials, controlling work-in-process as it moves through the plant, and delivering products to the customer. Many of these functions can be automated using computer systems; hence, we have terms like computer-aided design and computer integrated manufacturing. Whereas most of the previous automation levels have emphasized the flow of the physical product through the factory, the enterprise level is more concerned with the flow of information in the factory and throughout the firm. While most of the topics in Part V deal with computerized systems, we also describe some systems and procedures that are labor intensive in their operation. Examples include manual process planning (Section

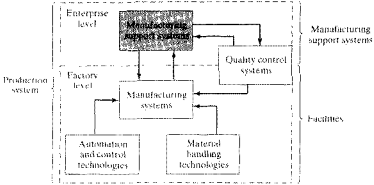



**Figure 24.1** The position of the manufacturing support systems in the larger production system.

25.1) and the ***kanban*** production control technique (Section 26.7.1). Even the computer-automated systems include people. People make the production systems work.

The present chapter is concerned with product design and the various technologies that are used to amplify and automate the design function. CAD/CAM (computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing) is one of those technologies. ***CAD/CAM*** involves the use of the digital computer to accomplish certain functions in product design and production. ***CAD*** is concerned with using the computer to support the design engineering function, and ***CAM*** is concerned with using the computer to support manufacturing engineering activities. The combination of CAD and CAM in the term CAD/CAM is symbolic of efforts to integrate the design and manufacturing functions of a firm into a continuum of activities rather than to treat them as two separate and disparate activities, as they had been considered in the past. ***CIM*** (computer integrated manufacturing) includes all of CAD/CAM but also embraces the business functions of a manufacturing firm. CIM implements computer technology in all of the operational and information processing activities related to manufacturing. In the final section of the chapter, we discuss a systematic method for approaching a product design project. called ***quality function deployment***.

Chapters 25 and 26 are concerned with topics in production systems and CIM other than product design. Chapter 25 deals with process planning and how it can be automated using computer systems. We also discuss ways in which product design and manufacturing and other functions can be integrated using an approach called ***concurrent engineering***. An important issue in concurrent engineering is ***design for manufacturing***; that is, how can a product be designed to make it easier (and cheaper) to produce? Chapter 26 discusses the various methods used in the modern practice of production planning and control. This includes material requirements planning, shop floor control, and just-in-time production. Our final chapter in Part V takes a broad view of the manufacturing enterprise by dealing with some contemporary management topics such as lean production and agile manufacturing.

## 24.1 PRODUCT DESIGN AND CAD

Product design is a critical function in the production system. The quality of the product design (i.e., how well the design department does its job) is probably the single most important factor in determining the commercial success and societal value of a product. If the product design is poor, no matter how well it is manufactured, the product is very likely doomed to contribute little to the wealth and well-being of the firm that produced it. If the product design is good, there is still the question of whether the product can be produced at sufficiently low cost to contribute to the company's profits and success. One of the facts of life about product design is that a very significant portion of the cost of the product is determined by its design. Design and manufacturing cannot be separated in the production system. They are bound together functionally, technologically, and economically.

Let us begin our discussion of product design by describing the general process of design. We then examine how computers are used to augment and automate the design process.

### 24.1.1 The Design Process

The general process of design is characterized by Shigley [15] as an iterative process consisting of six phases: (1) recognition of need, (2) problem definition, (3) synthesis, (4) analysis and optimization, (5) evaluation, and (6) presentation. These six steps, and the iterative nature of the sequence in which they are performed, are depicted in Figure 24.2(a).

Recognition of need (1) involves the realization by someone that a problem exists for which some corrective action can be taken in the form of a design solution. This recognition might mean identifying some deficiency in a current machine design by an engineer or perceiving of some new product opportunity by a salesperson. Problem definition (2) involves a thorough specification of the item to be designed. This specification includes the physical characteristics, function, cost, quality, and operating performance.

Synthesis (3) and analysis (4) are closely related and highly interactive in the design process. Consider the development of a certain product design: Each of the subsystems of the product must be conceptualized by the designer, analyzed, improved through this analysis procedure, redesigned, analyzed again, and so on. The process is repeated until the design has been optimized within the constraints imposed on the designer. The individual components are then synthesized and analyzed into the final product in a similar manner.

Evaluation (5) is concerned with measuring the design against the specifications established in the problem definition phase. This evaluation often requires the fabrication and testing of a prototype model to assess operating performance, quality, reliability, and other criteria. The final phase in the design procedure is the presentation of the design. Presentation (6) is concerned with documenting the design by means of drawings, material specifications, assembly lists, and so on. In essence, documentation means that the design data base is created.

### 24.1.2 Application of Computers in Design

***Computer-aided design*** (CAD) is defined as any design activity that involves the effective use of the computer to create, modify, analyze, or document an engineering design. CAD is most commonly associated with the use of an interactive computer graphics system, re-

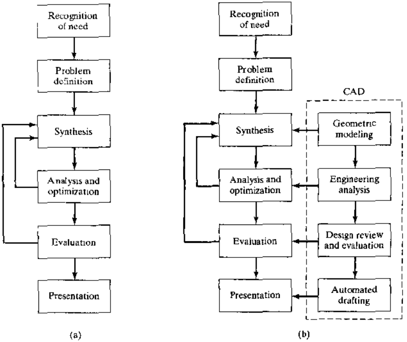



**Figure 24.2** (a) Design process as defined by Shigley [15]. (b) The design process using computer-aided design (CAD).

ferred to as a CAD system. The term CAD/CAM system is also used if it supports manufacturing as well as design applications.

There are several good reasons for using a CAD system to support the engineering design function [11]:

- ***To increase the productivity of the designer.*** This is accomplished by helping the designer to conceptualize the product and its components. In turn, this helps reduce the time required by the designer to synthesize, analyze, and document the design.
- ***To improve the quality of the design.*** The use of a CAD system with appropriate hardware and software capabilities permits the designer to do a more complete engineering analysis and to consider a larger number and variety of design alternatives. The quality of the resulting design is thereby improved.
- ***To improve design documentation.*** The graphical output of a CAD system results in better documentation of the design than what is practical with manual drafting. The engineering drawings are superior, and there is more standardization among the drawings, fewer drafting errors, and greater legibility.
- ***To create a manufacturing data base.*** In the process of creating the documentation for the product design (geometric specification of the product, dimensions of the components, materials specifications, bill of materials, etc.), much of the required data base to manufacture the product is also created.

**TABLE 24.1** Computer-Aided Design Applied to Four of the Shigley Design Phases

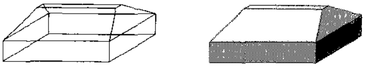
| *Design Phase* | *CAD Function* |
|---|---|
| 1. Synthesis | Geometric modeling |
| 2. Analysis and optimization | Engineering analysis |
| 3. Evaluation | Design review and evaluation |
| 4. Presentation | Automated drafting |

With reference to the six phases of design defined previously, a CAD system can beneficially be used in four of the design phases, as indicated in Table 24.1 and illustrated in Figure 24.2(b) as an overlay on the design process of Shigley.

*Geometric Modeling* ***Geometric modeling*** involves the use of a CAD system to develop a mathematical description of the geometry of an object. The mathematical description, called a ***geometric model***, is contained in computer memory. This permits the user of the CAD system to display an image of the model on a graphics terminal and to perform certain operations on the model. These operations include creating new geometric models from basic building blocks available in the system, moving the images around on the screen, zooming in on certain features of the image, and so forth. These capabilities permit the designer to construct a model of a new product (or its components) or to modify an existing model.

There are various types of geometric models used in CAD. One classification distinguishes between two-dimensional (2-D) and three-dimensional (3-D) models. Two-dimensional models are best utilized for design problems in two dimensions, such as flat objects and layouts of buildings. In the first CAD systems developed in the early 1970s, 2-D systems were used principally as automated drafting systems. They were often used for 3-D objects, and it was left to the designer or draftsman to properly construct the various views of the object. Three-dimensional CAD systems are capable of modeling an object in three dimensions. The operations and transformations on the model are done by the system in three dimensions according to user instructions. This is helpful in conceptualizing the object since the true 3-D model can be displayed in various views and from different angles.

Geometric models in CAD can also be classified as being either wire-frame models or solid models. A wire-frame model uses interconnecting lines (straight line segments) to depict the object as illustrated in Figure 24.3(a). Wire-frame models of complicated geometries can become somewhat confusing because all of the lines depicting the shape of the object are usually shown, even the lines representing the other side of the object. Techniques



(a) (b)

**Figure 24.3** (a) Wire-frame model. (b) Solid model of the same object.

are available for removing these so-called hidden lines, but even with this improvement, wire-frame representation is still often inadequate. Solid models are a more recent development in geometric modeling. In solid modeling, Figure 24.3(b), an object is modeled in solid three dimensions, providing the user with a vision of the object very much like it would be seen in real life. More important for engineering purposes, the geometric model is stored in the CAD system as a 3-D solid model, thus providing a more accurate representation of the object. This is useful for calculating mass properties, in assembly to perform interference checking between mating components, and in other engineering calculations.

Finally, two other features in CAD system models are color and animation. Some CAD systems have color capability in addition to black-and-white. The value of color is largely to enhance the ability of the user to visualize the object on the graphics screen. For example, the various components of an assembly can be displayed in different colors, thereby permitting the parts to be more readily distinguished. Animation capability permits the operation of mechanisms and other moving objects to be displayed on the graphics monitor.

*Engineering Analysis.* After a particular design alternative has been developed, some form of engineering analysis often must be performed as part of the design process. The analysis may take the form of stress-strain calculations, heat transfer analysis, or dynamic simulation. The computations are often complex and time consuming, and before the advent of the digital computer, these analyses were usually greatly simplified or even omitted in the design procedure. The availability of software for engineering analysis on a CAD system greatly increases the designer's ability and willingness to perform a more thorough analysis of a proposed design. The term ***computer-aided engineering*** (CAE) is often used for engineering analyses performed by computer. Examples of engineering analysis software in common use on CAD systems include:

- ***Mass properties analysis***, which involves the computation of such features of a solid object as its volume, surface area, weight, and center of gravity. It is especially applicable in mechanical design. Prior to CAD, determination of these properties often required painstaking and time-consuming calculations by the designer.
- ***Interference checking.*** This CAD software examines 2-D geometric models consisting of multiple components to identify interferences between the components. It is useful in analyzing mechanical assemblies, chemical plants, and similar multicomponent designs.
- ***Tolerance analysis.*** Software for analyzing the specified tolerances of a product's components is used for the following functions: (1) to assess how the tolerances may affect the product's function and performance, (2) to determine how tolerances may influence the ease or difficulty of assembling the product, and (3) to assess how variations in component dimensions may affect the overall size of the assembly.
- ***Finite element analysis.*** Software for finite element analysis (FEA), also known as ***finite element modeling*** (FEM), is available for use on CAD systems to aid in stress-strain, heat transfer, fluid flow, and other engineering computations. Finite element analysis is a numerical analysis technique for determining approximate solutions to physical problems described by differential equations that are very difficult or impossible to solve. In FEA, the physical object is modeled by an assemblage of discrete interconnected nodes (finite elements), and the variable of interest (e.g., stress, strain, temperature) in each node can be described by relatively simple mathemati-

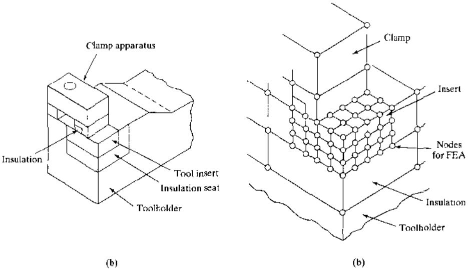



**Figure 24.4** Temperature analysis in a cutting tool using finite element analysis: (a) the physical geometry of the tool and (b) the tool composed of finite element nodes. (For clarity, not all nodes are shown in the drawing; also not shown are the internal nodes.)

cal equations. By solving the equations for each node, the distribution of values of the variable throughout the physical object is determined. Figure 24.4 illustrates a finite element model to analyze temperatures in a cutting tool [10].

- ***Kinematic and dynamic analysis.*** Kinematic analysis involves the study of the operation of mechanical linkages to analyze their motions. A typical kinematic analysis consists of specifying the motion of one or more driving members of the subject linkage, and the resulting motions of the other links are determined by the analysis package. Dynamic analysis extends kinematic analysis by including the effects of the mass of each linkage member and the resulting acceleration forces as well as any externally applied forces.
- ***Discrete-event simulation.*** This type of simulation is used to model complex operational systems, such as a manufacturing cell or a material handling system, as events occur at discrete moments in time and affect the status and performance of the system. For example, discrete events in the operation of a manufacturing cell include parts arriving for processing or a machine breakdown in the cell. Measures of the status and performance include whether a given machine in the cell is idle or busy and the overall production rate of the cell. Current discrete-event simulation software usually includes an animated graphics capability that enhances visualization of the system's operation.

*Design Evaluation and Review.* Design evaluation and review procedures can be augmented by CAD. Some of the CAD features that are helpful in evaluating and reviewing a proposed design include:

- ***Automatic dimensioning*** routines that determine precise distance measures between surfaces on the geometric model identified by the user.
- ***Error checking.*** This term refers to CAD algorithms that are used to review the accuracy and consistency of dimensions and tolerances and to assess whether the proper design documentation format has been followed.
- ***Animation of discrete-event simulation solutions.*** Discrete-event simulation was described above in the context of engineering analysis. Displaying the solution of the discrete-event simulation in animated graphics is a helpful means of presenting and evaluating the solution. Input parameters, probability distributions, and other factors can be changed to assess their effect on the performance of the system being modeled.
- ***Plant layout design scores.*** A number of software packages are available for facilities design, that is, designing the floor layout and physical arrangement of equipment in a facility. Some of these packages provide one or more numerical scores for each plant layout design, which allow the user to assess the merits of the alternative with respect to material flow, closeness ratings, and similar factors.

The traditional procedure in designing a new product includes fabrication of a prototype before approval and release of the product for production. The prototype serves as the "acid test" of the design, permitting the designer and others to see, feel, operate, and test the product for any last-minute changes or enhancements of the design. The problem with building a prototype is that it is traditionally very time consuming; in some cases, months are required to make and assemble all of the parts. Motivated by the need to reduce this lead time for building the prototype, several new approaches have been developed that rely on the use of the geometric model of the product residing in the CAD data file. We mention two of these approaches here: (1) rapid prototyping and (2) virtual prototyping.

***Rapid prototyping*** is a general term applied to a family of fabrication technologies that allow engineering prototypes of solid parts to be made in minimum lead time [12]. The common feature of the rapid prototyping processes is that they fabricate the part directly from the CAD geometric model. This is usually done by dividing the solid object into a series of layers of small thickness and then defining the area shape of each layer. For example, a vertical cone would be divided into a series of circular layers, each circle becoming smaller and smaller as the vertex of the cone is approached. The rapid prototyping processes then fabricate the object by starting at the base and building each layer on top of the preceding layer to approximate the solid shape. The fidelity of the approximation depends on the thickness of each layer. As layer thickness decreases, accuracy increases. There are a variety of layer-building processes used in rapid prototyping. The most common process, called ***stereolithography***, uses a photosensitive liquid polymer that cures (solidifies) when subjected to intense light. Curing of the polymer is accomplished using a moving laser beam whose path for each layer is controlled by means of the CAD model. By hardening each layer, one on top of the preceding, a solid polymer prototype of the part is built.

***Virtual prototyping***, based on virtual reality technology, involves the use of the CAD geometric model to construct a digital mock-up of the product, enabling the designer and others to obtain the sensation of the real physical product without actually building the physical prototype. Virtual prototyping has been used in the automotive industry to evaluate new car style designs. The observer of the virtual prototype is able to assess the appearance of the new design even though no physical model is on display. Other applications of virtual prototyping include checking the feasibility of assembly operations, for example, parts mating, access and clearance of parts during assembly, and assembly sequence.

*Automated Drafting.* The fourth area where CAD is useful (step 6 in the design process) is presentation and documentation. CAD systems can be used as automated drafting machines to prepare highly accurate engineering drawings quickly. It is estimated that a CAD system increases productivity in the drafting function by about fivefold over manual preparation of drawings.

## 24.2 CAD SYSTEM HARDWARE

The hardware for a typical CAD system consists of the following components: (1) one or more design workstations, (2) digital computer, (3) plotters, printers, and other output devices, and (4) storage devices. The relationship among the components is illustrated in Figure 24.5. In addition, the CAD system would have a communication interface to permit transmission of data to and from other computer systems, thus enabling some of the benefits of computer integration.

*Design Workstations.* The workstation is the interface between computer and user in the CAD system. Its functions are the following: (1) communicate with the CPU, (2) continuously generate a graphic image, (3) provide digital descriptions of the image, (4) translate user commands into operating functions, and (5) facilitate interaction between the user and the system.

The design of the CAD workstation and its available features have an important influence on the convenience, productivity, and quality of the user's output. The workstation must include a graphics display terminal and a set of user input devices. The display terminal must be capable of showing both graphics and alphanumeric text. It is the principal means by which the system communicates with the user. For optimum graphics display, the monitor should have a large color screen with high resolution.

The user input devices permit the operator to communicate with the system. To operate the CAD system, the user must be able to accomplish the following: (1) enter alphanumeric data, (2) enter commands to the system to perform various graphics operations, and (3) control the cursor position on the display screen. To enter alphanumeric data, an alphanumeric keyboard is provided. A conventional typewriter-like keyboard allows the designer to input numerical and alphabetic characters into the system. The alphanumeric

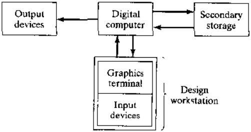



**Figure 24.5** Configuration of a typical CAD system.

keyboard can also be used to enter commands and instructions to the system. However, other input devices accomplish this function more conveniently. Special ***function keypads*** have been developed to allow entry of a command in only one or two keystrokes. These special keypads have from 10 to 50 function keys, depending on the system. However, each key provides more than one function, depending on the combination of keys pressed or which software is being used. Another input device for entering commands to a CAD system is the ***electronic tablet***, an electronically sensitive board on which an instruction set is displayed, and commands are entered using a puck or electronic pen.

Cursor control permits the operator to position the cursor on the screen to identify a location where some function is to be executed. For example, to draw a straight line on the screen, the endpoints of the line can be identified by locating the cursor in sequence at the two points and giving the command to construct the line. There are various cursor control devices used in CAD, including pucks, mouses, joysticks, trackballs, thumbwheels, light pens, and electronic tablets. An input device for entering coordinates from an existing drawing into the CAD system is a ***digitizer***, which consists of a large flat board and an electronic tracking element such as a puck that can be moved across the surface of the board to record x- and y-coordinate positions.

*Digital Computer.* CAD applications require a digital computer with a high-speed central processing unit (CPU), math coprocessor to perform computation-intensive operations, and large internal memory. Today's commercial systems have 32-bit processors, which permit high-speed execution of CAD graphics and engineering analysis applications.

Several CAD system configurations are available within the general arrangement shown in Figure 24.5. Let us identify three principal configurations, illustrated in Figure 24.6: (a) host and terminal, (b) engineering workstation, and (c) CAD system based on a personal computer (PC).

The ***host and terminal*** was the original CAD configuration in the 1970s and early 1980s when the technology was first developing. For many years, it was the only configuration available. In this arrangement, a large mainframe computer or a minicomputer serves as the host for one or more graphics terminals. These systems were expensive, each installation typically representing an investment of a million dollars or more. The powerful microprocessors and high-density memory devices that are so common today were not available at that time. The only way to meet the computational requirements for graphics processing and related CAD applications was to use a mainframe connected to multiple terminals operating on a time-sharing basis. Host and terminal CAD systems are still used today in the automotive industry and other industries in which it is deemed necessary to operate a large central database.

An ***engineering workstation*** is a stand-alone computer system that is dedicated to one user and capable of executing graphics software and other programs requiring high-speed computational power. The graphics display is a high-resolution monitor with a large screen. As shown in our figure, engineering workstations are often networked to permit exchange of data files and programs between users and to share plotters and data storage devices.

A ***PC-based CAD system*** is a PC with a high-performance CPU and medium-to-high resolution graphics display screen. The computer is equipped with a large random access memory (RAM), math coprocessor, and large-capacity hard disk for storage of the large applications software packages used for CAD. PC-based CAD systems can be networked to share files, output devices, and for other purposes. Starting around 1996, CAD software developers began offering products that utilize the excellent graphics environment of Microsoft Windows NT™ [13], thus enhancing the popularity and familiarity of PC-based CAD.

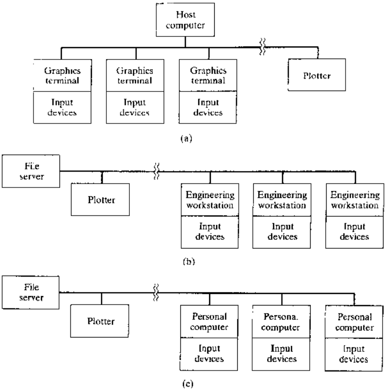



**Figure 24.6** Three CAD system configurations: (a) host and terminal, (b) engineering workstation, and (c) CAD system based on a PC.

When the engineering workstation is compared with the PC-based system, the former is superior in terms of most performance criteria. Its capacity to efficiently accomplish 3-D geometric modeling and execute other advanced software exceeds that of a PC, and this makes the workstation more responsive and interactive than a PC-based CAD system. However, the performance characteristics of PCs are improving each year, and the prices of engineering workstations are dropping each year, so that the distinction between the two types is becoming blurred.

*Plotters and Printers.* The CRT display is often the only output device physically located at the CAD workstation. There is a need to document the design on paper. The peripherals of the CAD system include one or more output devices for this purpose. Among these output devices are the following:

- ***Pen plotters.*** These are $x$-$y$ plotters of various types used to produce high accuracy line drawings.

- ***Electrostatic plotters.*** These are faster devices based on the same technology as photocopying. The resolution of the drawings from electrostatic plotters is generally lower than those made by a pen plotter.
- ***Dot-matrix printers.*** In the operation of these printers, small hammers strike an ink ribbon against the paper to form a drawing consisting of many ink dots.
- ***Ink jet printers.*** These are similar to dot-matrix printers except that the dots are formed by high-speed jets of ink impacting the paper.

*Storage Devices.* Storage peripherals are used in CAD systems to store programs and data files. The storage medium is usually a magnetic disk or magnetic tape. Files can be retrieved more quickly from magnetic disks, which facilitates loading and exchange of files between CPU and disk. Magnetic tape is less expensive, but more time is required to access a given file due to the sequential file storage on the tape. It is suited to disk backup, archival files, and data transfer to output devices.

## 24.3 CAM, CAD/CAM, AND CIM

We have briefly defined the terms CAM, CAD/CAM, and CIM in our introduction. Let us explain and differentiate these terms more thoroughly here. The term ***computer integrated manufacturing*** (CIM) is sometimes used interchangeably with CAM and CAD/CAM. Although the terms are closely related, our assertion is that CIM possesses a broader meaning than does either CAM or CAD/CAM.

### 24.3.1 Computer-Aided Manufacturing

***Computer-aided manufacturing*** (CAM) is defined as the effective use of computer technology in manufacturing planning and control. CAM is most closely associated with functions in manufacturing engineering, such as process planning and numerical control (NC) part programming. With reference to our model of production in Section 1.3.2, the applications of CAM can be divided into two broad categories: (1) manufacturing planning and (2) manufacturing control. We cover these two categories in Chapters 25 and 26, but let us provide a brief discussion of them here to complete our definition of CAM.

*Manufacturing Planning.* CAM applications for manufacturing planning are those in which the computer is used indirectly to support the production function, but there is no direct connection between the computer and the process. The computer is used "off-line" to provide information for the effective planning and management of production activities. The following list surveys the important applications of CAM in this category:

- ***Computer-aided process planning*** (CAPP). Process planning is concerned with the preparation of route sheets that list the sequence of operations and work centers required to produce the product and its components. CAPP systems are available today to prepare these route sheets. We discuss CAPP in the following chapter.
- ***Computer-assisted NC part programming.*** The subject of part programming for NC was discussed in Chapter 6 (Section 6.5). For complex part geometries, computer-assisted part programming represents a much more efficient method of generating the control instructions for the machine tool than manual part programming is.

- ***Computerized machinability data systems.*** One of the problems in operating a metal cutting machine tool is determining the speeds and feeds that should be used to machine a given workpart. Computer programs have been written to recommend the appropriate cutting conditions to use for different materials. The calculations are based on data that have been obtained either in the factory or laboratory that relate tool life to cutting conditions. These machinability data systems are described in [11].
- ***Development of work standards.*** The time study department has the responsibility for setting time standards on direct labor jobs performed in the factory. Establishing standards by direct time study can be a tedious and time-consuming task. There are several commercially available computer packages for setting work standards. These computer programs use standard time data that have been developed for basic work elements that comprise any manual task. By summing the times for the individual elements required to perform a new job, the program calculates the standard time for the job. These packages are discussed in [11].
- ***Cost estimating.*** The task of estimating the cost of a new product has been simplified in most industries by computerizing several of the key steps required to prepare the estimate. The computer is programmed to apply the appropriate labor and overhead rates to the sequence of planned operations for the components of new products. The program then sums the individual component costs from the engineering bill of materials to determine the overall product cost.
- ***Production and inventory planning.*** The computer has found widespread use in many of the functions in production and inventory planning. These functions include: maintenance of inventory records, automatic reordering of stock items when inventory is depleted, production scheduling, maintaining current priorities for the different production orders, material requirements planning, and capacity planning. We discuss these activities in Chapter 26.
- ***Computer-aided line balancing.*** Finding the best allocation of work elements among stations on an assembly line is a large and difficult problem if the line is of significant size. Computer programs have been developed to assist in the solution of this problem (Section 17.5.4).

*Manufacturing Control.* The second category of CAM applications is concerned with developing computer systems to implement the manufacturing control function. Manufacturing control is concerned with managing and controlling the physical operations in the factory. These management and control areas include:

- ***Process monitoring and control.*** Process monitoring and control is concerned with observing and regulating the production equipment and manufacturing processes in the plant. We have previously discussed process control in Chapter 4. The applications of computer process control are pervasive today in automated production systems. They include transfer lines, assembly systems, NC, robotics, material handling, and flexible manufacturing systems. All of these topics have been covered in earlier chapters.
- ***Quality control.*** Quality control includes a variety of approaches to ensure the highest possible quality levels in the manufactured product. Quality control systems were covered in the chapters of Part IV.
- ***Shop floor control.*** Shop floor control refers to production management techniques for collecting data from factory operations and using the data to help control production and inventory in the factory. We discuss shop floor control and computerized factory data collection systems in Chapter 26.

- ***Inventory control.*** Inventory control is concerned with maintaining the most appropriate levels of inventory in the face of two opposing objectives: minimizing the investment and storage costs of holding inventory and maximizing service to customers. Inventory control is discussed in Chapter 26.
- ***Just-in-time production systems.*** The term just-in-time refers to a production system that is organized to deliver exactly the right number of each component to downstream workstations in the manufacturing sequence just at the time when that component is needed. The term applies not only to production operations but to supplier delivery operations as well. Just-in-time systems are discussed in Chapter 26.

### 24.3.2 CAD/CAM

CAD/CAM is concerned with the engineering functions in both design and manufacturing. Product design, engineering analysis, and documentation of the design (e.g., drafting) represent engineering activities in design. Process planning, NC part programming, and other activities associated with CAM represent engineering activities in manufacturing. The CAD/CAM systems developed during the 1970s and early 1980s were designed primarily to address these types of engineering problems. In addition, CAM has evolved to include many other functions in manufacturing, such as material requirements planning, production scheduling, computer production monitoring, and computer process control.

It should also be noted that CAD/CAM denotes an integration of design and manufacturing activities by means of computer systems. The method of manufacturing a product is a direct function of its design. With conventional procedures practiced for so many years in industry, engineering drawings were prepared by design draftsmen and later used by manufacturing engineers to develop the process plan. The activities involved in designing the product were separated from the activities associated with process planning. Essentially a two-step procedure was employed. This was time-consuming and involved duplication of effort by design and manufacturing personnel. Using CAD/CAM technology, it is possible to establish a direct link between product design and manufacturing engineering. In effect, CAD/CAM is one of the enabling technologies for concurrent engineering (Section 25.3). It is the goal of CAD/CAM not only to automate certain phases of design and certain phases of manufacturing, but also to automate the transition from design to manufacturing. In the ideal CAD/CAM system, it is possible to take the design specification of the product as it resides in the CAD data base and convert it into a process plan for making the product, this conversion being done automatically by the CAD/CAM system. A large portion of the processing might be accomplished on a numerically controlled machine tool. As part of the process plan, the NC part program is generated automatically by CAD/CAM. The CAD/CAM system downloads the NC program directly to the machine tool by means of a telecommunications network. Hence, under this arrangement, product design, NC programming, and physical production are all implemented by computer.

### 24.3.3 Computer Integrated Manufacturing

Computer integrated manufacturing includes all of the engineering functions of CAD/CAM, but it also includes the firm's business functions that are related to manufacturing. The ideal CIM system applies computer and communications technology to all of the operational functions and information processing functions in manufacturing from order receipt, through design and production, to product shipment. The scope of CIM, compared with the more limited scope of CAD/CAM, is depicted in Figure 24.7.

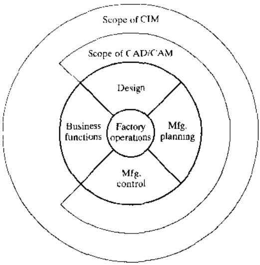



**Figure 24.7** The scope of CAD/CAM and CIM.

The CIM concept is that all of the firm's operations related to production are incorporated in an integrated computer system to assist, augment, and automate the operations. The computer system is pervasive throughout the firm, touching all activities that support manufacturing. In this integrated computer system, the output of one activity serves as the input to the next activity, through the chain of events that starts with the sales order and culminates with shipment of the product. The components of the integrated computer system are illustrated in Figure 24.8. Customer orders are initially entered by the company's sales force or directly by the customer into a computerized order entry system. The orders contain the specifications describing the product. The specifications serve as the input to the product design department. New products are designed on a CAD system. The components that comprise the product are designed, the bill of materials is compiled, and assembly drawings are prepared. The output of the design department serves as the input to manufacturing engineering, where process planning, tool design, and similar activities are accomplished to prepare for production. Many of these manufacturing engineering activities are supported by the CIM system. Process planning is performed using CAPP. Tool and fixture design is done on a CAD system, making use of the product model generated during product design. The output from manufacturing engineering provides the input to production planning and control, where material requirements planning and scheduling are performed using the computer system. And so it goes, through each step in the manufacturing cycle. Full implementation of CIM results in the automation of the information flow through every aspect of the company's organization.

## 24.4 QUALITY FUNCTION DEPLOYMENT

A number of concepts and techniques have been developed to aid in the product design function. For example, several of the principles and methods of Taguchi (who is most recognized for his contributions in quality control), such as "robust design" and the "Taguchi

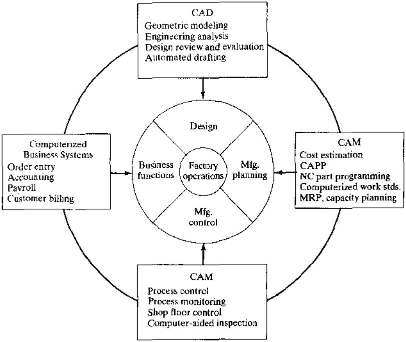



**Figure 24.8** Computerized elements of a CIM system.

loss function," can be applied to product design. These topics are covered in Part IV on Quality Control Systems (Section 20.3). The topics of concurrent engineering and design for manufacturing are also related closely with design. We discuss these subjects in the following chapter (Section 25.3) because they also relate to manufacturing engineering and process planning. In the present section, we discuss a technique that has gained acceptance in the product design community as a systematic method for organizing and managing any given design problem. The method is called quality function deployment.

Quality function deployment (QFD) sounds like a quality-related technique. And the scope of QFD certainly includes quality. However, its principal focus is on product design. The objective of QFD is to design products that will satisfy or exceed customer requirements. Of course, any product design project has this objective, but the approach is often very informal and unsystematic. QFD, developed in Japan in the mid-1960s, uses a formal and structured approach. ***Quality function deployment*** is a systematic procedure for defining customer desires and requirements and interpreting them in terms of product features and process characteristics. The technique is outlined in Figure 24.9. In a QFD analysis, a series of interconnected matrices are developed to establish the relationships between customer requirements and the technical features of a proposed new product. The matrices represent a progression of phases in the QFD analysis, in which customer requirements are first translated into product features, then into manufacturing process requirements, and finally into quality procedures for controlling the manufacturing operations.

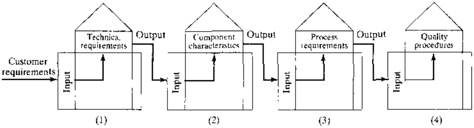



**Figure 24.9** Quality function deployment, shown here as a series of matrices that relate customer requirements to successive technical requirements. Shown here is a typical progression: (1) customer requirements to technical requirements of the product, (2) technical requirements of the product to component characteristics, (3) component characteristics to process requirements, and (4) process requirements to quality procedures.

It should be noted that QFD can be applied to analyze the delivery of a service as well as the design and manufacture of a product. It can be used to analyze an existing product or service, not just a proposed new one. The matrices may take on different meanings depending on the product or service being analyzed. And the number of matrices used in the analysis may also vary, from as few as one (although a single matrix does not fully exploit the potential of QFD) to as many as 30 [5]. QFD is a general framework for analyzing product and process design problems, and it must be adapted to the given problem context.

Each matrix in QFD is similar in format and consists of six sections, as shown in Figure 24.10. On the left-hand side is section 1, consisting of a list of ***input requirements*** that

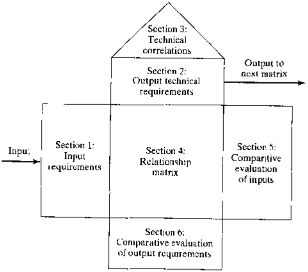



**Figure 24.10** General form of each matrix in QFD, known as the ***house of quality*** in the starting matrix because of its shape.

serve as drivers for the current matrix of the QFD analysis. In the first matrix, these inputs are the needs and desires of the customer. The input requirements are translated into ***output technical requirements***, listed in section 2 of the matrix. These technical requirements indicate how the input requirements are to be satisfied in the new product or service. In the starting matrix, they represent the product's technical features or capabilities. The output requirements in the present matrix serve as the input requirements for the next matrix, through to the final matrix in the QFD analysis.

At the top of the matrix is section 3, which depicts ***technical correlations*** among the output technical requirements. This section of the matrix uses a diagonal grid to allow each of the output requirements to be compared with all others. The shape of the grid is similar to the roof of a house, and for this reason the term ***house of quality*** is often used to describe the overall matrix. It should be mentioned that this term is applied only to the starting matrix in QFD by some authors [5], and the technical correlation section (the roof of the house) may be omitted in subsequent matrices in the analysis. Section 4 is called the ***relationship matrix***; it indicates the relationships between inputs and outputs. Various symbols [1], [5], [13] have been used to define the relationships among pairs of factors in sections 3 and 4. These symbols are subsequently reduced to numerical values.

On the right-hand side of the matrix is section 5, which is used for ***comparative evaluation of inputs***. For example, in the starting matrix, this might be used to compare the proposed new product with competing products already on the market. Finally, at the bottom of the matrix is section 6, used for ***comparative evaluation of output requirements***. The six sections may take on slightly different interpretations for the different matrices of QFD and for different products or services, but our descriptions are adequate as generalities.

Let us illustrate the construction of the house of quality, that is, the matrix used for the first phase of QFD. This is the beginning of the analysis, in which customer requirements and needs are translated into product technical requirements. The procedure can be outlined in the following steps:

1. ***Identify customer requirements.*** Often referred to as the "voice of the customer," this is the primary input in OFD (section 1 in Figure 24.10). Capturing the customer's needs, desires, and requirements is most critical in the analysis. It is accomplished using a variety of possible methods, several of which are listed in Table 24.2. Selecting the most appropriate data collection method depends on the product or service situation. In many cases, more than one approach is necessary to appreciate the full scope of the customer's needs.
2. ***Identify product features needed to meet customer requirements.*** These are the technical requirements of the product (section 2 in Figure 24.10) corresponding to the requirements and desires expressed by the customer. In effect, these product features are the means by which the voice of the customer is satisfied. Mapping customer requirements into product features often requires ingenuity, sometimes demanding the creation of new features not previously available on competing products.
3. ***Determine technical correlations among product features.*** This is section 3 in Figure 24.10. The various product features will likely be related to each other in various ways. The purpose of this chart is to establish the strength of each of the relationships between pairs of product features. Instead of using symbols, as previously indicated, let us adopt the numerical ratings shown in Table 24.3 for our illustrations. These numerical scores indicate how significant (how strong) the relationship between respective pairs of requirements is.

**TABLE 24.2** Methods of Captur ng Customer Requirements

***Interviews***—One-on-one interviews, either in person or by telephone.

***Comment cards***—These allow the customer to rate level of satisfaction of the product or service and to comment on features that were either appreciated or not appreciated. Comment cards are often provided to the customer on receipt of the product or service. They can also be made a part of product warranty registration.

***Formal surveys***—These are often accomplished by mass mailings. Unfortunately, the response rate is often low.

***Focus groups***—Several customers or potential customers serve on a panel. Group dynamics may elicit opinions and observations that would be omitted in one-on-one interviews.

***Study of complaints***—This allows a statistical review of data on customer complaints.

***Customer returns***—When the customer returns the product, information is requested about the reason for the return.

***Internet***—This is a relative new way of gathering customer opinions. The Usenet, for example, consists of 15,000 subject-oriented interest groups, some of which are companies and products [8].

***Field intelligence***—This involves collection of second-hand information from employees who deal directly with customers.

*Source:* Compiled from [7]–[9] and other sources.

**TABLE 24.3** Numerical Scores Used For Correlations and Evaluations in Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the QFD Matrix

| *Numerical Score* | *Strength of Relationship in Sections 3 and 4* | *Relative Importance in Section 5* | *Merits of Competing Product in Sections 5 and 6* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | No relationship | No importance | Not applicable |
| 1 | Weak relationship | Little importance | Low score |
| 3 | Medium-to-strong relationship | Medium importance | Medium score |
| 5 | Very strong relationship | Very important | High score |

4. ***Develop relationship matrix between customer requirements and product features.*** The function of the relationship matrix in the QFD analysis is to show how well the collection of product features is fulfilling individual customer requirements. Identified as section 4 in Figure 24.10, the matrix indicates the relationship between individual factors in the two lists. The numerical scores in Table 24.3 are used to depict relationship strength.

5. ***Comparative evaluation of input customer requirements.*** In section 5 of the house of quality, two comparisons are made. First, the relative importance of each customer requirement is evaluated using a numerical scoring scheme. High values indicate that the customer requirement is important. Low values indicate a low priority. This evaluation can be used to guide the design of the proposed new product. Second, existing competitive products are evaluated relative to customer requirements. This helps to identify possible weaknesses or strengths in competing products that might be emphasized in the new design. A numerical scoring scheme might be used as before (see Table 24.3).

6. ***Comparative evaluation of output technical requirements.*** This is section 6 in Figure 24.10. In this part of the analysis, each competing product is scored relative to the output technical requirements. Finally, target values can be established in each technical requirement for the proposed new product.

At this point in the analysis, the completed matrix contains much information about which customer requirements are most important, how they relate to proposed new product features, and how competitive products compare with respect to these input and output requirements. All of this information must be assimilated and assessed to advance to the next step in the QFD analysis. Those customer needs and product features that are most important must be stressed as the analysis proceeds through identification of technical requirements for components, manufacturing processes, and quality control in the succeeding QFD matrices.

**EXAMPLE 24.1 Quality Function Deployment: House of Quality**

**Given:** We are engaged in a new product design project for the case of child's toy. The toy would be for children ages 3–9. It is a toy that could be used in a bathtub or on the floor. We want to construct the house of quality for such a toy (the initial matrix in QFD), first listing the customer requirements as might be obtained from one or more of the methods listed in Table 24.2. We then want to identify the corresponding technical features of the product and develop the various correlations.

***Solution:*** The first phase of the QFD analysis (the house of quality) is developed in Figure 24.11. Following the steps in our procedure, we have the list of customer requirements in step 1 of the figure. Step 2 lists the corresponding technical features of the product that might be derived from these customer inputs. Step 3 presents the correlations among product features, and step 4 fills in the relationship matrix between customer requirements and product features. Step 5 indicates a possible comparative evaluation of customer requirements, and step 6 provides a hypothetical evaluation of competing products for the technical requirements.

## REFERENCES


[1] AKAO, Y., Author and Editor-in-Chief, *Quality Function Deployment: Integrating Customer Requirements into Product Design*, English translation by G. H. Mazur, Productivity Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990.

[2] BAKERJIAN, R., and MITCHELL, P., *Tool and Manufacturing Engineers Handbook* (Fourth edition), Volume VI, *Design for Manufacturability*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1992.

[3] BANCROFT, C. E., "Design for Manufacturability: Half Speed Ahead," *Manufacturing Engineering*, September 1988, pp 67–69.

[4] BOSSERT, J. L., *Quality Function Deployment, A Practitioner's Approach*, ASQC Press, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Marcel Dekker Inc., New York, 1991.

[5] COHEN, L., *Quality Function Deployment*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Reading, Massachusetts, 1995.

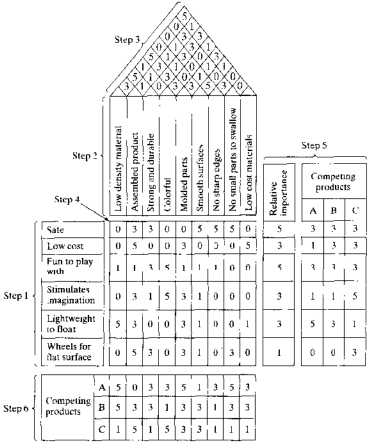



**Figure 24.11** The "house of quality" for Example 24.1.


[6] COHN, D. S., "What' Happening in 3D?" *Desktop Engineering*, March, 1998, pp 24–30.

[7] EVANS, J. R., and LINDSAY, W. M., *The Management and Control of Quality*, Third Edition, West Publishing Company, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1996.

[8] FINCH, B. J., "A New Way to Listen to the Customer," *Quality Progress*, May 1997, pp 73–76.

[9] GOETSCH, D. L., and S. B. DAVIS, *Introduction to Total Quality*, Second Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1997.

[10] GROOVER, M. P., "The Development and Study of a Remote Thermocouple Method to Measure Cutting Temperatures in Process Control Machining," *PhD Dissertation*, Lehigh University, 1969.

[11] GROOVER, M. P., and E. W. ZIMMERS, Jr., *CAD/CAM: Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing*, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1984.

[12] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[13] LEE, K., *Principles of CAD/CAM/CAE Systems*. Addison Wesley, Reading Massachusetts, 1999.

[14] JURAN, J. M., and GRYNA, F. M., *Quality Planning and Analysis*, Third Edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1993.

[15] SHIGLEY, J. E., and L. D. MITCHELL, *Mechanical Engineering Design*, Fourth Edition, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1983.

[16] THILMANY, J., "CAD meets CAE," *Mechanical Engineering*, October 1999, pp 66–69.

[17] USHER, J. M., U. ROY, and H. R. PARSAEI, Editors, *Integrated Product and Process Development*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1998.

[18] VAJPAYEE, S. K., *Principles of Computer-Integrated Manufacturing*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1995.

## PROBLEMS

### Quality Function Deployment

**24.1** Consider some existing product with which you are familiar. If you work for a manufacturing company, consider a product that is manufactured by your company. Develop the house of quality (the first matrix) in QFD for a possible new product that would be competitive with the existing product. Specifically, develop a list of customer requirements as the inputs to the first matrix and then identify the technical requirements of a new product that would satisfy the customer requirements. This project lends itself to a team activity.

**24.2** This problem is contingent on successful completion of preceding Problem 24.1. Based on the house of quality developed in Problem 24.1, develop the second matrix in QFD, in which the product's technical requirements would be the inputs to the second matrix, and the output would be the component characteristics. If the product consists of a large number of components, consider only several of the most important. This project lends itself to a team activity.

chapter 25

# Process Planning and Concurrent Engineering

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



The product design is the plan for the product and its components and subassemblies. To convert the product design into a physical entity, a manufacturing plan is needed. The activity of developing such a plan is called process planning. It is the link between product design and manufacturing. ***Process planning*** involves determining the sequence of processing and assembly steps that must be accomplished to make the product. In the present chapter, we examine process planning and several related topics.

At the outset, we should distinguish between process planning and production planning, which is covered in the following chapter. ***Process planning*** is concerned with the engineering and technological issues of how to make the product and its parts. What types of equipment and tooling are required to fabricate the parts and assemble the product? ***Production planning*** is concerned with the logistics issues of making the product. After process planning has determined the technical details, production planning is concerned with ordering the materials and obtaining the resources required to make the product in sufficient quantities to satisfy demand for it.

## 25.1 PROCESS PLANNING

***Process planning*** involves determining the most appropriate manufacturing and assembly processes and the sequence in which they should be accomplished to produce a given part or product according to specifications set forth in the product design documentation. The scope and variety of processes that can be planned are generally limited by the available processing equipment and technological capabilities of the company or plant. Parts that cannot be made internally must be purchased from outside vendors. It should be mentioned that the choice of processes is also limited by the details of the product design. This is a point we will return to later.

Process planning is usually accomplished by manufacturing engineers. (Other titles include industrial engineer, production engineer, and process engineer.) The process planner must be familiar with the particular manufacturing processes available in the factory and be able to interpret engineering drawings. Based on the planner's knowledge, skill, and experience, the processing steps are developed in the most logical sequence to make each part. Following is a list of the many decisions and details usually included within the scope of process planning [10], [12]:

- ***Interpretation of design drawings.*** The part or product design must be analyzed (materials, dimensions, tolerances, surface finishes, etc.) at the start of the process planning procedure.
- ***Processes and sequence.*** The process planner must select which processes are required and their sequence. A brief description of all processing steps must be prepared.
- ***Equipment selection.*** In general, process planners must develop plans that utilize existing equipment in the plant. Otherwise, the component must be purchased, or an investment must be made in new equipment.
- ***Tools, dies, molds, fixtures,*** and ***gages.*** The process planner must decide what tooling is required for each processing step. The actual design and fabrication of these tools is usually delegated to a tool design department and tool room, or an outside vendor specializing in that type of tool is contracted.
- ***Methods analysis.*** Workplace layout, small tools, hoists for lifting heavy parts, even in some cases hand and body motions must be specified for manual operations. The industrial engineering department is usually responsible for this area.
- ***Work standards.*** Work measurement techniques are used to set time standards for each operation.
- ***Cutting tools*** and ***cutting conditions.*** These must be specified for machining operations, often with reference to standard handbook recommendations.

### 25.1.1 Process Planning for Parts

For individual parts, the processing sequence is documented on a form called a ***route sheet.*** (Not all companies use the name route sheet; another name is "operation sheet.") Just as engineering drawings are used to specify the product design, route sheets are used to spec-

| **Route Sheet** | XYZ Machine Shop, Inc. | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Part no. | Part name | Planner | Checked by | Date | Page |
| **081099** | **Shaft, generator** | MPGroover | N. Needed | 08/12/XX | 1/1 |
| Material | Stock size | Comments | | | |
| 1050 H18 Al | 60 mm diam., 206 mm length | | | | |

| No | Operation description | Dept | Machine | Tooling | Setup | Std. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Face end (approx. 3 mm). Rough turn to 52.00 mm diam. Finish turn to 50.00 mm diam. Face and turn shoulder to 42.00 mm diam. and 15.00 mm length. | Lathe | L45 | G0810 | 1.0 hr | 5.2 min. |
| 20 | Reverse end. Face end to 200.00 mm length. Rough turn to 52.00 mm diam. Finish turn to 50.00 mm diam. | Lathe | L45 | G0810 | 0.7 hr | 3.0 min. |
| 30 | Drill 4 radial holes 7.50 mm diam. | Drill | D09 | J555 | 0.5 hr | 3.2 min. |
| 40 | Mill 6.5 mm deep x 5.00 mm wide slot | Mill | M32 | F562 | 0.7 hr | 6.2 min. |
| 50 | Mill 10.00 mm wide flat, opposite side. | Mill | M13 | F630 | 1.5 hr | 4.8 min. |

**Figure 25.1** Typical route sheet for specifying the process plan.

ify the process plan. They are counterparts, one for product design, the other for manufacturing. A typical route sheet, illustrated in Figure 25.1, includes the following information: (1) all operations to be performed on the workpart, listed in the order in which they should be performed; (2) a brief description of each operation indicating the processing to be accomplished, with references to dimensions and tolerances on the part drawing; (3) the specific machines on which the work is to be done; and (4) any special tooling, such as dies, molds, cutting tools, jigs or fixtures, and gages. Some companies also include setup times, cycle time standards, and other data. It is called a route sheet because the processing sequence defines the route that the part must follow in the factory. Some of the guidelines in preparing a route sheet are listed in Table 25.1.

Decisions on processes to be used to fabricate a given part are based largely on the starting material for the part. This starting material is selected by the product designer. Once the material has been specified, the range of possible processing operations is reduced considerably. The product designer's decisions on starting material are based primarily on functional requirements, although economics and manufacturability also play a role in the selection.

**TABLE 25.1** Typical Guidelines in Preparing a Route Sheet

- Operation numbers for consecutive processing steps should be listed as 10, 20, 30, etc. This allows new operations to be inserted if necessary.
- A new operation and number should be specified when a workpart leaves one workstation and is transferred to another station.
- A new operation and number should be specified if a part is transferred to another workholder (e.g., jig or fixture), even if it is on the same machine tool.
- A new operation and number should be specified if the workpart is transferred from one worker to another, as on a production line.

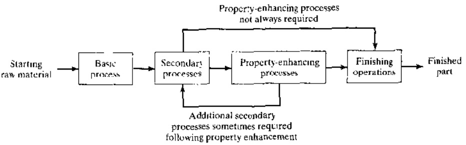



**Figure 25.2** Typical sequence of processes required in part fabrication.

A typical processing sequence to fabricate an individual part consists of: (1) a basic process, (2) secondary processes, (3) operations to enhance physical properties, and (4) finishing operations. The sequence is shown in Figure 25.2. A ***basic process*** determines the starting geometry of the workpart. Metal casting, plastic molding, and rolling of sheet metal are examples of basic processes. The starting geometry must often be refined by ***secondary processes***, operations that transform the starting geometry into the final geometry (or close to the final geometry). The secondary processes that might be used are closely correlated to the basic process that provides the starting geometry. When sand casting is the basic process, machining operations are generally the secondary processes. When a rolling mill produces sheet metal, stamping operations such as punching and bending are the secondary processes. When plastic injection molding is the basic process, secondary operations are often unnecessary, because most of the geometric features that would otherwise require machining can be created by the molding operation. Plastic molding and other operations that require no subsequent secondary processing are called ***net shape processes***. Operations that require some but not much secondary processing (usually machining) are referred to as ***near net shape processes***. Some impression die forgings are in this category. These parts can often be shaped in the forging operation (basic process) so that minimal machining (secondary processing) is required.

Once the geometry has been established, the next step for some parts is to improve their mechanical and phsyical properties. ***Operations to enhance properties*** do not alter the geometry of the part; instead, they alter physical properties. Heat-treating operations on metal parts are the most common example. Similar heating treatments are performed on glass to produce tempered glass. For most manufactured parts, these property–enhancing operations are not required in the processing sequence, as indicated by the alternative arrow path in Figure 25.2.

Finally, ***finishing operations*** usually provide a coating on the workpart (or assembly) surface. Examples include electroplating, thin film deposition techniques, and painting. The purpose of the coating is to enhance appearance, change color, or protect the surface from corrosion, abrasion, and so forth. Finishing operations are not required on many parts; for example, plastic moldings rarely require finishing. When finishing is required, it is usually the final step in the processing sequence.

Table 25.2 presents some typical processing sequences for common engineering materials used in manufacturing.

In most cases, parts and materials arriving at the factory have completed their basic process. Thus, the first operation in the process plan follows the basic process that has provided the starting geometry of the part. For example, machined parts begin as bar stock or

**TABLE 25.2** Some Typical Process Sequences

| Basic Process | Starting Material | Secondary Processes | Final shape | Enhancing Processes | Finishing Processes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sand casting | Sand casting | Machining | Machined part | (Optional) | Painting |
| Die casting | Die casting | (Net shape) | Die casting | (Optional) | Painting |
| Casting of glass | Glass ingot | Pressing, blow molding | Glass ware | Heat treatment | (None) |
| Injection molding | Molded part | (Net shape) | Plastic molding | (None) | (None) |
| Rolling | Sheet metal | Blanking, punching, bending, forming | Stamping | (None) | Plating, painting |
| Rolling | Sheet metal | Deep drawing | Drawing | (None) | Plating, painting |
| Forging | Forging | (Near net shape) Machining | Machined part | (None) | Plating, painting |
| Rolling and bar drawing | Bar stock | Machining, grinding | Machined part | Heat treatment | Plating, painting |
| Extrusion of aluminum | Extrudate | Cutoff | Extruded part | (None) | Painting, anodizing |
| Atomize | Metal powders | Press | PM part | Sinter | Paint |
| Comminution | Ceramic powders | Press | Ceramic ware | Sinter | Glaze |
| Ingot pulling | Silicon boule | Sawing and grinding | Silicon wafer | | Cleaning |
| Sawing and grinding | Silicon wafer | Oxidation, CVD, PVD, etching | IC chip | | Coating |

castings or forgings, which are purchased from outside vendors. The process plan begins with the machining operations in the company's own plant. Stampings begin as sheet metal coils or strips that are bought from the rolling mill. These raw materials are supplied from outside sources so that the secondary processes, property-enhancing operations, and finishing operations can be performed in the company's own factory.

In addition to the route sheet, a more detailed description of each operation is usually prepared. This is filed in the particular production department office where the operation is performed. It lists specific details of the operation, such as cutting conditions and tooling (if the operation is machining) and other instructions that may be useful to the machine operator. The descriptions often include sketches of the machine setup.

### 25.1.2 Process Planning for Assemblies

The type of assembly method used for a given product depends on factors such as: (1) the anticipated production quantities; (2) complexity of the assembled product, for example, the number of distinct components; and (3) assembly processes used, for example, mechanical assembly versus welding. For a product that is to be made in relatively small quantities, assembly is generally accomplished at individual workstations where one worker or a team of workers perform all of the assembly tasks. For complex products made in medium and high quantities, assembly is usually performed on manual assembly lines (Chapter 17). For simple products of a dozen or so components, to be made in large quantities, automated assembly systems are appropriate. In any case, there is a precedence order in which the work must be accomplished, an example of which is shown in Table 17.4. The precedence requirements are sometimes portrayed graphically on a precedence diagram, as in Figure 17.5.

Process planning for assembly involves development of assembly instructions similar to the list of work elements in Table 17.4, but in more detail. For low production quantities, the entire assembly is completed at a single station. For high production on an assembly line, process planning consists of allocating work elements to the individual stations of the line, a procedure called ***line balancing*** (Section 17.4.2). The assembly line routes the work units to individual stations in the proper order as determined by the line balancing solution. As in process planning for individual components, any tools and fixtures required to accomplish an assembly task must be determined, designed, and built; and the workstation arrangement must be laid out.

### 25.1.3 Make or Buy Decision

An important question that arises in process planning is whether a given part should be produced in the company's own factory or purchased from an outside vendor, and the answer to this question is known as the ***make or buy decision***. If the company does not possess the technological equipment or expertise in the particular manufacturing processes required to make the part, then the answer is obvious: The part must be purchased because there is no internal alternative. However, in many cases, the part could either be made internally using existing equipment, or it could be purchased externally from a vendor that possess similar manufacturing capability.

In our discussion of the make or buy decision, it should be recognized at the outset that nearly all manufacturers buy their raw materials from suppliers. A machine shop purchases its starting bar stock from a metals distributor and its sand castings from a foundry. A plastic molding plant buys its molding compound from a chemical company. A stamping press factory purchases sheet metal either from a distributor or direct from a rolling mill. Very few companies are vertically integrated in their production operations all the way from raw materials to finished product. Given that a manufacturing company purchases some of its starting materials, it seems reasonable to consider purchasing at least some of the parts that would otherwise be produced in its own plant. It is probably appropriate to ask the make or buy question for every component that is used by the company.

There are a number of factors that enter into the make or buy decision. We have compiled a list of the factors and issues that affect the decision in Table 25.3. One would think that cost is the most important factor in determining whether to produce the part or puchase it. If an outside vendor is more proficient than the company's own plant in the manufacturing processes used to make the part, then the internal production cost is likely to be greater than the purchase price even after the vendor has included a profit. However, if the decision to purchase results in idle equipment and labor in the company's own plant, then the apparent advantage of purchasing the part may be lost. Consider the following example.

**TABLE 25.3** Factors in the Make or Buy Decision

| *Factor* | *Explanation and Effect on Make/Buy Decision* |
|---|---|
| How do part costs compare? | This must be considered the most important factor in the make or buy decision. However, the cost comparison is not always clear, as Example 25.1 illustrates. |
| Is the process available in-house? | If the equipment and technical expertise for a given process are not available internally, then purchasing is the obvious decision. Vendors usually become very proficient in certain processes, which often makes them cost competitive in external-internal comparisons. However, there may be long-term cost implications for the company if it does not develop technological expertise in certain processes that are important for the types of products it makes. |
| What is the total production quantity? | The total number of units required over the life of the product is a key factor. As the total production quantity increases, this tends to favor the make decision. Lower quantities favor the buy decision. |
| What is the anticipated product life? | Longer product life tends to favor the make decision. |
| Is the component a standard item? | Standard catalog items (e.g., hardware items such as bolts, screws, nuts, and other commodity items) are produced economically by suppliers specializing in those products. Cost comparisons almost always favor a purchase decision on these standard parts. |
| Is the supplier reliable? | A vendor that misses a delivery on a critical component can cause a shutdown at the company's final assembly plant. Suppliers with proven delivery and quality records are favored over suppliers with lesser records. |
| Is the company's plant already operating at full capacity? | In peak demand periods, the company may be forced to augment its own plant capacity by purchasing a portion of the required production from external vendors. |
| Does the company need an alternative supply source? | Companies sometimes purchase parts from external vendors to maintain an alternative source to their own production plants. This is an attempt to ensure an uninterrupted supply of parts, e.g., as a safeguard against a wildcat strike at the company's parts production plant. |

*Source:* Based on [10] and other sources.

**EXAMPLE 25.1 Make or Buy Cost Decision**

The quoted price for a certain part is \$20.00 per unit for 100 units. The part can be produced in the company's own plant for \$28.00. The cost components of making the part are as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Unit raw material cost | = | \$8.00 per unit |
| Direct labor cost | = | 6.00 per unit |
| Labor overhead at 150% | = | 9.00 per unit |
| Equipment fixed cost | = | 5.00 per unit |
| Total | = | 28.00 per unit |

Should the component by bought or made in-house?

***Solution:*** Although the vendor's quote seems to favor a buy decision, let us consider the possible impact on plant operations if the quote is accepted. Equipment fixed cost of \$5.00 is an allocated cost based on an investment that was already made. If the equipment designated for this job becomes unutilized because of a decision to purchase the part, then the fixed cost continues even if the equipment stands idle. In the same way, the labor overhead cost of \$9.00 consists of factory space, utility, and labor costs that remain even if the part is purchased. By this reasoning, a buy decision is not a good decision because it might cost the company as much as \$20.00 + \$5.00 + \$9.00 = \$34.00 per unit if it results in idle time on the machine that would have been used to produce the part. On the other hand, if the equipment in question can be used for the production of other parts for which the in-house costs are less than the corresponding outside quotes, then a buy decision is a good decision.

Make or buy decisions are not often as straightforward as in this example. The other factors listed in Table 25.3 also affect the decision. A trend in recent years, especially in the automobile industry, is for companies to stress the importance of building close relationships with parts suppliers. We will return to this issue in our later discussion of concurrent engineering (Section 25.3).

## 25.2 COMPUTER-AIDED PROCESS PLANNING

There is much interest by manufacturing firms in automating the task of process planning using computer-aided process planning (CAPP) systems. The shop-trained people who are familiar with the details of machining and other processes are gradually retiring, and these people will be unavailable in the future to do process planning. An alternative way of accomplishing this function is needed, and CAPP systems are providing this alternative. CAPP is usually considered to be part of computer-aided manufacturing (CAM). However, this tends to imply that CAM is a stand-alone system. In fact, a synergy results when CAM is combined with computer-aided design to create a CAD/CAM system. In such a system, CAPP becomes the direct connection between design and manufacturing. The benefits derived from computer-automated process planning include the following:

- ***Process rationalization and standardization.*** Automated process planning leads to more logical and consistent process plans than when process planning is done completely manually. Standard plans tend to result in lower manufacturing costs and higher product quality.
- ***Increased productivity of process planners.*** The systematic approach and the availability of standard process plans in the data files permit more work to be accomplished by the process planners.
- ***Reduced lead time for process planning.*** Process planners working with a CAPP system can provide route sheets in a shorter lead time compared to manual preparation.
- ***Improved legibility.*** Computer-prepared route sheets are neater and easier to read than manually prepared route sheets.
- ***Incorporation of other application programs.*** The CAPP program can be interfaced with other application programs, such as cost estimating and work standards.

Computer-aided process planning systems are designed around two approaches. These approaches are called: (1) retrieval CAPP systems and (2) generative CAPP systems. Some CAPP systems combine the two approaches in what is known as semi-generative CAPP [12].

### 25.2.1 Retrieval CAPP Systems

A ***retrieval CAPP*** system, also called a ***variant CAPP*** system, is based on the principles of group technology (GT) and parts classification and coding (Chapter 15). In this type of CAPP, a standard process plan (route sheet) is stored in computer files for each part code number. The standard route sheets are based on current part routings in use in the factory or on an ideal process plan that has been prepared for each family. It should be noted that the development of the data base of these process plans requires substantial effort.

A retrieval CAPP system operates as illustrated in Figure 25.3. Before the system can be used for process planning, a significant amount of information must be compiled and entered into the CAPP data files. This is what Chang et al. [3], [4] refer to as the "preparatory phase." It consists of the following steps: (1) selecting an appropriate classification and coding scheme for the company, (2) forming part families for the parts produced by the company; and (3) preparing standard process plans for the part families. It should be mentioned that steps (2) and (3) continue as new parts are designed and added to the company's design data base.

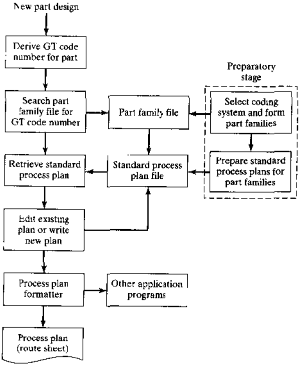



**Figure 25.3** General procedure for using one of the retrieval CAPP systems.

After the preparatory phase has been completed, the system is ready for use. For a new component for which the process plan is to be determined, the first step is to derive the GT code number for the part. With this code number, a search is made of the part family file to determine if a standard route sheet exists for the given part code. If the file contains a process plan for the part, it is retrieved (hence, the word "retrieval" for this CAPP system) and displayed for the user. The standard process plan is examined to determine whether any modifications are necessary. It might be that although the new part has the same code number, there are minor differences in the processes required to make it. The user edits the standard plan accordingly. This capacity to alter an existing process plan is what gives the retrieval system its alternative name: variant CAPP system.

If the file does not contain a standard process plan for the given code number, the user may search the computer file for a similar or related code number for which a standard route sheet does exist. Either by editing an existing process plan, or by starting from scratch, the user prepares the route sheet for the new part. This route sheet becomes the standard process plan for the new part code number.

The process planning session concludes with the process plan formatter, which prints out the route sheet in the proper format. The formatter may call other application programs into use; for example, to determine machining conditions for the various machine tool operations in the sequence, to calculate standard times for the operations (e.g., for direct labor incentives), or to compute cost estimates for the operations.

One of the commercially available retrieval CAPP systems is MultiCapp, from OIR, the Organization for Industrial Research. It is an on-line computer system that permits the user to create new plans, or retrieve and edit existing process plans, as we have explained above. An example of a route sheet representing the output from the MultiCapp system is shown in Figure 25.4.

### 25.2.2 Generative CAPP Systems

Generative CAPP systems represent an alternative approach to automated process planning. Instead of retrieving and editing an existing plan contained in a computer data base, a generative system creates the process plan based on logical procedures similar to the procedures a human planner would use. In a fully generative CAPP system, the process sequence is planned without human assistance and without a set of predefined standard plans.

The problem of designing a generative CAPP system is usually considered part of the field of expert systems, a branch of artificial intelligence. An ***expert system*** is a computer program that is capable of solving complex problems that normally require a human with years of education and experience. Process planning fits within the scope of this definition.

There are several ingredients required in a fully generative process planning system. First, the technical knowledge of manufacturing and the logic used by successful process planners must be captured and coded into a computer program. In an expert system applied to process planning, the knowledge and logic of the human process planners is incorporated into a so-called "knowledge base." The generative CAPP system then uses that knowledge base to solve process planning problems (i.e., create route sheets).

The second ingredient in generative process planning is a computer-compatible description of the part to be produced. This description contains all of the pertinent data and information needed to plan the process sequence. Two possible ways of providing this description are: (1) the geometric model of the part that is developed on a CAD system during product design and (2) a GT code number of the part that defines the part features in significant detail.

| Organization for Industrial Research, Inc. | | | | Facility – F1 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Part number: Prob. 15.10.1 | Last tour orders S/O # | PRJ # | Qty | Minimum Qty | Due dates | PRI # |
| Part name: Driver VLV Guide | | | | | | |
| Plng. rev. 11 DWG Rev. C | | | | | | |
| Planner. Fred Sambera | | | | | | |

| Change approvals & date | | | | Code #1. 1 3300-07 234901-5-0516-000000000000 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | #1 | #2 | #3 | Code #2: 5-2120-3654-22-01 | | |
| MFG | | A3 | | Code #3. 6-4032-417 | | |
| ENG | | F1 | E2 | | | |
| Q/A | | Q2 | | Start: 08/15/8X | T.O.T.D.: 4000 | T.R.DOC. 1 |

Material required:
Special instructions:

| Oper no. | Mach. tool | Operation description–assy instructions | Times S/U | Times Run | Operator stamp |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0010 | 1258 | Set-up 3/4 dia. collet pads<br>Set turrent stop to hold 4.5 length<br>Rough turn .5 dia to .532 dia. + .01 – .01<br>Rough turn .375 dia. to .39 + .01 .01<br>Hold 1.625 length<br>Finish turn .500 dia. + or – .005<br>Finish turn 375 dia + or – .005 hold 1 625<br>Cut-off to 5-7/8 length | 1.7 | .40 | |

**Figure 25.4** Route sheet prepared by the MultiCapp System (courtesy of OIR, the Organization for Industrial Research).

The third ingredient in a generative CAPP system is the capability to apply the process knowledge and planning logic contained in the knowledge base to a given part description. In other words, the CAPP system uses its knowledge base to solve a specific problem—planning the process for a new part. This problem-solving procedure is referred to as the "inference engine"in the terminology of expert systems. By using its knowledge base and inference engine, the CAPP system synthesizes a new process plan from scratch for each new part it is presented.

## 25.3 CONCURRENT ENGINEERING AND DESIGN FOR MANUFACTURING

***Concurrent engineering*** refers to an approach used in product development in which the functions of design engineering, manufacturing engineering, and other functions are integrated to reduce the elapsed time required to bring a new product to market. Also called ***simultaneous engineering***, it might be thought of as the organizational counterpart to CAD/CAM technology. In the traditional approach to launching a new product, the two functions of design engineering and manufacturing engineering tend to be separated and sequential, as illustrated in Figure 25.5(a). The product design department develops the new design, sometimes without much consideration given to the manufacturing capabilities of the company. There is little opportunity for manufacturing engineers to offer advice

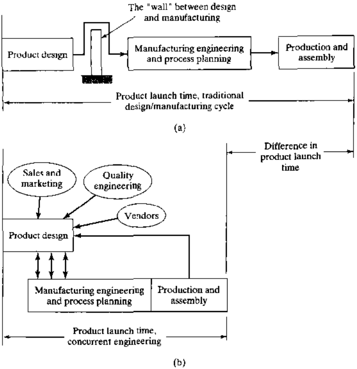



**Figure 25.5** Comparison of: (a) traditional product development cycle and (b) product development using concurrent engineering.

on how the design might be altered to make it more manufacturable. It is as if a wall exists between design and manufacturing. When the design engineering department completes the design, it tosses the drawings and specifications over the wall, and only then does process planning begin.

By contrast, in a company that practices concurrent engineering, the manufacturing engineering department becomes involved in the product development cycle early on, providing advice on how the product and its components can be designed to facilitate manufacture and assembly. It also proceeds with the early stages of manufacturing planning for the product. This concurrent engineering approach is pictured in Figure 25.5(b). In addition to manufacturing engineering, other functions are also involved in the product development cycle, such as quality engineering, the manufacturing departments, field service, vendors supplying critical components, and in some cases the customers who will use the product. All of these functions can make contributions during product development to improve not only the new product's function and performance, but also its produceability, inspectability, testability, serviceability, and maintainability. Through early involvement, as opposed to reviewing the final product design after it is too late to conveniently make any changes in the design, the duration of the product development cycle is substantially reduced.

Concurrent engineering includes several elements: (1) design for manufacturing and assembly, (2) design for quality, (3) design for cost, and (4) design for life cycle. In addition, certain enabling technologies such as rapid prototyping, virtual prototyping, and organizational changes are required to facilitate the concurrent engineering approach in a company.

### 25.3.1 Design for Manufacturing and Assembly

It has been estimated that about 70% of the life cycle cost of a product is determined by basic decisions made during product design [16]. These design decisions include the material for each part, part geometry, tolerances, surface finish, how parts are organized into subassemblies, and the assembly methods to be used. Once these decisions are made, the ability to reduce the manufacturing cost of the product is limited. For example, if the product designer decides that a part is to be made of an aluminum sand casting but which possesses features that can be achieved only by machining (such as threaded holes and close tolerances), the manufacturing engineer has no alternative except to plan a process sequence that starts with sand casting followed by the sequence of machining operations needed to achieve the specified features. In this example, a better decision might be to use a plastic molded part that can be made in a single step. It is important for the manufacturing engineer to be given the opportunity to advise the design engineer as the product design is evolving, to favorably influence the manufacturability of the product.

Terms used to describe such attempts to favorably influence the manufacturability of a new product are ***design for manufacturing*** (DFM) and ***design for assembly*** (DFA). Of course, DFM and DFA are inextricably linked, so let us use the term ***design for manufacturing and assembly*** (DFM/A). Design for manufacturing and assembly involves the systematic consideration of manufacturability and assemblability in the development of a new product design. This includes: (1) organizational changes and (2) design principles and guidelines.

*Organizational Changes in DFM/A.* Effective implementation of DFM/A involves making changes in a company's organizational structure, either formally or informally, so that closer interaction and better communication occurs between design and manufacturing personnel. This can be accomplished in several ways: (1) by creating project teams consisting of product designers, manufacturing engineers, and other specialties (e.g., quality engineers, material scientists) to develop the new product design; (2) by requiring design engineers to spend some career time in manufacturing to witness first-hand how manufacturability and assemblability are impacted by a product's design; and (3) by assigning manufacturing engineers to the product design department on either a temporary or full-time basis to serve as producibility consultants.

*Design Principles and Guidelines.* DFM/A also relies on the use of design principles and guidelines for how to design a given product to maximize manufacturability and assemblability. Some of these are universal design guidelines that can be applied to nearly any product design situation, such as those presented in Table 25.4. In other cases, there are design principles that apply to specific processes, for example, the use of drafts or tapers in casted and molded parts to facilitate removal of the part from the mold. We leave these more process-specific guidelines to texts on manufacturing processes, such as [10].

The guidelines sometimes conflict with one another. For example, one of the guidelines in Table 25.4 is to "simplify part geometry; avoid unnecessary features." But another guideline in the same table states that "special geometric features must sometimes be added

**TABLE 25.4** General Principles and Guidelines in DFM/A

| *Guideline* | *Interpretation and Advantages* |
|---|---|
| Minimize number of components | Reduced assembly costs.<br>Greater reliability in final product.<br>Easier disassembly in maintenance and field service.<br>Automation is often easier with reduced part count.<br>Reduced work-in-process and inventory control problems.<br>Fewer parts to purchase; reduced ordering costs. |
| Use standard commercially available components | Reduced design effort.<br>Fewer part numbers<br>Better inventory control possible.<br>Avoids design of custom-engineered components.<br>Quantity discounts possible. |
| Use common parts across product lines | Group technology (Chapter 15) can be applied.<br>Quantity discounts are possible.<br>Permits development of manufacturing cells. |
| Design for ease of part fabrication | Use net shape and near net shape processes where possible.<br>Simplify part geometry; avoid unnecessary features.<br>Avoid surface roughness that is smoother than necessary since additional processing may be needed. |
| Design parts with tolerances that are within process capability | Avoid tolerances less than process capability (Section 21.1.2).<br>Specify bilateral tolerances.<br>Otherwise, additional processing or sortation and scrap are required. |
| Design the product to be foolproof during assembly | Assembly should be unambiguous.<br>Components designed so they can be assembled only one way.<br>Special geometric features must sometimes be added to components. |
| Minimize flexible components | These include components made of rubber, belts, gaskets, electrical cables, etc.<br>Flexible components are generally more difficult to handle. |
| Design for ease of assembly. | Include part features such as chamfers and tapers on mating parts.<br>Use base part to which other components are added.<br>Use modular design (see following guideline).<br>Design assembly for addition of components from one direction, usually vertically; if mass production, this rule can be violated because fixed automation can be designed for multiple direction assembly.<br>Avoid threaded fasteners (screws, bolts, nuts) where possible, especially when automated assembly is used; use fast assembly techniques such as snap fits and adhesive bonding.<br>Minimize number of distinct fasteners. |
| Use modular design | Each subassembly should consists of 5-15 parts.<br>Easier maintenance and field service.<br>Facilitates automated (and manual) assembly.<br>Reduces inventory requirements.<br>Reduces final assembly time. |
| Shape parts and products for ease of packaging | Compatible with automated packaging equipment.<br>Facilitates shipment to customer.<br>Can use standard packaging cartons. |
| Eliminate or reduce adjustments | Many assembled products require adjustments and calibrations.<br>During product design, the need for adjustments and calibrations should be minimized because they are often time consuming in assembly. |

*Source:* [10].

to components" to design the product for foolproof assembly. And it may also be desirable to combine features of several assembled parts into one component to minimize the number of parts in the product. In these instances, design for part manufacture is in conflict with design for assembly, and a suitable compromise must be found between the opposing sides of the conflict.

### 25.3.2 Other Product Design Objectives

To complete our coverage of concurrent engineering, let us briefly discuss the other design objectives: design for quality, cost, and life cycle.

*Design for Quality.* It might be argued that DFM/A is the most important component of concurrent engineering because it has the potential for the greatest impact on product cost and development time. However, the importance of quality in international competition cannot be minimized. Quality does not just happen. It must be planned for during product design and during production. ***Design for quality*** (DFQ) is the term that refers to the principles and procedures employed to ensure that the highest possible quality is designed into the product. The general objectives of DFQ are [1]: (1) to design the product to meet or exceed customer requirements; (2) to design the product to be "robust," in the sense of Taguchi (Section 20.3.2), that is, to design the product so that its function and performance are relatively insensitive to variations in manufacturing and subsequent application; and (3) to continuously improve the performance, functionality, reliability, safety, and other quality aspects of the product to provide superior value to the customer.

Our discussion of quality in Part IV (Chapters 20–23) is certainly consistent with the focus of design for quality, but our emphasis in those chapters was directed more at the operational aspects of quality during production. Among those chapters, the Taguchi quality engineering methods (Section 20.3) are applicable in design for quality. Another approach that is gaining acceptance is quality function deployment, discussed in Section 24.5.

*Design for Product Cost.* The cost of a product is a major factor in determining its commercial success. Cost affects the price charged for the product and the profit made by the company producing it. ***Design for product cost*** (DFC) refers to the efforts of a company to specifically identify how design decisions affect product costs and to develop ways to reduce cost through design. Although the objectives of DFC and DFM/A overlap to some degree, since improved manufacturability usually results in lower cost, the scope of design for product cost extends beyond only manufacturing in its pursuit of cost savings, as indicated by the list of typical product cost components in Table 25.5.

*Design for Life Cycle.* To the customer, the price paid for the product may be a small portion of its total cost when life cycle costs are considered. ***Design for life cycle*** refers to the product after it has been manufactured and includes factors ranging from product delivery to product disposal. Most of the significant life cycle factors are listed in Table 25.6. Some customers (e.g., the federal government) include consideration of these costs in their purchasing decisions. The producer of the product is often obligated to offer service contracts that limit customer liability for out-of-control maintenance and service costs. In these cases, accurate estimates of these life cycle costs must be included in the total product cost.

**TABLE 25.5** Typical Product Cost Components

| *General Area* | *Affected Departments* |
|---|---|
| Product development and design | Marketing research<br>Basic research on new product technologies<br>Engineering analysis and optimization<br>Design drawings and specifications<br>Prototype development<br>Design testing |
| Manufacturing engineering | Manufacturing process research<br>Process planning<br>Tool design |
| Materials | Purchased raw materials<br>Purchased components<br>Transportation costs<br>Receiving and inspection |
| Manufacturing | Parts fabrication (equipment, labor, tooling, etc.)<br>Assembly (tools, assembly lines, labor, etc.)<br>Material handling (equipment and labor)<br>Production planning and control (labor and computer resources) |
| Inspection | Inspection (inspection plan design, gages, labor)<br>Testing (test design, equipment, labor) |
| Distribution | Warehousing<br>Shipment<br>Inventory control |
| Overhead | Factory overhead (plant management, building, utilities, support staff)<br>Corporate overhead (general management, sales, finance, legal, clerical, building, utilities, etc.) |

**TABLE 25.6** Factors in Design for Life Cycle

| *Factor* | *Typical Issues and Concerns* |
|---|---|
| Delivery | Transport cost, time to deliver, storage and distribution of mass produced items, type of carrier required (truck, railway, air transport) |
| Installability | Utility requirements (electric power, air pressure, etc.), construction costs, field assembly, support during installation |
| Reliability | Service life of product, failure rate, reliability testing requirements, materials used in the product, tolerances |
| Maintainability | Design modularity, types of fasteners used in assembly, preventive maintenance requirements, ease of servicing by customer |
| Serviceability | Product complexity, diagnostics techniques, training of field service staff, access to internal workings of product, tools required, availability of spare parts |
| Human factors | Ease and convenience of use, complexity of controls, potential hazards, risk of injuries during operation |
| Upgradeability | Compatibility of current design with future modules and software, cost of upgrades |
| Disposability | Materials used in the product, recycling of components, waste hazards |

*Source:* [10].

## 25.4 ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PLANNING

Advanced manufacturing planning emphasizes planning for the future. It is a corporate-level activity that is distinct from process planning because it is concerned with products being contemplated in the company's long-term plans (2–10-year future), rather than products currently being designed and released. ***Advanced manufacturing planning*** involves working with sales, marketing, and design engineering to forecast the new products that will be introduced and to determine what production resources will be needed to make those future products. Future products may require manufacturing technologies and facilities not currently available within the firm. In advanced manufacturing planning, the current equipment and facilities are compared with the processing needs created by future planned products to determine what new facilities should be installed. The general planning cycle is portrayed in Figure 25.6. Activities in advanced manufacturing planning include: (1) new technology evaluation, (2) investment project management, (3) facilities planning, and (4) manufacturing research.

*New Technology Evaluation.* Certainly one of the reasons why a company may consider installing new technologies is because future product lines require processing methods not currently used by the company. To introduce the new products, the company must either implement new processing technologies in-house or purchase the components made by the new technologies from vendors. For strategic reasons, it may be in the company's interest to install a new technology internally and develop staff expertise in that technology as a distinctive competitive advantage for the company. These issues must be analyzed, and the processing technology itself must be evaluated to assess its merits and demerits.

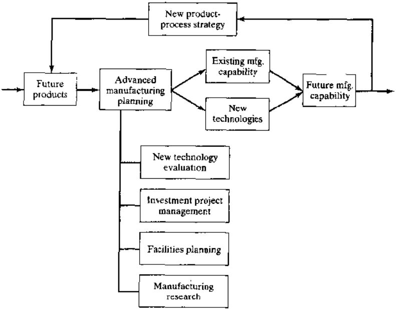



**Figure 25.6** Advanced manufacturing planning cycle.

A good example of the need for technology evaluation has occurred in the microelectronics industry, whose history spans only the past several decades. The technology of microelectronics has progressed very rapidly, driven by the need to include ever-greater numbers of devices into smaller and smaller packages. As each new generation has evolved, alternative technologies have been developed both in the products themselves and the required processes to fabricate them. It has been necessary for the companies in this industry, as well as companies that use their products, to evaluate the alternative technologies and decide which should be adopted.

There are other reasons why a company may need to introduce new technologies: (1) quality improvement, (2) productivity improvement, (3) cost reduction, (4) lead time reduction, and (5) modernization and replacement of worn-out facilities with new equipment. A good example of the introduction of a new technology is the CAD/CAM systems that were installed by many companies during the 1980s. Initially, CAD/CAM was introduced to modernize and increase productivity in the drafting function in product design. As CAD/CAM technology itself evolved and its capabilities expanded to include three-dimensional geometric modeling, design engineers began developing their product designs on these more powerful systems. Engineering analysis programs were written to perform finite-element calculations for complex heat transfer and stress problems. The use of CAD had the effect of increasing design productivity, improving the quality of the design, improving communications, and creating a data base for manufacturing. In addition, CAM software was introduced to implement process planning functions such as numerical control part programming (Section 6.5) and CAPP, thus reducing transition time from design to production.

*Investment Project Management.* Investments in new technologies or new equipment are generally made one project at a time. The duration of each project may be several months to several years. The management of the project requires a collaboration between the finance department that oversees the disbursements, manufacturing engineering that provides technical expertise in the production technology, and other functional areas that may be related to the project. For each project, the following sequence of steps must usually be accomplished: (1) Proposal to justify the investment is prepared. (2) Management approvals are granted for the investment. (3) Vendor quotations are solicited. (4) Order is placed to the winning vendor. (5) Vendor progress in building the equipment is monitored. (6) Any special tooling and supplies are ordered. (7) The equipment is installed and debugged. (8) Training of operators. (9) Responsibility for running the equipment is turned over to the operating department.

*Facilities Planning.* When new equipment is installed in an existing plant, an alteration of the facility is required. Floor space must be allocated to the equipment, other equipment may need to be relocated or removed, utilities (power, heat, light, air, etc.) must be connected, safety systems must be installed if needed, and various other activities must be accomplished to complete the installation. In extreme cases, an entire new plant may need to be designed to produce a new product line or expand production of an existing line. The planning work required to renovate an existing facility or design a new one is carried out by the plant engineering department (or similar title) and is called facilities planning. In the design or redesign of a production facility, manufacturing engineering and plant engineering must work closely to achieve a successful installation.

***Facilities planning*** is concerned with the planning and design of the fixed assets (e.g., land, buildings, and equipment) of an organization. Facilities planning can be divided into two types of problems: (1) facilities location and (2) facilities design. ***Facilities location*** deals with the problem of determining the optimum geographical location for a new facility. Factors that must be considered in selecting the best location include: location relative to customers and suppliers, labor availability, skills of labor pool, transportation, cost of living, quality of life, energy costs, construction costs, and tax and other incentives that may be offered by the local or state government. The choices in facilities location include international as well as national alternatives. Once the general location of the facility has been decided (i.e., state and region within the state), the local site must be selected.

***Facilities design*** consists of the design of the plant, which includes plant layout, material handling, building, and related issues. The ***plant layout*** is the physical arrangement of equipment and space in the building. Objectives in designing a plant layout include logical work flow, minimum material movement, convenience of those using the facility, safety, expandability, and flexibility in case rearrangement is necessary. ***Material handling*** is concerned with the efficient movement of work in the factory. This is usually accomplished by means of equipment such as powered forklift trucks, conveyors of various types, automatic guided vehicles, cranes, and hoists (Chapter 10). Material handling and plant layout are closely related design issues. ***Building design*** deals with the architectural and structural design of the plant and includes not only bricks and mortar but also utilities and communications lines

*Manufacturing Research and Development.* To develop the required manufacturing technologies, the company may find it necessary to undertake a program of manufacturing research and development (R&D). Some of this research is done internally, whereas in other cases projects are contracted to university and commercial research laboratories specializing in the associated technologies. Manufacturing research can take various forms, including:

- ***Development of new processing technologies***–This R&D activity involves the development of new processes that have never been used before. Some of the processing technologies developed for integrated circuits fabrication represent this category. Other recent examples include rapid prototyping techniques (Section 24.1.2).
- ***Adaptation of existing processing technologies***–A manufacturing process may exist that has never been used on the type of products made by the company, yet it is perceived that there is a potential for application. In this case, the company must engage in applied research to customize the process to its needs.
- ***Process fine-tuning***–This involves research on processes used by the company. The objectives of a given study can be any of the following: (1) improve operating efficiency, (2) improve product quality, (3) develop a process model, (4) learn how to better control the process, (5) determine optimum operating conditions, and so forth.
- ***Software systems development***–These are projects involving development of customized manufacturing-related software for the company. Possible software development projects might include: cost estimating software, parts classification and coding systems, CAPP, customized CAD/CAM application software, production planning and control systems, work-in-process tracking systems, and similar projects. Successful development of a good software package may give the company a competitive advantage.

- ***Automation systems development***–These projects are similar to the preceding except they deal with hardware or hardware/software combinations. Studies related to applications of industrial robots (Chapter 7) in the company are examples of this kind of research.
- ***Operations research and simulation***–Operations research involves the development of mathematical models to analyze operational problems. The techniques include linear programming, inventory models, queuing theory, and stochastic processes. In many problems, the mathematical models are sufficiently complex that they cannot be solved in closed form. In these cases, discrete event simulation can be used to study the operations. A number of commercial simulation packages are available for this purpose.

Manufacturing R&D is applied research. The objective is to develop or adapt a technology or technique that will result in higher profits and a distinctive competitive advantage for the company.

## REFERENCES

[1] BAKERJIAN, R., and MITCHELL, P., *Tool and Manufacturing Engineers Handbook* (Fourth edition), Volume VI, *Design for Manufacturability*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1992.

[2] BANCROFT, C. E., "Design for Manufacturability: Half Speed Ahead," *Manufacturing Engineering*, September 1988, pp 67–69.

[3] CHANG, T-C. and R. A. WYSK, *An Introduction to Automated Process Planning Systems*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1985.

[4] CHANG, T-C. R. A. WYSK, and H-P WANG, *Computer-Aided Manufacturing*, Second Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1998, Chapter 13.

[5] CHERNG, J. G., X-Y SHAO, Y. CHEN, and P. R. SFERRO, "Feature-Based Part Modeling and Process Planning for Rapid Response Manufacturing," *Computers & Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp 515–530, 1998.

[6] CORBETT, J., DOONER, M., MELEKA, J., and PYM, C., *Design for Manufacture*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Wokingham, England, 1991.

[7] EARY, D. F., and JOHNSON, G. E., *Process Engineering for Manufacturing*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962.

[8] GROOVER, M. P., and E. W. ZIMMERS, Jr., *CAD/CAM: Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1984, Chapter 13.

[9] GROOVER, M. P., "Computer-Aided Process Planning - An Introduction," *Proceedings*, Conference on Computer-Aided Process Planning, Provo, Utah, October 1984.

[10] GROOVER, M. P., *Fundamentals of Modern Manufacturing: Materials, Processes, and Systems*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1996 (now published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

[11] FELCH, R. I., "Make-or-Buy Decisions," *Maynard's Industrial Engineering Handbook*, Fourth Edition, William K. Hodson, Editor-in-Chief, McGraw-Hill. Inc., New York, 1992, pp 9.121–9.127.

[12] KAMRANI, A. K., P. SFERRO, and J. HANDLEMAN, "Critical Issues in Design and Evaluation of Computer-Aided Process Planning," *Computers & Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 29, No. 1–4, pp 619–623, 1995.

[13] KANE, G. E., "The Role of the Manufacturing Engineer," *Technical Paper MM70–222*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1970.

[14] KOENIG, D. T., *Manufacturing Engineering*, Hemisphere Publishing Corporation (Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.), Washington, D.C., 1987.

[15] KUSIAK, A., Editor, *Concurrent Engineering*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1993.

[16] NEVINS, J. L., and WHITNEY, D. E., Editors, *Concurrent Design of Products and Processes*, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, New York, 1989.

[17] PARSAEI, H. R., and W. G SULLIVAN, Editors, *Concurrent Engineering*, Chapman & Hall, London, United Kingdom, 1993.

[18] TANNER, J. P., *Manufacturing Engineering*, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, 1985.

[19] TOMPKINS, J. A., and WHITE, J. A., *Facilities Planning*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1984.

[20] WANG, H-P., and J-K. LI, *Computer-Aided Process Planning*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1991.

[21] WOLFE, P. M., "Computer-Aided Process Planning is Link Between CAD and CAM," *Industrial Engineering*, August 1985, pp 72 -77.

# chapter 26

# Production Planning and Control Systems

## CHAPTER CONTENTS



***Production planning and control*** (PPC) is concerned with the logistics problems that are encountered in manufacturing, that is, managing the details of what and how many products to produce and when, and obtaining the raw materials, parts, and resources to produce those products. PPC solves these logistics problems by managing information. The computer is essential for processing the tremendous amounts of data involved to define the products and the manufacturing resources to produce them and to reconcile these technical details with the desired production schedule. In a very real sense, PPC is the integrator in computer integrated manufacturing.

Planning and control in PPC must themselves be integrated functions. It is insufficient to plan production if there is no control of the factory resources to achieve the plan. And it is ineffective to control production if there is no plan against which to compare factory progress. Both planning and control must be accomplished, and they must be coordinated with each other and with other functions in the manufacturing firm, such as process planning, concurrent engineering, and advanced manufacturing planning (Chapter 25). Now, having emphasized the integrated nature of PPC, let us nevertheless try to explain what is involved in each of the two functions, production planning and production control.

***Production planning*** is concerned with: (1) deciding which products to make, how many of each, and when they should be completed; (2) scheduling the delivery and/or production of the parts and products; and (3) planning the manpower and equipment resources needed to accomplish the production plan. Activities within the scope of production planning include:

- ***Aggregate production planning.*** This involves planning the production output levels for major product lines produced by the firm. These plans must be coordinated among various functions in the firm, including product design, production, marketing, and sales.
- ***Master production planning.*** The aggregate production plan must be converted into a master production schedule (MPS) which is a specific plan of the quantities to be produced of individual models within each product line.
- ***Material requirements planning*** (MRP) is a planning technique, usually implemented by computer, that translates the MPS of end products into a detailed schedule for the raw materials and parts used in those end products.
- ***Capacity planning*** is concerned with determining the labor and equipment resources needed to achieve the master schedule.

Production planning activities divide into two stages: (1) aggregate planning which results in the MPS, and (2) detailed planning, which includes MRP and capacity planning. Aggregate planning involves planning 6 months or more into the future, whereas detailed planning is concerned with the shorter term (weeks to months).

***Production control*** is concerned with determining whether the necessary resources to implement the production plan have been provided, and if not, it attempts to take corrective action to address the deficiencies. As its name suggests, production control includes various systems and techniques for controlling production and inventory in the factory. The major topics covered in this chapter are:

- ***Shop floor control.*** Shop floor control systems compare the progress and status of production orders in the factory to the production plans (MPS and parts explosion accomplished by MRP).
- ***Inventory control.*** Inventory control includes a variety of techniques for managing the inventory of a firm. One of the important tools in inventory control is the economic order quantity formula.

- ***Manufacturing resource planning.*** Also known as MRP II, manufacturing resource planning combines MRP and capacity planning as well as shop floor control and other functions related to PPC.
- ***Just-in-time production systems.*** The term "just-in-time" refers to a scheduling discipline in which materials and parts are delivered to the next work cell or production line station just prior to their being used. This type of discipline tends to reduce inventory and other kinds of waste in manufacturing.

The activities in a modern PPC system and their interrelationships are depicted in Figure 26.1. As the figure indicates, PPC ultimately extends to the company's supplier base and customer base. This expanded scope of PPC control is known as ***supply chain management.***

## 26.1 AGGREGATE PRODUCTION PLANNING AND THE MASTER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Aggregate planning is a high-level corporate planning activity. The ***aggregate production plan*** indicates production output levels for the major product lines of the company. The ag-

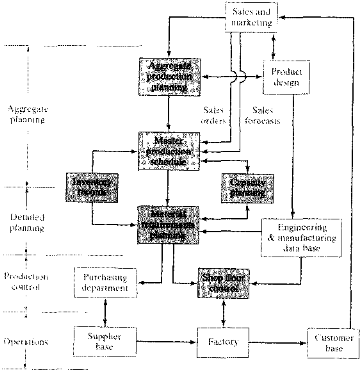



**Figure 26.1** Activities in a PPC system (highlighted in the diagram) and their relationships with other functions in the firm and outside.

gregate plan must be coordinated with the plans of the sales and marketing departments. Because the aggregate production plan includes products that are currently in production, it must also consider the present and future inventory levels of those products and their component parts. Because new products currently being developed will also be included in the aggregate plan, the marketing plans and promotions for current products and new products must be reconciled against the total capacity resources available to the company.

The production quantities of the major product lines listed in the aggregate plan must be converted into a very specific schedule of individual products, known as the ***master production schedule*** (MPS). It is a list of the products to be manufactured, when they should be completed and delivered, and in what quantities. A hypothetical MPS for a narrow product set is presented in Figure 26.2(b), showing how it is derived from the corresponding aggregate plan in Figure 26.2(a). The master schedule must be based on an accurate estimate of demand and a realistic assessment of the company's production capacity.

Products included in the MPS divide into three categories: (1) firm customer orders, (2) forecasted demand, and (3) spare parts. Proportions in each category vary for different companies, and in some cases one or more categories are omitted. Companies producing assembled products will generally have to handle all three types. In the case of customer orders for specific products, the company is usually obligated to delivery the item by a particular date that has been promised by the sales department. In the second category, production output quantities are based on statistical forecasting techniques applied to previous demand patterns, estimates by the sales staff, and other sources. For many companies, forecasted demand constitutes the largest portion of the master schedule. The third category consists of repair parts that will either be stocked in the company's service department or sent directly to the customer. Some companies exclude this third category from the master schedule since it does not represent end products.

The MPS is generally considered to be a medium-range plan since it must take into account the lead times to order raw materials and components, produce parts in the factory, and then assemble the end products. Depending on the product, the lead times can

| | Week | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Product line | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| M model line | 200 | 200 | 200 | 150 | 150 | 120 | 120 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| N model line | 80 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 | | | |
| P model line | | | | | | | 70 | 130 | 25 | 100 |

(a) Aggregate production plan

| | Week | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Product line models | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Model M3 | 120 | 120 | 120 | 100 | 100 | 80 | 80 | 70 | 70 | 70 |
| Model M4 | 80 | 80 | 80 | 50 | 50 | 40 | 40 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Model N8 | 80 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 | | | |
| Model P1 | | | | | | | | 50 | | 100 |
| Model P2 | | | | | | | 70 | 80 | 25 | |

(b) Master production schedule

**Figure 26.2** (a) Aggregate production plan and (b) corresponding MPS for a hypothetical product line.

range from several weeks to many months; in some cases, more than a year. The MPS is usually considered to be fixed in the near term. This means that changes are not allowed within about a 6 week horizon because of the difficulty in adjusting production schedules within such a short period. However, schedule adjustments are allowed beyond 6 weeks to cope with changing demand patterns or the introduction of new products. Accordingly, we should note that the aggregate production plan is not the only input to the master schedule. Other inputs that may cause the master schedule to depart from the aggregate plan include new customer orders and changes in sales forecast over the near term.

## 26.2 MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS PLANNING

***Material requirements planning*** (MRP) is a computational technique that converts the master schedule for end products into a detailed schedule for the raw materials and components used in the end products. The detailed schedule identifies the quantities of each raw material and component item. It also indicates when each item must be ordered and delivered to meet the master schedule for final products. MRP is often thought of as a method of inventory control. Even though it is an effective tool for minimizing unnecessary inventory investment, MRP is also useful in production scheduling and purchasing of materials.

The distinction between independent demand and dependent demand is important in MRP. ***Independent*** demand means that demand for a product is unrelated to demand for other items. Final products and spare parts are examples of items whose demand is independent. Independent demand patterns must usually be forecasted. ***Dependent*** demand means that demand for the item is directly related to the demand for some other item, usually a final product. The dependency usually derives from the fact that the item is a component of the other product. Not only component parts but also raw materials and subassemblies are examples of items subject to dependent demand.

Whereas demand for the firm's end products must often be forecasted, the raw materials and component parts should not be forecasted. Once the delivery schedule for end products is established, the requirements for components and raw materials can be directly calculated. For example, even though demand for automobiles in a given month can only be forecasted, once the quantity is established and production is scheduled, we know that five tires will be needed to deliver the car (don't forget the spare). MRP is the appropriate technique for determining quantities of dependent demand items. These items constitute the inventory of manufacturing: raw materials, work-in-process (WIP), component parts, and subassemblies. That is why MRP is such a powerful technique in the planning and control of manufacturing inventories. For independent demand items, inventory control is often accomplished using order point systems, described in Section 26.5.1.

The concept of MRP is relatively straightforward. Its implementation is complicated by the sheer magnitude of the data to be processed. The master schedule provides the overall production plan for the final products in terms of month-by-month deliveries. Each product may contain hundreds of individual components. These components are produced from raw materials, some of which are common among the components. For example, several components may be made out of the same gauge sheet steel. The components are assembled into simple subassemblies, and these subassemblies are put together into more complex subassemblies, and so on, until the final products are assembled. Each step in the manufacturing and assembly sequence takes time. All of these factors must be incorporated into the MRP calculations. Although each calculation is uncomplicated, the magnitude of the data is so large that the application of MRP is practically impossible except by computer processing.

In our discussion of MRP that follows, we first examine the inputs to the MRP system. We then describe how MRP works, the output reports generated by the MRP computations, and finally the benefits and pitfalls that have been experienced with MRP systems in industry.

### 26.2.1 Inputs to the MRP System

To function, the MRP program must operate on data contained in several files. These files serve as inputs to the MRP processor They are: (1) MPS, (2) bill of materials file and other engineering and manufacturing data, and (3) inventory record file. Figure 26.3 illustrates the flow of data into the MRP processor and its conversion into useful output reports. In a properly implemented MRP system, capacity planning also provides input to ensure that the MRP schedule does not exceed the production capacity of the firm. More on this in Section 26.3.

The MPS lists what end products and how many of each are to be produced and when they are to be ready for shipment, as shown in Figure 26.2(b). Manufacturing firms generally work toward monthly delivery schedules, but the master schedule in our figure uses weeks as the time periods. Whatever the duration, these time periods are called ***time buckets*** in MRP. Instead of treating time as a continuous variable (which of course, it is), MRP makes its computations of materials and parts requirements in terms of time buckets.

The ***bill of materials*** (BOM) ***file*** is used to compute the raw material and component requirements for end products listed in the master schedule. It provides information on the product structure by listing the component parts and subassemblies that make up each product. The structure of an assembled product can be illustrated as in Figure 26.4. This is much simpler than most commercial products, but its simplicity will serve for illustration purposes. Product P1 is composed of two subassemblies, S1 and S2, each of which is made up of components C1, C2, and C3, and C4, C5, and C6, respectively. Finally, at the

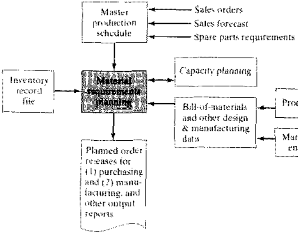



**Figure 26.3** Structure of an MRP system.

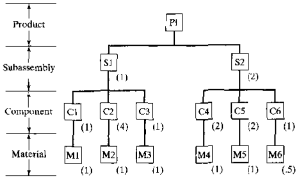



**Figure 26.4** Product structure for product P1.

bottom level are the raw materials that go into each component. The items at each successively higher level are called the ***parents*** of the items feeding into it from below. For example, S1 is the parent of C1, C2, and C3. The product structure must also specify the number of each subassembly, component, and raw material that go into its respective parent. These numbers are shown in parentheses in our figure.

The ***inventory record file*** is referred to as the ***item master file*** in a computerized inventory system. The types of data contained in the inventory record are divided into three segments:

1. ***Item master data.*** This provides the item's identification (part number) and other data about the part such as order quantity and lead times.
2. ***Inventory status.*** This gives a time-phased record of inventory status. In MRP, it is important to know not only the current level of inventory, but also any future changes that will occur against the inventory. Therefore, the inventory status segment lists the gross requirements for the item, scheduled receipts, on-hand status, and planned order releases, as shown in Figure 26.6.
3. ***Subsidiary data.*** The third file segment provides subsidiary data such as purchase orders, scrap or rejects, and engineering changes.

### 26.2.2 How MRP Works

The MRP processor operates on data contained in the MPS, the BOM file, and the inventory record file. The master schedule specifies the period-by-period list of final products required. The BOM defines what materials and components are needed for each product. And the inventory record file contains data on current and future inventory status of each product, component, and material. The MRP processor computes how many of each component and raw material are needed each period by "exploding" the end product requirements into successively lower levels in the product structure.

**EXAMPLE 26.1 MRP Gross Quantity Computations**

In the master schedule of Figure 26.2, 50 units of product P1 are to be completed in week 8. Explode this product requirement into the corresponding number of subassemblies and components required.

***Solution:*** Referring to the product structure in Figure 26.4, 50 units of P1 explode into 50 units of S1 and 100 units of S2. Similarly, the requirements for these subassemblies explode into 50 units of C1, 200 of C2, 50 of C3, 200 of C4, 200 of C5, and 100 of C6. Quantities of raw materials are determined in a similar manner.

---

Several complicating factors must be taken into account during the MRP computations. First, the quantities of components and subassemblies listed in the solution of Example 26.1 do not account for any of those items that may already be stocked in inventory or are expected to be received as future orders. Accordingly, the computed quantities must be adjusted for any inventories on hand or on order, a procedure called ***netting***. For each time bucket, net requirements = gross requirements less on-hand inventories and less quantities on order.

Second, quantities of common use items must be combined during parts explosion to determine the total quantities required for each component and raw material in the schedule. ***Common use items*** are raw materials and components that are used on more than one product. MRP collects these common use items from different products to effect economies in ordering the raw materials and producing the components.

Third, lead times for each item must be taken into account. The ***lead time*** for a job is the time that must be allowed to complete the job from start to finish. There are two kinds of lead times in MRP: ordering lead times and manufacturing lead times. ***Ordering lead time*** for an item is the time required from initiation of the purchase requisition to receipt of the item from the vendor. If the item is a raw material that is stocked by the vendor, the ordering lead time should be relatively short, perhaps a few days or a few weeks. If the item is fabricated, the lead time may be substantial, perhaps several months. ***Manufacturing lead time*** is the time required to produce the item in the company's own plant, from order release to completion, once the raw materials for the item are available. The scheduled delivery of end products must be translated into time-phased requirements for components and materials by factoring in the ordering and manufacturing lead times.

### EXAMPLE 26.2 MRP Time-Phased Quantity Requirements

To illustrate these various complicating factors, let us consider the MRP procedure for component C4, which is used in product P1. This part also happens to be used on product P2 of the master schedule in Figure 26.2. The product structure for P2 is shown in Figure 26.5. Component C4 is made out of material

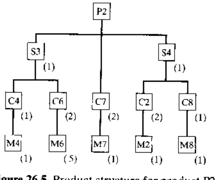



**Figure 26.5** Product structure for product P2.

| Period | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item: **Raw material M4** | | | | | | | | |
| Gross requirements | | | | | | | | |
| Scheduled receipts | | | | 40 | | | | |
| On hand | 50 | 50 | 50 | 90 | | | | |
| Net requirements | | | | | | | | |
| Planned order releases | | | | | | | | |

**Figure 26.6** Initial inventory status of material M4 in Example 26.2.

M4, one unit of M4 for each unit of C4, and the inventory status of M4 is given in Figure 26.6. The lead times and inventory status for each of the other items needed in the MRP calculations are shown in the table below. Complete the MRP calculations to determine the time-phased requirements for items S2, S3, C4, and M4, based on the requirements for P1 and P2 given in the MPS of Figure 26.2. We assume that the inventory on hand or on order for P1, P2, S2, S3, and C4 is zero for all future periods except for the calculated values in this problem solution.

| *Item* | *Lead time* | *Inventory* |
|---|---|---|
| P1 | Assembly lead time = 1 wk | No inventory on hand or on order |
| P2 | Assembly lead time = 1 wk | No inventory on hand or on order |
| S2 | Assembly lead time = 1 wk | No inventory on hand or on order |
| S3 | Assembly lead time = 1 wk | No inventory on hand or on order |
| C4 | Manufacturing lead time = 2 wk | No inventory on hand or on order |
| M4 | Ordering lead time = 3 wk | See Figure 26.6. |

***Solution:*** The results of the MRP calculations are given in Figure 26.7. The delivery requirements for P1 and P2 must be offset by their 1 wk assembly lead time to obtain the planned order releases. These quantities are then exploded into requirements for subassemblies S2 (for P1) and S3 (for P2). These requirements are offset by their 1 wk assembly lead time and combined in week 6 to obtain gross requirements for component C4. Net requirements equal gross requirements for P1, P2, S2, S3, and C4 because of no inventory on hand and no planned orders. We see the effect of current inventory and planned orders in the time-phased inventory status of M4. The on-hand stock of 50 units plus scheduled receipts of 40 are used to meet gross requirements of 70 units of M4 in week 3, with 20 units remaining that can be applied to the gross requirements of 280 units in week 4. Net requirements in week 4 are therefore 260 units. With an ordering lead time of 3 wk, the order release for 260 units must be planned for week 1.

| Period | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item: **Product P1** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gross requirements | | | | | | | | | 50 | | 100 |
| Scheduled receipts | | | | | | | | | | | |
| On hand | 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net requirements | | | | | | | | | 50 | | 100 |
| Planned order releases | | | | | | | | 50 | | 100 | |
| Item: **Product P2** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gross requirements | | | | | | | | 70 | 80 | 25 | |
| Scheduled receipts | | | | | | | | | | | |
| On hand | 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net requirements | | | | | | | | 70 | 80 | 25 | |
| Planned order releases | | | | | | | 70 | 80 | 25 | | |
| Item: **Subassembly S2** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gross requirements | | | | | | | | 100 | | 200 | |
| Scheduled receipts | | | | | | | | | | | |
| On hand | 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net requirements | | | | | | | | 100 | | 200 | |
| Planned order releases | | | | | | | 100 | | 200 | | |
| Item: **Subassembly S3** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gross requirements | | | | | | | 70 | 80 | 25 | | |
| Scheduled receipts | | | | | | | | | | | |
| On hand | 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net requirements | | | | | | | 70 | 80 | 25 | | |
| Planned order releases | | | | | | 70 | 80 | 25 | | | |
| Item: **Component C4** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gross requirements | | | | | | 70 | 280 | 25 | 400 | | |
| Scheduled receipts | | | | | | | | | | | |
| On hand | 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net requirements | | | | | | 70 | 280 | 25 | 400 | | |
| Planned order releases | | | | 70 | 280 | 25 | 400 | | | | |
| Item: **Raw material M4** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gross requirements | | | | 70 | 280 | 25 | 400 | | | | |
| Scheduled receipts | | | | 40 | | | | | | | |
| On hand | 50 | 50 | 50 | 90 | 20 | | | | | | |
| Net requirements | | | | −20 | 260 | 25 | 400 | | | | |
| Planned order releases | | 260 | 25 | 400 | | | | | | | |

**Figure 26.7** MRP solution to Example 26.2. Time-phased requirements for P1 and P2 are taken from Figure 26.2. Requirements for S2, S3, C4, and M4 are calculated.

### 26.2.3 MRP Outputs and Benefits

The MRP program generates a variety of outputs that can be used in planning and managing plant operations. The outputs include: (1) ***planned order releases***, which provide the authority to place orders that have been planned by the MRP system; (2) report of planned order releases in future periods; (3) rescheduling notices, indicating changes in due dates for open orders; (4) cancelation notices, indicating that certain open orders have been canceled because of changes in the MPS; (5) reports on inventory status; (6) performance reports of various types, indicating costs, item usage, actual versus planned lead times, and so on; (7) exception reports, showing deviations from the schedule, orders that are overdue, scrap, and so on; and (8) inventory forecasts, indicating projected inventory levels in future periods.

Of the MRP outputs listed above, the planned order releases are the most important because they drive the production system. Planned order releases are of two kinds, purchase orders and work orders. ***Purchase orders*** provide the authority to purchase raw materials or parts from outside vendors, with quantities and delivery dates specified. ***Work orders*** generate the authority to produce parts or assemble subassemblies or products in the company's own factory. Again quantities to be completed and completion dates are specified.

Many benefits are claimed for a well-designed MRP system. Benefits reported by users include the following: (1) reduction in inventory, (2) quicker response to changes in demand than is possible with a manual requirements planning system, (3) reduced setup and product changeover costs, (4) better machine utilization, (5) improved capacity to respond to changes in the master schedule, and (6) as an aid in developing the master schedule.

Notwithstanding these claimed benefits, the success rate in implementing MRP systems throughout industry has been less than perfect. Reasons why some MRP systems have not been successful include: (1) the application was not appropriate, usually because the product structure did not fit the data requirements of MRP; (2) the MRP computations were based on inaccurate data; and (3) the MPS was not coupled with a capacity planning system, therefore the MRP program generated an unrealistic schedule of work orders that overloaded the factory.

## 26.3 CAPACITY PLANNING

A realistic master schedule must be consistent with the production capabilities and limitations of the plant that will produce the product. Accordingly, the firm must know its production capacity and must plan for changes in capacity to meet changing production requirements specified in the master schedule. In Chapter 2, we defined production capacity and formulated ways for determining the capacity of a plant. ***Capacity planning*** is concerned with determining what labor and equipment resources are required to meet the current MPS as well as long-term future production needs of the firm (see Section 25.4). Capacity planning also serves to identify the limitations of the available production resources so that an unrealistic master schedule is not planned.

Capacity planning is typically accomplished in two stages, as indicated in Figure 26.8: first, when the MPS is established; and second, when the MRP computations are done. In the MPS stage, a ***rough-cut capacity planning*** (RCCP) calculation is made to assess the feasibility of the master schedule. Such a calculation indicates whether there is a significant violation of production capacity in the MPS. On the other hand, if the calculation shows no capacity violation, neither does it guarantee that the production schedule can be met. This

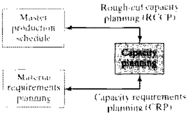



**Figure 26.8** Two stages of capacity planning.

depends on the allocation of work orders to specific work cells in the plant. Accordingly, a second capacity calculation is made at the time the MRP schedule is prepared. Called ***capacity requirements planning*** (CRP), this detailed calculation determines whether there is sufficient production capacity in the individual departments and work cells to complete the specific parts and assemblies that have been scheduled by MRP. If the schedule is not compatible with capacity, then adjustments must be made either in plant capacity or in the master schedule.

Capacity adjustments can be divided into short term adjustments and long-term adjustments. Capacity adjustments for the short term include:

- ***Employment levels.*** Employment in the plant can be increased or descreased in response to changes in capacity requirements.
- ***Temporary workers.*** Increases in employment level can also be made by using workers from a temporary agency. When the busy period is passed, these workers move to positions at other companies where their services are needed.
- ***Number of work shifts.*** The number of shifts worked per production period can be increased or decreased.
- ***Labor hours.*** The number of labor hours per shift can be increased or decreased, through the use of overtime or reduced hours.
- ***Inventory stockpiling.*** This tactic might be used to maintain steady employment levels during slow demand periods.
- ***Order backlogs.*** Deliveries of the product to the customer could be delayed during busy periods when production resources are insufficient to keep up with demand.
- ***Subcontracting.*** This involves the letting of jobs to other shops during busy periods, or the taking in of extra work during slack periods.

Capacity planning adjustments for the long term include possible changes in production capacity that generally require long lead times. These adjustments include the following types of decisions:

- ***New equipment investments.*** This involves investing in more machines or more productive machines to meet increased future production requirements, or investing in new types of machines to match future changes in product design.
- ***New plant construction.*** Building a new factory represents a major investment for the company. However, it also represents a significant increase in production capacity for the firm.
- ***Purchase of existing plants*** from other companies.

- ***Acquisition of existing companies.*** This may be done to increase productive capacity. However, there are usually more important reasons for taking over an existing company, for example, to achieve economies of scale that result from increasing market share and reducing staff.
- ***Plant closings.*** This involves the closing of plants that will not be needed in the future.

Many of these capacity adjustments are suggested by the capacity equations and models presented in Chapter 2.

## 26.4 SHOP FLOOR CONTROL

***Shop floor control*** is concerned with the release of production orders to the factory, monitoring and controlling the progress of the orders through the various work centers, and acquiring current information on the status of the orders. A typical shop floor control system consists of three phases: (1) order release, (2) order scheduling, and (3) order progress. The three phases and their connections to other functions in the production management system are pictured in Figure 26.9. In today's implementation of shop floor control, these phases are executed by a combination of computer and human resources, with a growing proportion accomplished by computer automated methods.

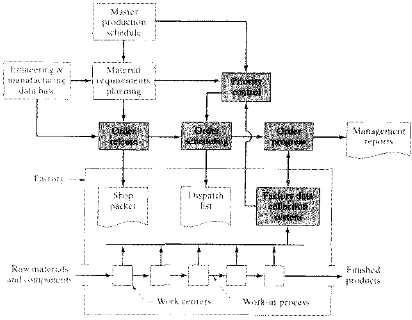



**Figure 26.9** Three phases in a shop floor control system.

### 26.4.1 Order Release

The order release phase of shop floor control provides the documentation needed to process a production order through the factory. The collection of documents is sometimes called the ***shop packet.*** It consists of: (1) the ***route sheet,*** which documents the process plan for the item to be produced; (2) ***material requisitions*** to draw the necessary raw materials from inventory; (3) ***job cards*** or other means to report direct labor time devoted to the order and to indicate progress of the order through the factory; (4) ***move tickets*** to authorize the material handling personnel to transport parts between work centers in the factory if this kind of authorization is required; and (5) ***parts list,*** if required for assembly jobs. In the operation of a conventional factory, which relies heavily on manual labor, these are paper documents that move with the production order and are used to track its progress through the shop. In a modern factory, automated identification and data capture technologies (Chapter 12) are used to monitor the status of production orders, thus rendering the paper documents (or at least some of them) unnecessary. We explore these factory data collection systems in Section 26.4.4.

The order release module is driven by two inputs, as indicated in Figure 26.9. The first is the authorization to produce that derives from the master schedule. This authorization proceeds through MRP which generates work orders with scheduling information. The second input to the order release module is the engineering and manufacturing data base which provides the product structure and process planning information needed to prepare the various documents that accompany the order through the shop.

### 26.4.2 Order Scheduling

The order scheduling module follows directly from the order release module and assigns the production orders to the various work centers in the plant. In effect, order scheduling executes the dispatching function in PPC. The order scheduling module prepares a ***dispatch list,*** which indicates which production orders should be accomplished at the various work centers. It also provides information about relative priorities of the different jobs, for example, by showing due dates for each job. In current shop floor control practice, the dispatch list guides the shop foreman in making work assignments and allocating resources to different jobs so that the master schedule can best be achieved.

The order scheduling module in shop floor control is intended to solve two problems in production control: (1) machine loading and (2) job sequencing. To schedule a given set of production orders or jobs in the factory, the orders must first be assigned to work centers. Allocating orders to work centers is referred to as ***machine loading.*** The term ***shop loading*** is also used, which refers to the loading of all machines in the plant. Since the total number of production orders usually exceeds the number of work centers, each work center will have a queue of orders waiting to be processed. The remaining question is: In what sequence should these jobs be processed?

Answering this question is the problem in job sequencing. ***Job sequencing*** involves determining the sequence in which the jobs will be processed through a given work center. To determine this sequence, priorities are established among the jobs in the queue, and the jobs are processed in the order of their relative priorities. ***Priority control*** is a term used in production control to denote the function that maintains the appropriate priority levels for the various production orders in the shop. As indicated in Figure 26.9, priority control information is an important input in the order scheduling module. Some of the dispatching rules used to establish priorities for production orders in the plant include:[1]

- ***First-come-first serve.*** Jobs are processed in the order in which they arrive at the machine. One might argue that this rule is the most fair.
- ***Earliest due date.*** Orders with earlier due dates are given higher priorities.
- ***Shortest processing time.*** Orders with shorter processing times are given higher priorities.
- ***Least slack time.*** Slack time is defined as the difference between the time remaining until due date and the process time remaining. Orders with the least slack in their schedule are given higher priorities.
- ***Critical ratio.*** The critical ratio is defined as the ratio of the time remaining until due date divided by the process time remaining. Orders with the lowest critical ratio are given higher priorities.

When an order is completed at one work center, it enters the queue at the next machine in its process routing. That is, the order becomes part of the machine loading for the next work center, and priority control is utilized to determine the sequence of processing among the jobs at that machine.

The relative priorities of the different orders may change over time. Reasons behind these changes include: (1) lower or higher than expected demand for certain products, (2) equipment breakdowns that cause delays in production, (3) cancellation of an order by a customer, and (4) defective raw materials that delay an order. The priority control function reviews the relative priorities of the orders and adjusts the dispatch list accordingly.

### 26.4.3 Order Progress

The order progress module in shop floor control monitors the status of the various orders in the plant, WIP, and other characteristics that indicate the progress and performance of production. The function of the order progress module is to provide information that is useful in managing the factory based on data collected from the factory. The information presented to production management is often summarized in the form of reports, such as the following:

- ***Work order status reports.*** These reports indicate the status of production orders. Typical information in the report includes the current work center where each order is located, processing hours remaining before completion of each order, whether the job is on-time or behind schedule, and priority level.

- ***Progress reports.*** A progress report is used to report performance of the shop during a certain time period (e.g., week or month in the master schedule). It provides information on how many orders were completed during the period, how many orders should have been completed during the period but were not, and so forth.

[1] A more complete list of dispatching rules is presented in [9], which indicates that the shortest processing time rule often compares favorably with other scheduling priority rules.

- ***Exception reports.*** An exception report indicates the deviations from the production schedule (e.g., overdue jobs), and similar exception information.

These reports are useful to production management in making decisions about allocation of resources, authorization of overtime hours, and other capacity issues, and in identifying problem areas in the plant that adversely affect achieving the MPS.

### 26.4.4 Factory Data Collection System

There are a variety of techniques used to collect data from the factory floor. These techniques range from clerical methods which require workers to fill out paper forms that are later compiled, to fully automated methods, that require no human participation. The ***factory data collection system*** (FDC system) consists of the various paper documents, terminals, and automated devices located throughout the plant for collecting data on shop floor operations, plus the means for compiling and processing the data. The factory data collection system serves as an input to the order progress module in shop floor control, as illustrated in Figure 26.9. It is also an input to priority control, which affects order scheduling. Examples of the types of data on factory operations collected by the FDC system include: piece counts completed at a certain work center, direct labor time expended on each order, parts that are scrapped, parts requiring rework, and equipment downtime. The data collection system can also include the time clocks used by employees to punch in and out of work.

The ultimate purpose of the factory data collection system is twofold: (1) to supply status and performance data to the shop floor control system and (2) to provide current information to production foremen, plant management, and production control personnel. To accomplish this purpose, the factory data collection system must input data to the plant computer system. In current CIM technology, this is done using an on-line mode, in which the data are entered directly into the plant computer system and are immediately available to the order progress module. The advantage of on-line data collection is that the data file representing the status of the shop can be kept current at all times. As changes in order progress are reported, these changes are immediately incorporated into the shop status file. Personnel with a need to know can access this status in real-time and be confident that they have the most up-to-date information on which to base any decisions. Even though a modern FDC system is largely computerized, paper documents are still used in factory operations, and our coverage includes both manual (clerical) and automated systems.

*Manual (Clerical) Data Input Techniques.* Manually oriented techniques of factory data collection are those in which the production workers must read from and fill out paper forms indicating order progress data. The forms are subsequently turned in and compiled, using a combination of clerical and computerized methods. The paper forms include:

- ***Job traveler.*** This is a log sheet that travels with the shop packet through the factory. Workers who spend time on the order are required to record their times on the log sheet along with other data such as the date, piece counts, defects, and so forth. The job traveler becomes the chronological record of the processing of the order. The problem with this method is its inherent incompatibility with the principles of real-time data collection. Since the job traveler moves with the order, it is not readily available for compiling current order progress.

- ***Employee time sheets.*** In the typical operation of this method, a daily time sheet is prepared for each worker, and the worker must fill out the form to indicate work that he/she accomplished during the day. Typical data entered on the form include order number, operation number on the route sheet, number of pieces completed during the day, and time spent. Some of these data are taken from information contained in the documents traveling with the order (e.g., typical documents traveling with the order include one or more engineering drawings and route sheets). The time sheet is turned in daily, and order progress information is compiled (usually by clerical staff).
- ***Operation tear strips.*** With this technique, the traveling documents include a set of preprinted tear strips that can be easily separated from the shop packet. The preprinted data on each tear strip includes order number and route sheet details. When a worker finishes an operation or at the end of the shift, one of the tear strips is torn off, piece count and time data are recorded by the worker, and the form is turned in to report order progress.
- ***Prepunched cards.*** This is essentially the same technique as the tear strip method, except that prepunched computer cards are included with the shop packet instead of tear strips. The prepunched cards contain the same type of order data, and the workers must write the same kind of production data onto the card. The difference in the use of prepunched cards is that in compiling the daily order progress, mechanized data processing procedures can be used to record some of the data.

There are problems with all of these manually oriented data collection procedures. They all rely on the cooperation and clerical accuracy of factory workers to record data onto a paper document. There are invariably errors in this kind of procedure. Error rates associated with handwritten entry of data average about 3% (one error out of 30 data entries). Some of the errors can be detected by the clerical staff that compiles the order progress records. Examples of detectable errors include: wrong dates, incorrect order numbers (the clerical staff knows which orders are in the factory, and they can usually figure out when an erroneous order number has been entered by a worker), and incorrect operation numbers on the route sheet. (If the worker enters a certain operation number, but the preceding operation number has not been started, then an error has been made.) Other errors are more difficult to identify. If a worker enters a piece count of 150 pieces that represents the work completed in one shift when the batch size is 250 parts, this is difficult for the clerical staff to verify. If a different worker on the following day completes the batch and also enters a piece count of 150, then it is obvious that one of the workers overstated his/her production, but which one? Maybe both.

Another problem is the delay in submitting the order progress data for compilation. There is a time lapse in each of the methods between when events occur in the shop and when the paper data representing those events are submitted. The job traveler method is the worst offender in this regard. Here the data might not be compiled until the order has been completed, too late to take any corrective action. This method is of little value in a shop floor control system. The remaining manual methods suffer a one-day delay since the shop data are generally submitted at the end of the shift, and a summary compilation is not available until the following day. In addition to the delay in submitting the order data, there is also a delay associated with compiling the data into useful reports. Depending on how the order progress procedures are organized, the compilation may add several days to the reporting cycle.

*Automated and Semi-Automated Data Collection Systems.* Because of the problems associated with the manual/clerical procedures, techniques have been developed that use data collection terminals located in the factory. Data collection terminals require workers to input data relative to order progress using simple keypads or conventional alphanumeric keyboards. Data entered by keyboard are subject to error rates of around 0.3% (one error in 300 data entries), an order of magnitude improvement in data accuracy over handwritten entry. Also, error-checking routines can be incorporated into the entry procedures to detect syntax and certain other types of errors. Because of their widespread use in our society, PCs are becoming more and more common in the factory, both for collection of data and for presenting engineering and production data to shop personnel.

The data entry methods also include more automated input technologies such as optical bar code readers or magnetic card readers. Certain types of data such as order number, product identification, and operation sequence number can be entered with automated techniques using bar-coded or magnetized cards included with the shop documents (refer back to the bar-coded route sheet in Figure 12.7).

Using either PCs or terminals that combine keypad entry with bar code technology, there are various configurations of data collection terminals that can be installed in the factory. These configurations include:

- ***One centralized terminal.*** In this arrangement there is a single terminal located centrally in the plant. This requires all workers to walk from their workstations to the central location when they must enter the data. If the plant is large, this becomes inconvenient. Also, use of the terminal tends to increase at time of shift change, resulting in significant lost time for the workers.
- ***Satellite terminals.*** In this configuration, there are multiple data collection terminals located throughout the plant. The number and locations are designed to strike a balance between minimizing the investment cost in terminals and maximizing the convenience of the plant workers.
- ***Workstation terminals.*** The most convenient arrangement for workers is to have a data collection terminal available at each workstation. This minimizes the time lost in walking to satellite terminals or a single central terminal. Although the investment cost of this configuration is the greatest, it may be justified when the number of data transactions is relatively large and when the terminals are also designed to collect certain data automatically.

The trend in industry is toward more use of automation in factory data collection systems. Although the term "automation" is used, many of the techniques require the participation of human workers; hence, we have included "semi-automated" in the subtitle for this category of data collection system.

## 26.5 INVENTORY CONTROL

Inventory control is concerned with achieving an appropriate compromise between two opposing objectives: (1) minimizing the cost of holding inventory and (2) maximizing service to customers. On the one hand, minimizing inventory cost suggests keeping inventory to a minimum, in the extreme, zero inventory. On the other hand, maximizing customer service implies keeping large stocks on hand from which the customer can choose and immediately take possession.

The types of inventory of greatest interest in PPC are raw materials, purchased components, in-process inventory (WIP), and finished products. The major costs of holding inventory are (1) investment costs, (2) storage costs, and (3) cost of possible obsolescence or spoilage. The three costs are referred to collectively as ***carrying costs*** or ***holding costs.*** Investment cost is usually the largest component: for example, when a company borrows money at a high rate of interest to invest in materials being processed in the factory, but the materials are months away from being delivered to the customer. Companies can minimize holding costs by minimizing the amount of inventory on hand. However, when inventories are minimized, customer service may suffer, inducing customers to take their business elsewhere. This also has a cost, called the ***stock-out cost.*** Most companies want to minimize stock-out cost and provide good customer service. Thus, they are caught on the horns of an inventory control dilemma: balancing carrying costs against the cost of poor customer service.

In our introduction to MRP (Section 26.2), we distinguished between two types of demand, independent and dependent. Different inventory control procedures are used for independent and dependent demand items. For dependent demand items, MRP is the most widely implemented technique. For independent demand items, order point inventory systems are commonly used.

### 26.5.1 Order Point Inventory Systems

Order point systems are concerned with two related problems that must be solved when managing inventories of independent demand items: (1) how many units should be ordered? and (2) when should the order be placed? The first problem is often solved using economic order quantity formulas. The second problem can be solved using reorder point methods.

*Economic Order Quantity Formula.* The problem of deciding on the most appropriate quantity to order or produce arises when the demand rate for the item is fairly constant, and the rate at which the item is produced is significantly greater than its demand rate. This is the typical ***make-to-stock*** situation. The same basic problem occurs with dependent demand items when usage of the item is relatively constant over time due to a steady production rate of the final product with which the item is correlated. In this case, it may make sense to endure some inventory holding costs so that the frequency of setups and their associated costs can be reduced. In these situations where demand rate remains steady, inventory is gradually depleted over time and then quickly replenished to some maximum level determined by the order quantity. The sudden increase and gradual reduction in inventory causes the inventory level over time to have a sawtooth appearance, as depicted in Figure 26.10.

A total cost equation can be derived for the sum of carrying cost and setup cost for the inventory model in Figure 26.10. Because of the sawtooth behavior of inventory level, the average inventory level is one-half the maximum level $Q$ in our figure. The total annual inventory cost is therefore given by:

$$\text{TIC} = \frac{C_h Q}{2} + \frac{C_{su} D_a}{Q} \tag{26.1}$$

where TIC = total annual inventory cost (holding cost plus ordering cost, \$/yr), $Q$ = order quantity (pc/order), $C_h$ = carrying or holding cost (\$/pc/yr), $C_{su}$ = setup cost and/or or-

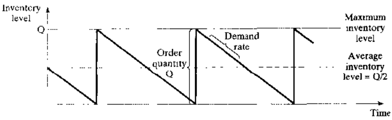



**Figure 26.10** Model of inventory level over time in the typical make-to-stock situation.

dering cost for an order ($/setup or $/order), and $D_a$ = annual demand for the item (pc/yr). In the equation, the ratio $D_a/Q$ is the number of orders or batches produced per year, which therefore gives the number of setups per year.

The holding cost $C_h$ consists of two main components, investment cost and storage cost. Both are related to the time that the inventory spends in the warehouse or factory. As previously indicated, the investment cost results from the money the company must invest in the inventory before it is sold to customers. This inventory investment cost can be calculated as the interest rate paid by the company $i$ (%/100), multiplied by the value (cost) of the inventory.

Storage cost occurs because the inventory takes up space that must be paid for. The amount of the cost is generally related to the size of the part and how much space it occupies. As an approximation, it can be related to the value or cost of the item stored. For our purposes, this is the most convenient method of valuating the storage cost of an item. By this method, the storage cost equals the cost of the inventory multiplied by the storage rate, $s$. The term $s$ is the storage cost as a fraction (%/100) of the value of the item in inventory.

Combining interest rate and storage rate into one factor, we have $h = i + s$. The term $h$ is called the holding cost rate. Like $i$ and $s$, it is a fraction (%/100) that is multiplied by the cost of the part to evaluate the holding cost of investing in and storing WIP. Accordingly, holding cost can be expressed as follows:

$$C_h = hC_p \tag{26.2}$$

where $C_h$ = holding (carrying) cost ($/pc/yr), $C_p$ = unit cost of the item ($/pc), and $h$ = holding cost rate (rate/yr).

Setup cost includes the cost of idle production equipment during the changeover time between batches. The costs of labor performing the setup changes might also be added in. Thus,

$$C_{su} = T_{su}C_{dt} \tag{26.3}$$

where $C_{su}$ = setup cost ($/setup or $/order), $T_{su}$ = setup or changeover time between batches, (hr/setup or hr/order), and $C_{dt}$ = cost rate of machine downtime during the changeover ($/hr). In cases where parts are ordered from an outside vendor, the price quoted by the vendor usually includes a setup cost, either directly or in the form of quantity discounts. $C_{su}$ should also include the internal costs of placing the order to the vendor.

Eq. (26.1) excludes the actual annual cost of part production. If this cost is included then annual total cost is given by the following equation:

$$TC = D_a C_p + \frac{C_h Q}{2} + \frac{C_{su} D_a}{Q} \tag{26.4}$$

where $D_a C_p$ = annual demand (pc/yr) multipled by cost per item (\$/pc).

If the derivative is taken of either Eq. (26.1) or Eq. (26.4), the economic order quantity (EOQ) formula is obtained by setting the derivative equal to zero and solving for $Q$. This batch size minimizes the sum of carrying costs and setup costs:

$$Q = \text{EOQ} = \sqrt{\frac{2 D_a C_{su}}{C_h}} \tag{26.5}$$

where EOQ = economic order quantity (number of parts to be produced per batch, pc/batch or pc/order), and the other terms have been defined previously.

**EXAMPLE 26.3 Economic Order Quantity Formula**

The annual demand for a certain item made-to-stock = 15,000 pc/yr. One unit of the item costs \$20.00, and the holding cost rate = 18%/yr. Setup time to produce a batch = 5 hr. The cost of equipment downtime plus labor = \$150/hr. Determine the economic order quantity and the total inventory cost for this case.

***Solution:*** Setup cost $C_{su} = 5 \times \$150 = \$750$. Holding cost per unit $= 0.18 \times \$20.00 = \$3.60$. Using these values and the annual demand rate in the EOQ formula, we have

$$\text{EOQ} = \sqrt{\frac{2(15000)(750)}{3.60}} = 2500 \text{ units}$$

Total inventory cost is given by the TIC equation:

$$TIC = 0.5(3.60)(2500) + 750(15{,}000/2500) = \$9000$$

Including the actual production costs in the annual total, by Eq (26.4) we have:

$$TC = 15{,}000(20) + 9000 = \$309{,}000$$

---

The economic order quantity formula has been widely used for determining so-called optimum batch sizes in production. More sophisticated forms of Eqs. (40.1) and (40.4) have appeared in the literature; for example, models that take production rate into account to yield alternative EOQ equations [8]. Eq. 26.5 is the most general form and, in the author's opinion, quite adequate for most real-life situations. The difficulty in applying the EOQ formula is in obtaining accurate values of the parameters in the equation, namely (1) setup cost and (2) inventory carrying costs. These cost factors are usually difficult to evaluate; yet they have an important impact on the calculated economic batch size.

There is no disputing the mathematical accuracy of the EOQ equation. Given specific values of annual demand $(D_a)$, setup cost $(C_{su})$, and carrying Cost $(C_h)$, Eq. (26.5) computes the lowest cost batch size to whatever level of precision the user desires. The trouble is that the user may be lulled into the false belief that no matter how much it costs to change the setup, the EOQ formula always calculates the optimum batch size. For many years in U.S. industry, this belief tended to encourage long production runs by manufacturing managers. The thought process went something like this: "If the setup cost increases, we just increase the batch size, because the EOQ formula always tells us the optimum production quantity."

The user of the EOQ equation must not lose sight of the total inventory cost (TIC) equation, Eq. (26.1), from which EOQ is derived. Examining the TIC equation, a cost-conscious production manager would quickly conclude that both costs and batch sizes can be reduced by decreasing the values of holding cost $(C_h)$ and setup cost $(C_{su})$. The production manager may not be able to exert much influence on holding cost because it is determined largely by prevailing interest rates. However, methods can be developed to reduce setup cost by reducing the time required to accomplish the changeover of a production machine. Reducing setup times is an important focus in just-in-time production, and we review the approaches for reducing setup time in Section 26.7.2.

*Reorder Point Systems.* Determining the economic order quantity is not the only problem that must be solved in controlling inventories in make-to-stock situations. The other problem is deciding when to reorder. One of the most widely used methods is the reorder point system. Although we have drawn the inventory level in Figure 26.10 as a very deterministic sawtooth diagram, the reality is that there are usually variations in demand rate during the inventory order cycle, as illustrated in Figure 26.11. Accordingly, the timing of when to reorder cannot be predicted with the precision that would exist if demand rate were a known constant value. In a ***reorder point system***, when the inventory level for a given stock item falls to some point specified as the reorder point, then an order is placed to restock the item. The reorder point is specified at a sufficient quantity level to minimize the probability of a stock-out between when the reorder point is reached and the new order is received. Reorder point triggers can be implemented using computerized inventory control systems that continuously monitor the inventory level as demand occurs and automatically generate an order for a new batch when the level declines below the reorder point.

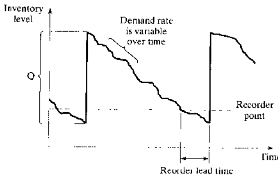



**Figure 26.11** Operation of a reorder point inventory system.

### 26.5.2 Work-in-Process Inventory Costs

Work-in-process (WIP) represents a significant inventory cost for many manufacturing firms. In effect, the company is continually investing in raw materials, processing those materials, and then delivering them to customers when processing has been completed. The problem is that processing takes time, and the company pays a holding cost between start of production and receipt of payment from the customer for goods delivered. In Chapter 2, we showed that WIP and manufacturing lead time (MLT) are closely related. The longer the manufacturing lead time, the greater the WIP. In this section, a method for evaluating the cost of WIP and MLT is presented. The method is based on concepts suggested by Meyer [5].

In Chapter 2, we indicated that production typically consists of a series of separate manufacturing steps or operations. Time is consumed in each operation, and that time has an associated cost. There is also a time between each operation (at least for most manufacturing situations) that we have referred to as the nonoperation time. The nonoperation time includes material handling, inspection, and storage. There is also a cost associated with the nonoperation time. These times and costs for a given part can be graphically illustrated as shown in Figure 26.12. At time $t = 0$, the cost of the part is simply its material cost $C_m$. The cost of each processing step on the part is the production time multiplied by the rate for the machine and labor. Production time $T_p$ is determined from Eq. (2.10) and accounts for both setup time and operation time. Let us symbolize the rate as $C_o$. Nonoperation costs (e.g., inspection and material handling) related to the processing step are symbolized by the term $C_{no}$. Accordingly, the cost associated with each processing step in the manufacturing sequence is the sum

$$C_o T_p + C_{no}$$

The cost for each step is shown in Figure 26.12 as a vertical line, suggesting no time lapse. This is a simplification in the graph, justified by the fact that the time between operations

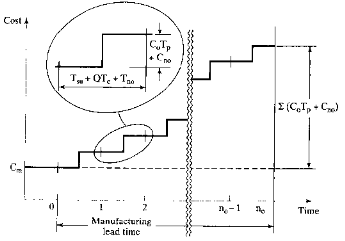



**Figure 26.12** Cost of product or part as a function of time in the factory. As operations are completed, value and cost are added to the item.

spent waiting and in storage is generally much greater than the time for processing, handling, and inspection.

The total cost that has been invested in the part at the end of all operations is the sum of the material cost and the accumulated processing, inspection, and handling costs. Symbolizing this part cost as $C_{pc}$, we can evaluate it using the following equation:

$$C_{pc} = C_m + \sum_{k=1}^{n_o} (C_o T_{pk} + C_{nok})$$

where $k$ is used to indicate the sequence of operations, and there are a total of $n_o$ operations. For convenience, if we assume that $T_p$ and $C_{no}$ are equal for all $n_o$ operations, then

$$C_{pc} = C_m + n_o(C_o T_p + C_{no}) \tag{26.6}$$

The part cost function shown in Figure 26.12 and represented by Eq. (26.6) can be approximated by a straight line as shown in Figure 26.13. The line starts at time $t = 0$ with a value $= C_m$ and slopes upward to the right so that its final value is the same as the final part cost in Figure 26.12. The approximation becomes more accurate as the number of processing steps increases. The equation for this line is

$$C_m + \frac{n_o(C_o T_p + C_{no})}{\text{MLT}} t$$

where MLT = manufacturing lead time for the part, and $t$ = time in Figure 26.13.

As in our derivation of the economic order quantity formula, we apply the holding cost rate $h$ to the accumulated part cost defined by Eq. (26.6), but substituting the straight-line approximation in place of the stepwise cost accumulation in Figure 26.12. In this way, we have an equation for total cost per part that includes the WIP carrying costs:

$$TC_{pc} = C_m + n_o(C_o T_p + C_{no}) + \int_0^{\text{MLT}} \left( C_m + \frac{n_o(C_o T_p + C_{no})}{\text{MLT}} t \right) h\,dt$$

Let us use a simpler form of this cost equation by making the following substitution for the $n_o(C_o T_p + C_{no})$ term in the above:

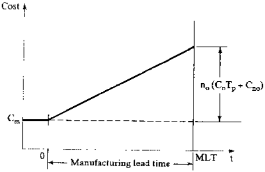



**Figure 26.13** Approximation of product or part cost as a function of time in the factory.

$$C_p = n_o(C_oT_p + C_{no}) \tag{26.7}$$

Then,

$$TC_{pc} = C_m + C_p + \int_0^{\text{MLT}} \left(C_m + \frac{C_p t}{\text{MLT}}\right) h\,dt \tag{26.8}$$

Carrying out the integration, we have the following:

$$TC_{pc} = C_m + C_p + \left(C_m + \frac{C_p}{2}\right) h(\text{MLT}) \tag{26.9}$$

The holding cost is the last term on the right-hand side of the equation.

$$\text{Holding cost/pc} = \left(C_m + \frac{C_p}{2}\right) h(\text{MLT}) \tag{26.10}$$

Figure 26.14 shows the effect of adding the holding cost to the material, operation, and nonoperation costs of a part or product during production in the plant.

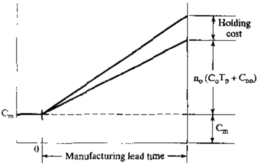



**Figure 26.14** Approximation of product cost showing additional cost of holding WIP during the manufacturing lead time.

**EXAMPLE 26.4 Inventory Holding Cost for WIP During Manufacturing**

The cost of the raw material for a certain part is \$100. The part is processed through 20 processing steps in the plant, and the manufacturing lead time is 15 wk. The production time per processing step is 0.8 hr, and the machine and labor rate is \$25.00/hr. Inspection, material handling, and other related costs average to \$10 per processing step by the time the part is finished. The interest rate used by the company $i = 20\%$, and the storage rate $s = 13\%$. Determine the cost per part and the holding cost.

***Solution:*** The material cost, operation costs, and nonoperation costs are by Eq. (26.6),

$$C_{pc} = \$100 + 20(\$25.00/\text{hr} \times .8\,\text{hr} + \$10) = \$700/\text{pc}$$

To compute the holding cost, first calculate $C_p$:

$$C_p = 20(\$25.00/\text{hr} \times .8\,\text{hr} + \$10) = \$600/\text{pc}$$

Next, determine the holding cost rate $h = 20\%+13\%=33\%$. Expressing this as a weekly rate $h = (33\%)/(52\text{ wk}) = 0.6346\ \%/\text{wk} = 0.006346/\text{wk}$. According to Eq. (26.10),

$$\text{Holding cost/pc} = (100 + 600/2)(.006346)(15\,\text{wk}) = \$38.08/\text{pc}$$

$$TC_{pc} = 700.00 + 38.08 = \$738.08/\text{pc}$$

The \$38.08 in our example is more than 5% of the cost of the part; yet the holding cost is usually not included directly in the company's evaluation of part cost. Rather, it is considered as overhead. Suppose that this is a typical part for the company, and 5000 similar parts are processed through the plant each year; then the annual inventory cost for WIP of 5000 parts = 5000 × \$38.08 = \$190,400. If the manufacturing lead time could be reduced to half its current value, this would translate into a 50% savings in WIP holding cost.

## 26.6 MANUFACTURING RESOURCE PLANNING (MRP II)

The initial versions of MRP in the early 1970s were limited to the planning of purchase orders and factory work orders and did not take into account such issues as capacity planning or feedback data from the factory for shop floor control. MRP was strictly a materials and parts planning tool whose calculations were based on the MPS. It became evident that MRP should be tied to other software packages to create a more integrated PPC system. The PPC software packages that evolved from MRP became known as manufacturing resource planning, or MRP II, to distinguish it from the original abbreviation and perhaps to suggest that it was second generation; that is, more than "just" MRP.

***Manufacturing resource planning*** can be defined as a computer-based system for planning, scheduling, and controlling the materials, resources, and supporting activities needed to meet the MPS. MRP II is a closed-loop system that integrates and coordinates all of the major functions of the business to produce the right products at the right times. The term "closed-loop system" means that MRP II incorporates feedback of data on various aspects of operating performance so that corrective action can be taken in a timely manner; that is, MRP II includes a shop floor control system.

Application modules typically provided in a high-end MRP II system include the following:

- ***Management planning.*** Functions included in this module are business strategy, aggregate production planning, master production scheduling, rough-cut capacity planning, and budget planning.
- ***Customer service.*** Typical components in this module are sales forecasting, order entry, sales analysis, and finished goods inventory.

- ***Operations planning.*** This is the MRP module, enhanced with capacity requirements planning. The output consists of purchase order and work order releases.
- ***Operations execution.*** This includes purchasing, production scheduling and control, WIP inventory control, shop floor control, and labor hour tracking.
- ***Financial functions.*** These include cost accounting, accounts receivable, accounts payable, general ledger, and payroll.

In effect, MRP II consists of virtually all of the functions in the PPC system diagramed in Figure 26.1 plus additional business functions that are related to production. Software vendors continue to add new features to their MRP II packages to gain competitive advantages in the market. Some of the applications that have been added to recent generations of MRP II are in the following areas: quality control, maintenance management, customer field service, warranty tracking, marketing support, supply chain management, distribution management, and product data management. ***Product data management*** (PDM) is closely related to CAD/CAM and includes product data filing and retrieval, engineering change control, engineering data capture, and other features related to product design. In fact, the PDM area has emerged as a separate software market [11], although available commercial packages are designed to integrate with MRP II.

New names have been coined in the attempt to differentiate the latest generation of MRP II software from its predecessors. Some of the newer terms include:

- ***Enterprise resource planning*** (ERP). Software packages described by the term ERP have the traditional MRP II modules. Use of the word "enterprise" in the title denotes that these packages extend beyond manufacturing to include applications such as maintenance management, quality control, and marketing support [11].
- ***Customer-oriented manufacturing management systems*** (COMMS). This term competes with ERP but the definition is similar. COMMS software packages are organized into three major phases: (1) planning, (2) execution, and (3) control. Modules in the execution phase are known as manufacturing execution systems, which have become recognized on their own.
- ***Manufacturing execution systems*** (MES). As mentioned above, this name refers to the execution phase of COMMS. MES typically includes production scheduling, quality control, and material handling modules.
- ***Customer-oriented management systems*** (COMS). This term was coined by one of the originators of COMMS who started up his own commercial venture to market software and services for a more general clientele than only manufacturing. Hence, the word "manufacturing" was dropped from the title. What remained was ***customer-oriented management systems.*** Application modules in COMS are again similar to those in ERP and COMMS.

Commercially available MRP II packages number in the hundreds and range in price from several hundred dollars to several hundred thousand dollars, depending on features and support delivered by the software vendor. The cost of the software itself is only a portion of the total cost that may ultimately be paid by the user company. Other costs include [8]: (1) training of user company personnel in the operation of the specific MRP II package, (2) interfacing the MRP II package with other software and data bases in the user company, and (3) reprogramming the MRP II package to customize it to other user company's systems.

## 26.7 JUST-IN-TIME PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

***Just-in-time*** (JIT) production systems were developed in Japan to minimize inventories, especially WIP. WIP and other types of inventory are seen by the Japanese as waste that should be minimized or eliminated. The ideal ***just-in-time production system*** produces and delivers exactly the required number of each component to the downstream operation in the manufacturing sequence just at the time when that component is needed. Each component is delivered "just in time." This delivery discipline minimizes WIP and manufacturing lead time as well as the space and money invested in WIP. The JIT discipline can be applied not only to production operations but to supplier delivery operations as well.

Whereas the development of JIT production systems is largely credited to the Japanese, the philosophy of JIT has been adopted by many U.S. manufacturing firms. Other terms have sometimes been applied to the American practice of JIT to suggest differences with the Japanese practice. For example, ***continuous flow manufacturing*** is a widely used term in the United States that denotes a JIT style of production operations. Prior to JIT, the traditional U.S. practice might be described as a "just-in-case" philosophy, that is, to hold large in-process inventories to cope with production problems such as late deliveries of components, machine breakdowns, defective components, and wildcat strikes.

The JIT production discipline has shown itself to be very effective in high-volume repetitive operations, such as those found in the automotive industry [6]. The potential for WIP accumulation in this type of manufacturing is significant due to the large quantities of products made and the large numbers of components per product.

The principal objective of JIT is to reduce inventories. However, inventory reduction cannot simply be mandated to happen. Certain requisites must be in place for a JIT production system to operate successfully. They are: (1) a pull system of production control, (2) small batch sizes and reduced setup times, and (3) stable and reliable production operations. We discuss these requisites in the following sections.

### 26.7.1 Pull System of Production Control

JIT is based on a ***pull system*** of production control, in which the order to make and deliver parts at each workstation in the production sequence comes from the downstream station that uses those parts. When the supply of parts at a given workstation is about to be exhausted, that station orders the upstream station to replenish the supply. Only on receipt of this order is the upstream station authorized to produce the needed parts. When this procedure is repeated at each workstation throughout the plant, it has the effect of pulling parts through the production system. By comparison, in a ***push system*** of production control, parts at each workstation are produced irrespective of the immediate need for the parts at its respective downstream station. In effect, this production discipline pushes parts through the plant. The risk in a push system is that more work gets scheduled in the factory than it can handle, resulting in large queues of parts in front of machines. The machines are unable to keep up with arriving work, and the factory becomes overloaded. A poorly planned MRP-based production planning system that does not include capacity planning runs this risk.

One way to implement a pull system is to use kanbans. The word ***kanban*** (pronounced kahn-bahn) means "card" in Japanese. The ***Kanban system*** of production control, developed and made famous by Toyota, the Japanese automobile company, is based on the use of cards that authorize (1) parts production and (2) parts delivery in the plant. Thus, there are two types of kanbans: (1) production kanbans and (2) transport kanbans. A ***production kanban*** (P-kanban) authorizes the upstream station to produce a batch of parts. As they are produced, the parts are placed in containers, so the batch quantity is just sufficient to fill the container. Production of more than this quantity of parts is not allowed in the kanban system. A ***transport kanban*** (T-kanban) authorizes transport of the container of parts to the downstream station.

Let us describe the operation of a kanban system with reference to Figure 26.15. The workstations shown in the figure (station $i$ and station $i + 1$) are only two in a sequence of multiple stations upstream and downstream. The flow of work is from station $i$ to station $i + 1$. The sequence of steps in the kanban pull system is as follows (our numbering sequence is coordinated with Figure 26.15): (1) Station $i + 1$ removes the next P-kanban from the dispatching rack This P-kanban authorizes the station to process a container of part b. A material handling worker removes the T-kanban from the incoming container and takes it back to station $i$. (2) At station $i$, the worker finds a container of part b, removes the P-kanban and replaces it with the T-kanban. He then puts the P-kanban in the dispatching rack at station $i$. (3) The P-kanban for part b at station $i$ authorizes station $i$ to process a new container of part b; however, it must wait its turn in the rack for the other P-kanbans ahead of it. Scheduling of work at each station is determined by the order in which the production kanbans are placed in the dispatching rack. The container of part b that was at station $i$ is moved to station $i + 1$, as authorized by the T-kanban. Meanwhile, processing of the b parts at station $i + 1$ has been completed, and that station removes the next P-kanban from the dispatching rack and begins processing that container of parts (part d as indicated in our figure).

As mentioned, stations $i$ and $i + 1$ are only two sequential stations in a longer sequence. All other pairs of sequential stations operate according to the same kanban pull system. This production control system avoids unnecessary paperwork. The kanban cards are used over and over again instead of generating new production and transport orders every cycle. Although considerable labor is involved in material handling (moving cards and containers between stations), this is claimed to promote teamwork and cooperation among workers.

### 26.7.2 Small Batch Sizes and Reduced Setup Times

To minimize WIP inventories in manufacturing, batch size and setup time must be minimized. The relationship between batch size and setup time is given by the EOQ formula, Eq. (26.5). In our mathematical model for total inventory cost, Eq. (26.1), from which the EOQ formula is derived, average inventory level is equal to one half the batch size. To reduce average inventory level, batch size must be reduced. And to reduce batch size, setup cost must be reduced. This means reducing setup times. Reduced setup times permit smaller batches and lower WIP levels. Methods for reducing setup time were pioneered by the Japanese during the 1960s and 1970s. U.S. manufacturing firms have also adopted setup reduction methods. Results of the efforts are sometimes dramatic. Examples of setup reductions in Japanese and U.S. industries are reported by Suzaki [10], and we present some of these in Table 26.1.

Setup time reductions result from a number of basic approaches that are best described as industrial engineering methods improvements. These approaches include (sources: [2], [3], [7], [12]):

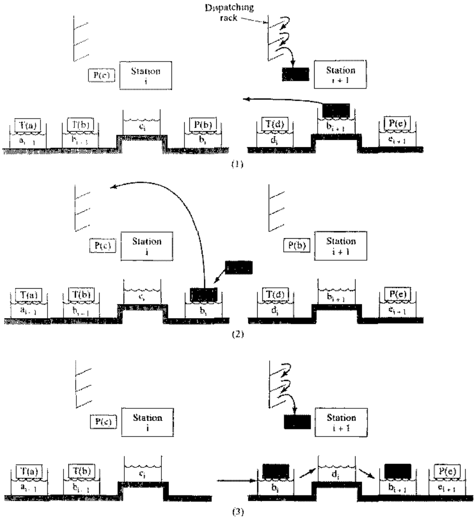



**Figure 26.15** Operation of a kanban system between workstations (see description of steps in the text).

- Separate the work elements that comprise the setup procedure into two categories: (1) ***internal elements,*** those that must be done during the machine stoppage, and (2) ***external elements,*** those that can be done while the previous job is still running.
- Design the setup tooling (e.g., die, fixture, mold) and plan the setup method to permit as much of the changeover procedure as possible to consist of external work elements.
- Use time and motion study to reduce the internal work elements to the fewest possible.

**TABLE 26.1** Examples of Setup Reductions in Japanese and U.S. Industries

| *Industry* | *Equipment Type* | *Setup Time Before Reduction* | *Setup Time After Reduction (min)* | *Reduction (%)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Japanese automotive | 1000-ton press | 4 hr | 3 | 98.7 |
| Japanese diesel | Transfer line | 9.3 hr | 9 | 98.4 |
| U.S. power tool | Punch press | 2 hr | 3 | 97.5 |
| Japanese automotive | Machine tool | 6 hr | 10 | 97.2 |
| U.S. electric appliance | 45-ton press | 50 min | 2 | 96.0 |

*Source:* [10].

- Eliminate or minimize adjustments in the setup. Adjustments are time consuming.
- Use quick-acting clamping devices instead of bolts and nuts.
- Develop permanent solutions for problems that cause delays in the setup.
- Schedule batches of similar part styles in sequence to minimize the magnitude of changes required in the setup.
- Use group technology and cellular manufacturing if possible so that similar part styles are produced on the same equipment.
- Design modular fixtures consisting of a base unit plus insert tooling that can be quickly changed for each new part style.

**EXAMPLE 26.5 Effect of Setup Reduction on EOQ and Inventory Cost**

Let us determine the effect on economic batch size and total inventory costs of reducing setup time in Example 26.3. Given in that example are the following: annual demand = 15,000 pc/yr, unit cost = \$20, holding cost rate = 18%/yr, setup time = 5 hr, and cost of downtime during setup = \$150/hr. Suppose it were possible to set up time from 5 hr to 5 min. (This kind of reduction is not so far-fetched, given the data in Table 26.1.) Determine the economic order quantity and total inventory cost for this new situation.

***Solution:*** Setup cost $C_{su} = (5/60) \times \$150 = \$12.50$. Holding cost per unit remains at \$3.60. From the EOQ formula, we have

$$\text{EOQ} = \sqrt{\frac{2(15000)(12.50)}{3.60}} = 323 \text{ units}$$

This is a significant reduction from the 2500-pc batch size in the previous example. Total inventory costs are computed as follows:

$$\text{TIC} = 0.5(3.60)(323) + 12.50(15{,}000/323) = \$1162.$$

This is an 87% reduction from the previous value of \$9000.

### 26.7.3 Stable and Reliable Production Operations

Other requirements for a successful JIT production systems include: (1) stable production schedules, (2) on-time delivery, (3) defect-free components and materials, (4) reliable production equipment, (5) a workforce that is capable, committed, and cooperative, and (6) a dependable supplier base.

*Stable Schedule.* Production must flow as smoothly as possible, which means minimum perturbations from the fixed schedule. Perturbations in downstream operations tend to be magnified in upstream operations. A 10% change in final assembly may translate into a 50% change in parts production operations due to overtime, unscheduled setups, variations from normal work procedures, and other exceptions. By maintaining a constant MPS over time, smooth work flow is achieved, and disturbances in production are minimized.

*On-Time Delivery, Zero Defects, and Reliable Equipment.* Just-in-time production requires near perfection in on-time delivery, parts quality, and equipment reliability. Because of the small lot sizes used in JIT, parts must be delivered before stock-outs occur at downstream stations. Otherwise, these stations are starved for work, and production must be stopped.

JIT requires high quality in every aspect of production. If defective parts are produced, they cannot be used in subsequent processing or assembly stations, thus interrupting work at those stations and possibly stopping production. Such a severe penalty forces a discipline of very high quality levels (zero defects) in parts fabrication. Workers are trained to inspect their own output to make sure it is right before it goes to the next operation. In effect, this means controlling quality during production rather than relying on inspectors to discover the defects later. The Japanese use the word ***Jidoka*** in their quality control procedures. Roughly translated, it means "stop everything when something goes wrong" [2].

JIT also requires highly reliable production equipment. Low WIP leaves little room for equipment stoppages. Machine breakdowns cannot be tolerated in a JIT production system. The equipment must be "designed for reliability," and the plant that operates the equipment must have a well-planned preventive maintenance program.

*Workforce and Supplier Base.* Workers in a JIT production system must be cooperative, committed, and cross-trained. Small batch sizes means that workers must be willing and able to perform a variety of tasks and to produce a variety of part styles at their workstations. As indicated above, they must be inspectors as well as production workers to ensure the quality of their own output. They must be able to deal with minor technical problems that may be experienced with the production equipment so that major breakdowns are avoided.

The suppliers of raw materials and components to the company must be held to the same standards of on-time delivery, zero defects, and other JIT requirements as the company itself. New policies in dealing with vendors are required for JIT. These polices include: (1) reducing the total number of suppliers, thus allowing the remaining suppliers to do more business; (2) entering into long-term agreements and partnerships with suppliers, so that suppliers do not have to worry about competitively bidding for every order; (3) establishing quality and delivery standards and selecting suppliers on the basis of their capacity to meet these standards; (4) placing employees into supplier plants to help those suppliers develop their own JIT systems; and (5) selecting parts suppliers that are located near the company's final assembly plant to reduce transportation and delivery problems.

## REFERENCES

[1] BAUER, A., R. BOWDEN, J. BROWNE, J. DUGGAN, and G. LYONS, *Shop Floor Control Systems*, Chapman & Hall, London, United Kingdom, 1994.

[2] CHASE, R. B., and N. J. AQUILANO, *Production and Operations Management: A Life Cycle Approach*, Fifth Edition, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, Illinois, 1989.

[3] CLAUNCH, J. W., *Setup Time Reduction*, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Chicago, Illinois, 1996.

[4] KASARDA, J. B., "Shop Floor Control Must be Able to Provide Real-Time Status and Control." *Industrial Engineering*, November 1980, pp 74–78, 96.

[5] MEYER, R. J., "A Cookbook Aproach to Robotics and Automation Justification," *Technical Paper MS82-192*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1982.

[6] MONDEN, Y., *Toyota Production System*, Industrial Engineering and Management Press, Norcross, Georgia, 1983.

[7] SEKINE, K., and K. ARAI, *Kaizen for Quick Changeover*, Productivity Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987.

[8] SIPPER, D., and R. L. BUFFIN, *Production: Planning, Control, and Integration*, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., New York, 1997.

[9] SULE, D. R., *Industrial Scheduling*, PWS Publishing Company, Boston, Massachusetts, 1997.

[10] SUZAKI, K., *The New Manufacturing Challenge: Techniques for Continuous Improvement*, Free Press, New York, 1987.

[11] TURBIDE, D. A., "MRP II, Still Number One," *IIE Solutions*, July 1995, pp 28–31.

[12] VEILLEUX, R. F., and PETRO, L. W., *Tool and Manufacturing Engineers Handbook* (Fourth edition), Volume V, *Manufacturing Management*, Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Dearborn, Michigan, 1988.

[13] VOLLMAN, T. E., BERRY, W. L., and WHYBARK, D. C., *Manufacturing Planning and Control Systems*, Second Edition, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, Illinois, 1988.

## PROBLEMS

### Inventory Control

**26.1** The annual demand for a certain part is 2000 units. The part is produced in a batch model manufacturing system. Annual holding cost per piece is \$3.00. It takes 2 hr to set up the machine to produce this part, and cost of system downtime is \$150/hr. Determine (a) the most economical batch quantity for this part and (b) the associated total inventory cost.

**26.2** Annual demand for a made-to-stock product is 60,000 units. Each unit costs \$8.00, and the annual holding cost rate = 24%. Setup time to change over equipment for this product = 6 hr, and the downtime cost of the equipment = \$120/hr. Determine: (a) economic order quantity and (b) total inventory costs.

**26.3** Demand for a certain product is 25,000 units/yr. Unit cost = \$10.00. Holding cost rate = 30%/yr. Changeover (setup) time between products = 10.0 hr, and downtime cost during changeover = \$150/hr. Determine: (a) economic order quantity, (b) total inventory costs, and (c) total inventory cost per year as a proportion of total production costs.

**26.4** A part is produced in batches of size = 3000 pieces. Annual demand = 60,000 pieces, and piece cost = \$5.00. Setup time to run a batch = 3.0 hr, cost of downtime on the affected equipment is figured at \$200/hr, and annual holding cost rate = 30%. What would the annual savings be if the part were produced in the economic order quantity?

**26.5** In the previous problem, (a) how much would setup time have to be reduced to make the batch size of 3000 pieces equal to the economic order quantity? (b) How much would total inventory costs be reduced if the EOQ = 3000 units compared with the EOQ calculated in the previous problem? (c) How much would total inventory costs be reduced if the setup time were equal to the value obtained in part (a) compared with the 3.0 hr used in the previous problem?

**26.6** A certain machine tool is used to produce several components for one assembled product. To keep in-process inventories low, a batch size of 100 units is produced for each component. Demand for the product = 3000 units/yr. Production downtime costs an estimated \$150/hr. All parts produced on the machine tool are approximately equal in value: \$9.00 unit. Holding cost rate = 30%/yr. How many minutes must the changeover between batches be so that 100 units is the economic order quantity?

**26.7** Annual demand for a certain part = 10,000 units. At present, the setup time on the machine tool that makes this part = 5.0 hr. Cost of downtime on this machine = \$200/hr. Annual holding cost per part = \$1.50. Determine: (a) EOQ and (b) total inventory costs for these data. Also, determine (c) EOQ and (d) total inventory costs if the changeover time could be reduced to 6 min.

**26.8** A variety of assembled products are made in batches on a batch model assembly line. Every time a different product is produced, the line must be changed over, which causes lost production time. The assembled product of interest here has an annual demand of 12,000 units. The changeover time to set up the line for this product is 6.0 hr. The company figures that the hourly rate for lost production time on the line due to changeovers is \$200/hr. Annual holding cost for the product is \$7.00/product. The product is currently made in batches of 1000 units for shipment each month to the wholesale distributor. (a) Determine the total annual inventory cost for this product in batch sizes of 1000 units. (b) Determine the economic batch quantity for this product. (c) How often would shipments be made using this EOQ? (d) How much would the company save in annual inventory costs if it produced batches equal to the EOQ rather than 1000 units?

**26.9** A two-bin approach is used to control inventory for a certain low-cost hardware item. Each bin holds 500 units of the item. When one bin becomes empty, an order for 500 units is released to replace the stock in that bin. The order lead time is slightly less than the time it takes to deplete the stock in one bin. Accordingly, the chance of a stock-out is low, and the average inventory level of the item is about 250 units, perhaps slightly more. Annual usage of the item = 6000 units. Ordering cost = \$40. (a) What is the imputed holding cost per unit for this item, based on the data given? (b) If the actual annual holding cost per unit is \$0.05, what lot size should be ordered? (c) How much does the current two-bin approach cost the company per year compared with using the economic order quantity?

**26.10** A workpart costing \$80 is processed through the factory. The manufacturing lead time for the part is 12 wk, and the total time spent in processing during the lead time is 30 hr for all operations at a rate of \$35/hr. Nonoperation costs total \$70 during the lead time. The holding cost rate used by the company for WIP is 26%. The plant operates 40 hr/wk, 52 wk/yr. If this part is typical of the 200 parts/wk processed through the factory, determine the following: (a) the holding cost per part during the manufacturing lead time and (b) the total annual holding costs to the factory. (c) If the manufacturing lead time were to be reduced from 12 wk to 8 wk, how much would the total holding costs be reduced on an annual basis?

**26.11** A batch of large castings is processed through a machine shop. The batch size is 20. Each raw casting costs \$175. There are 22 machining operations performed on each casting at an average operation time of 0.5 hr/operation. Setup time per operation averages 5 hr. The cost rate for the machine and labor is \$40/hr. Nonoperation costs (inspection, handling between operations, etc.) average \$5/operation per part. The corresponding nonoperation time between each operation averages two working days. The shop works five 8 hr day/wk, 52 wk/yr. Interest rate used by the company is 25% for investing in WIP inventory, and storage cost rate is 14% of the value of the item held. Both of these rates are annual rates. Determine the following: (a) manufacturing lead time for the batch of castings; (b) total cost to the shop of each casting when it is completed, including the holding cost; and (c) total holding cost of the batch for the time it spends in the machine shop as WIP.

## Material Requirements Planning

**26.12** Using the master schedule of Figure 26.2(b) and the product structures in Figures 26.4 and 26.5, determine the time-phased requirements for component C6 and raw material M6. The raw material used in component C6 is M6. Lead times are as follows: for P1, assembly lead time = 1 wk; for P2, assembly lead time = 1 wk; for S2, assembly lead time = 1 wk; for S3, assembly lead time = 1 wk; for C6, manufacturing lead time = 2 wk; and for M6, ordering lead time = 2 wk. Assume that the current inventory status for all of the above items is zero units on hand and zero units on order. The format of the solution should be similar to that presented in Figure 26.7.

**26.13** Solve Problem 26.12 except that the current inventory on hand and on order for S3, C6, and M6 is as follows: for S3, inventory on hand = 2 units, and quantity on order = 0; for C6, inventory on hand = 5 units, and quantity on order = 10 for delivery in week 2; and for M6, inventory on hand = 10 units, and quantity on order = 50 for delivery in week 2.

**26.14** Material requirements are to be planned for component C2 given the master schedule for P1 and P2 in Figure 26.2(b) and the product structures in Figures 26.4 and 26.5. Assembly lead time for products and subassemblies (P and S levels) = 1 wk, manufacturing lead times for components (C level) = 2 wk, and ordering lead time for raw materials (M level) = 3 wk. Determine the time-phased requirements for M2, C2, and S1. Assume there are no common use items other than those specified by the product structures for P1 and P2 (Figures 26.4 and 26.5), and that all on-hand inventories and scheduled receipts are zero. Use a format similar to Figure 26.7. Ignore demand beyond period 10.

**26.15** Requirements are to be planned for component C5 in product P1. Required deliveries for P1 are given in Figure 26.2(b), and the product structure for P1 is shown in Figure 26.4. Assembly lead time for products and subassemblies (P and S levels) = 1 wk, manufacturing lead times for components (C level) = 2 wk, and ordering lead time for raw materials (M level) = 3 wk. Determine the time-phased requirements for M5, C5, and S2 to meet the master schedule. Assume no common use items. On-hand inventories are: 100 units for M5 and 50 units for C5, 0 units for S2. Scheduled receipts are zero for these items. Use a format similar to Figure 26.7. Ignore demand for P1 beyond period 10.

**26.16** Solve previous Problem 26.15 except that the following additional information is known: scheduled receipts of M5 are 50 units in week 3 and 50 units in week 4.

## Order Scheduling

**26.17** It is currently day 10 in the production calendar of the XYZ Machine Shop. Three orders (A, B, and C) are to be processed at a particular machine tool. The orders arrived in the sequence A-B-C. The following table indicates the process time remaining and production calendar due date for each order:

| *Order* | *Remaining Process Time (day)* | *Due Date* |
|---|---|---|
| A | 4 | Day 20 |
| B | 16 | Day 30 |
| C | 6 | Day 18 |

Determine the sequence of the orders that would be scheduled using the following priority control rules: (a) first-come-first-served, (b) earliest due date, (c) shortest processing time, (d) least slack time, and (e) critical ratio.

**26.18** In Problem 26.17, for each solution, (a)-(e), determine which jobs are delivered on time and which jobs are tardy.

### Setup Time Reduction

**26.19** The following data apply to sheet metal parts produced at a stamping plant that serves a final assembly plant in the automotive industry. The data are average values representative of the parts made at the plant. Annual demand = 150,000 pieces (for each part produced); average cost per piece = \$20, holding cost = 25%, changeover (setup) time for the presses = 5 hr, and cost of downtime on any given press = \$200/hr. (a) Compute the economic batch size and the total annual inventory cost for the data. (b) If the changeover time could be reduced to 30 min, compute the economic batch size and the total annual inventory cost.

**26.20** Given the data in the previous problem, it is desired to reduce the batch size from the value determined in that problem to 600 pieces, consistent with the number of units produced daily by the final assembly plant served by the stamping plant. Determine the changeover time that would allow the economic batch size in stamping to be 600 pieces. What is the corresponding total annual inventory cost for this batch size?

**26.21** Annual demand for a part is 500 units. The part is currently produced in batches. It takes 2.0 hr to set up the production machine for this part, and the downtime during setup costs \$125/hr. Annual holding cost for the part is \$5.00. The company would like to produce the part using a new flexible manufacturing system it recently installed. This would allow the company to produce this part as well as others on the same equipment. However, changeover time must be reduced to a minimum. (a) Determine the required changeover (setup) time to produce this part economically in batch sizes of 1 unit. (b) If the part were to be produced in batch sizes of 10 units instead of 1 unit, what is the implicit changeover time for this batch quantity? (c) How much are the annual total inventory costs to the company when the batch size = 1 unit?

chapter 27

# Lean Production and Agile Manufacturing

**CHAPTER CONTENTS**



Two new systems of doing business in manufacturing have evolved in recent decades: lean production and agile manufacturing. One might argue that these new systems represent paradigm shifts from mass production. Lean production can be traced to the 1960s in Japan, when Toyota Motors started innovating changes in mass production to deal with its domestic automotive market. The term "lean production" was coined around 1989 with the popularity of the book, ***The Machine that Changed the World*** [18], written by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Agile manufacturing originated from a research study at Lehigh University in the early 1990s. This study attempted to peer into the future to answer the question: What things would successful manufacturing companies be doing in 15 years? What they discovered was that successful companies were ***already*** doing these things.

We identify lean and agile as "new systems of doing business." They have their origins in manufacturing. However, as we shall see in the present chapter, lean and agile principles can be applied beyond the factory.[1] They are ways of *doing* business that can be applied at the enterprise level.

## 27.1 LEAN PRODUCTION

Lean production is a term that embraces many of the topics that we have covered in earlier chapters, topics such as flexible manufacturing, minimizing work-in-process, "pull" systems of production control, and setup time reduction. The term itself was coined by MIT researchers to describe the collection of efficiency improvements that Toyota Motors undertook to survive in the Japanese automobile business after World War II (Historical Note 27.1). Because of its origins at Toyota Motors, the same collection of improvements has also been called the "Toyota production system" [12], [13].

### Historical Note 27.1 Lean production

The person given credit for initiating many of the methods of lean production was a Toyota chief engineer named Taiichi Ohno (1912–1990). In the post-World War II period, the Japanese automotive industry had to basically start over. Ohno visited a U.S. auto plant to learn American production methods. At that time, the car market in Japan was much smaller than in the U.S., so a Japanese automotive plant could not afford the large production runs and huge work-in-process inventories that we had here. (As it turns out, our plants cannot afford them any longer either.) Ohno knew that Toyota's plants needed to be more flexible. Also, space was (and is) very precious in Japan. These conditions, as well as Ohno's apparent aversion to waste in any form (***muda***, as the Japanese call it), motivated him to develop some of the basic ideas and procedures that have come to be known as lean production. Over the next several decades, he and his colleagues perfected these ideas and procedures, which included just-in-time production and the ***kanban*** system of production control, smoothed production, setup time reduction, quality circles, and dedicated adherence to statistical quality control.

Ohno himself did not coin the term "lean production" to describe the collection of actions taken at Toyota to improve production efficiency. In fact, he titled his book, ***The Toyota Production System: Beyond Large Scale Production*** [13]. The term "lean production" was coined by researchers at MIT to describe the activities and programs that seemed to explain Toyota's success: the efficiency with which they produced cars and the quality of the cars they produced.

The MIT research project came to be known as the International Motor Vehicle Program (IMVP). Included in the research was a survey of 87 automobile assembly plants throughout the world. The research was popularized by the book ***The Machine that Changed the World*** [18]. In the subtitle of the book was the term "lean production."

Let us provide two definitions of lean production. Our first definition is a paraphrase of two of the authors of ***The Machine that Changed the World***. Womack and Jones define ***lean*** as doing "more and more with less and less-less human effort, less equipment, less time, and less space-while coming closer and closer to providing customers with exactly what they want"[19]. We are taking some liberties in using this quote. It comes from their book titled ***Lean Thinking*** (p. 15), and they use these words to define "lean thinking,"

[1] One of the originators of the term "agile manufacturing" was Roger Nagel, a colleague of mine at Lehigh University. Roger once confided in me that he regretted using the word manufacturing because it seemed to restrict the scope of agility. In his view, agility can be applied to the entire organization, even beyond one organization. It is an enterprise level way of doing business, not limited to manufacturing.

which is lean production but expanded in scope to include distribution and other functions beyond the factory.

The second definition is developed to introduce our discussion of the principles of lean production. ***Lean production*** can be defined as an adaptation of mass production in which workers and work cells are made more flexible and efficient by adopting methods that reduce waste in all forms. According to another author of ***The Machine that Changed the World***, lean production is based on four principles [14]:

1. minimize waste
2. perfect first-time quality
3. flexible production lines
4. continuous improvement

Let us explain these principles and at the same time compare lean production with its predecessor, mass production. The comparison is summarized in Table 27.1.

*Minimize Waste.* All four principles of lean production are derived from the first principle: minimize waste. Taiichi Ohno's list of waste forms can be listed as follows [13]: (1) production of defective parts, (2) production of more than the number of items needed, (3) unnecessary inventories, (4) unnecessary processing steps, (5) unnecessary movement of people, (6) unnecessary transport of materials, and (7) workers waiting. The various procedures used in the Toyota plants were developed to minimize these forms of waste. A number of these procedures have been discussed in previous chapters. For example, lean principle 2 (perfect first-time quality), discussed next, is directed at eliminating production of defective parts (waste form 1). The just-in-time production system (Section 26.7) was intended to produce no more than the minimum number of parts needed at the next workstation (waste form 2). This reduced unnecessary inventories (waste form 3). And so on, as we will see now.

*Perfect First-Time Quality.* In the area of quality, the comparison between mass production and lean production provides a sharp contrast. In mass production, quality control is defined in terms of an acceptable quality level or AQL (Section 22.2.1). This means that a certain level of fraction defects is sufficient, even satisfactory. In lean production, by contrast, perfect quality is required. The just-in-time delivery discipline (Section 26.7) used in lean production necessitates a zero defects level in parts quality, because if the part delivered to the downstream workstation is defective, production stops. There is minimum in-

**TABLE 27.1** Comparison of Mass Production and Lean Production

| *Mass Production* | *Lean Production* |
|---|---|
| Inventory buffers | Minimum waste |
| Just-in-case deliveries | Minimum inventory |
| | Just-in-time deliveries |
| Acceptable quality level (AQL) | Perfect first-time quality |
| Taylorism | Worker teams |
| Maximum efficiency | Worker involvement |
| | Flexible production systems |
| If it ain't broke, don't fix it | Continuous improvement |

ventory in a lean system to act as a buffer. In mass production, inventory buffers are used just in case these quality problems occur. The defective work units are simply taken off the line and replaced with acceptable units. However, the problem is that such a policy tends to perpetuate the cause of the poor quality. Therefore, defective parts continue to be produced. In lean production, a single defect draws attention to the quality problem, forcing corrective action and a permanent solution. Workers inspect their own production, minimizing the delivery of defects to the downstream production station.

*Flexible Production Systems.* Mass production is predicated largely on the principles of Frederick W. Taylor, one of the leaders of the scientific management movement in the early 1900s (Historical Note 2.1). According to Taylor, workers had to be told every detail of their work methods and were incapable of planning their own tasks. By comparison, lean production makes use of worker teams to organize the tasks to be accomplished and worker involvement to solve technical problems. One of the findings reported in ***The Machine that Changed the World*** was that workers in Japanese "lean production" plants received many more hours of training than their U.S. counterparts (380 hours of training vs. 46 hours). Another finding was the lower number of job classifications in Japanese lean plants. The study showed an average of 11.9 job classifications in Japanese plants versus an average of 67.1 in U.S. plants. Fewer job classifications mean more cross-training among workers and greater flexibility in the work force.

In mass production, the goal is to maximize efficiency. This is achieved using long production runs of identical parts. Long production runs tolerate long setup changeovers. In lean production, procedures are designed to speed the changeover. Reduced setup times allow for smaller batch sizes, thus providing the production system with greater flexibility. Flexible production systems were needed in Toyota's comeback period because of the much smaller car market in Japan and the need to be as efficient as possible.

*Continuous Improvement.* In mass production, there is a tendency to set up the operation, and if it is working, leave it alone. Mass production lives by the motto: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." By contrast, lean production supports the policy of continuous improvement. Called ***kaizen*** by the Japanese, continuous improvement means constantly searching for and implementing ways to reduce cost, improve quality, and increase productivity. The scope of continuous improvement goes beyond factory operations and involves design improvements as well. Continuous improvement is carried out one project at a time. The projects may be concerned with any of the following problem areas: cost reduction, quality improvement, productivity improvement, setup time reduction, cycle time reduction, manufacturing lead time and work-in-process inventory reduction, and improvement of product design to increase performance and customer appeal. The procedure for carrying out a continuous improvement project in the quality area is outlined in Section 21.4.2. Similar procedures can be applied to other problem areas.

## 27.2 AGILE MANUFACTURING[2]

As an observed "system of doing business," agile manufacturing emerged after lean production (Historical Note 27.2) yet shares many aspects, as we shall see when we compare the two in Section 27.3. ***Agile manufacturing*** can be defined as (1) an enterprise level manufacturing strategy of introducing new products into rapidly changing markets and (2) an

[2]This section is based largely on [8] and [9].

organizational ability to thrive in a competitive environment characterized by continuous and sometimes unforeseen change.

### **Historical Note 27.2** Agile manufacturing

In 1991, an industry-led study was accomplished under the auspices of the Iacocca Institute at Lehigh University. The study was sponsored by the United States Navy Mantech Program and involved 13 U.S. companies.[3] The objective of the study was to consider what the characteristics will be that successful manufacturing companies will possess in the year 2006. By the time the study was completed, more than 100 companies had participated in addition to the original 13. The report of the study was entitled ***21st Century Manufacturing Enterprise Study.*** The term "agile manufacturing" was coined to describe a new manufacturing paradigm that was recognized as emerging to replace mass production. Key findings of the study included the following:

- A new competitive environment is emerging that is forcing changes in manufacturing systems and organizations.
- Agile companies that can rapidly respond to demand for customized products will have competitive advantage in this environment.
- Agility requires integration of: (1) flexible production technologies, (2) knowledgeable work force, and (3) management structures that encourage cooperative initiatives internally and between firms.
- The American standard of living is at risk unless U.S. industry can lead the transition to agile manufacturing.

Three of the principals involved in the 1991 study went on to write a book that is generally recognized as the definitive work on agility. Their book is titled ***Agile Competitors and Virtual Organizations***, published in 1995 [8].

The 1991 study identified four principles of agility.[4] Manufacturing companies that are agile competitors tend to exhibit these principles or characteristics. The four principles are:

1. ***Organize to Master Change***—"An agile company is organized in a way that allows it to thrive on change and uncertainty."[5] In a company that is agile, the human and physical resources can be rapidly reconfigured to adapt to changing environment and market opportunities.
2. ***Leverage the Impact of People and Information***—In an agile company, knowledge is valued, innovation is rewarded, authority is distributed to the appropriate level of the organization. Management provides the resources that personnel need. The organization is entrepreneurial in spirit. There is a "climate of mutual responsibility for joint success."[6]

[3] Companies participating in the *21st Century Manufacturing Enterprise Study* were: Air Products & Chemicals, AT&T, Boeing, Chrysler, FMC, General Electric, General Motors, IBM, Kingsbury Corp., Motorola, Texas Instruments, TRW, and Westinghouse.

[4] The four principles, as we have called them here, are referred to as the four dimensions of agility in [8].

[5] Goldman, S. L., R. N. Nagel, and K. Preiss, *Agile Competitors and Virtual Organizations*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1995, p. 74.

[6] See note 5 above.

3. ***Cooperate to Enhance Competitiveness***—"Cooperation-internally and with other companies-is an agile competitor's operational strategy of first choice."[7] The objective is to bring products to market as rapidly as possible. The required resources and competencies are found and used, wherever they exist. This may involve partnering with other companies, possibly even competing companies, to form ***virtual enterprises*** (Section 27.2.3).
4. ***Enrich the Customer***—"An agile company is perceived by its customers as enriching them in a significant way, not only itself."[8] The products of an agile company are perceived as solutions to customers' problems. Pricing of the product can be based on the value of the solution to the customer rather than on manufacturing cost.

As our definition and the list of four agility principles indicate, agile manufacturing involves more than just manufacturing. It involves the firm's organizational structure, it involves the way the firm treats it people, it involves partnerships with other organizations, and it involves relationships with customers. Instead of "agile manufacturing," it might be more appropriate to just call this new system of doing business "agility."[9]

### 27.2.1 Market Forces and Agility

A number of market forces can be identified that are driving the evolution of agility and agile manufacturing in business. These forces include:

- ***Intensifying competition***—Signs of intensifying competition include (1) global competition, (2) decreasing cost of information, (3) growth in communication technologies, (4) pressure to reduce time-to-market, (5) shorter product lives, and (6) increasing pressures on costs and profits.
- ***Fragmentation of mass markets***—Mass production was justified by the existence of very large markets for mass-produced products. The signs of the trend toward fragmented markets include: (1) emergence of niche markets, for example, different sneakers for different sports and nonsports applications; (2) high rate of model changes; (3) declining barriers to market entry from global competition; and (4) shrinking windows of market opportunity. Producers must develop new product styles in shorter development periods.
- ***Cooperative business relationships***—There is more cooperation occurring among corporations in the United States. The cooperation takes many forms, including: (1) increasing inter-enterprise cooperation, (2) increased outsourcing, (3) global sourcing, (4) improved labor management relationships, and (5) the formation of virtual enterprises among companies. One might view the increased rate of corporate mergers that are occurring at time of writing as an extension of these cooperative relationships.
- ***Changing customer expectations***—Market demands are changing. Customers are becoming more sophisticated and individualistic in their purchases. Rapid delivery of

[7]See note 5 above.

[8]Goldman, S. L., R. N. Nagel, and K. Preiss, *Agile Competitors and Virtual Organizations*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1995, p. 73.

[9]In support of the agility term rather than agile manufacturing, it is interest to note that the company incorporated to promulgate the agility movement throughout U.S. industry was initially called the "Agile Manifacturing Enterprise Forum." This name was ultimately officially abbreviated to "Agility Forum."

the product, support throughout the product life, and high quality are attributes expected by the customer of the product and of the company that manufactured the product. Quality is no longer the basis of competition that it was in the 1970s and 1980s. Today's products are likely to have an increased information content.

- ***Increasing societal pressures***—Modern companies are expected to be responsive to social issues, including workforce training and education, legal pressures, environmental impact issues, gender issues, and civil rights issues.

Modern firms are dealing with these market forces by becoming agile. Agility is a strategy for profiting from rapidly changing and continually fragmenting global markets for customized products and services. Becoming agile is certainly not the only objective of the firm. There are important other objectives, such as making a profit and surviving into the future. However, becoming more agile is entirely compatible with these other objectives. Indeed, becoming agile represents a working strategy for company survival and future profitability.

How does a company become more agile? Two important approaches are: (1) to reorganize the company's production systems to make them more agile and (2) to manage relationships differently and value the knowledge that exists in the organization. Let us examine each of these approaches in a company's operations as it seeks to become an agile manufacturing firm.

### 27.2.2 Reorganizing the Production System for Agility

Companies seeking to be agile must organize their production operations differently than the traditional organization. Let us discuss the changes in three basic areas: (1) product design, (2) marketing, and (3) production operations.

*Product Design.* Reorganizing production for agility includes issues related to product design. As we have noted previously, decisions made in product design determine approximately 70% of the manufacturing cost of a product. For a company to be more agile, the design engineering department must develop products that can be characterized as follows:

- ***Customizable.*** Products can be customized for individual niche markets. In some cases, the product must be customizable for individual customers.
- ***Upgradeable.*** It should be possible for customers who purchased the base model to subsequently buy additional options to upgrade the product.
- ***Reconfigurable.*** Through modest changes in design, the product can be altered to provide it with unique features. A new model can be developed from the previous model without drastic and time-consuming redesign effort.
- ***Design modularity.*** The product should be designed so that it consists of several modules (e.g., subassemblies) that can be readily assembled to create the finished item. In this way, if a module needs to be redesigned, the entire product does not require redesign. The other modules can remain the same.
- ***Frequent model changes*** within stable market families. Even for products that succeed in the marketplace, the company should nevertheless introduce new versions of the product to remain competitive.

- ***Platforms for information and services.*** Depending on the type of product offering, it should include some aspect of information and service. Information and service might be in the form of an imbedded microprocessor to carry out seemingly intelligent functions; for example, the capability of a VCR to display instructions on the TV screen to guide the viewer through a procedure. Or service by the company in the form of a 1-800 telephone number that can be called for an immediate response to an important issue troubling the customer.

In addition, the company must achieve rapid, cost-effective development of new products, and it must have a life cycle design philosophy (the life cycle running from initial concept through production, distribution, purchase, disposal, and recovery).

*Marketing.* A company's design and marketing objectives must be closely linked. The best efforts of design may be lost if the marketing plan is flawed. Being an agile marketing company suggests the following objectives, several of which are related directly to the preceding product design attributes:

- ***Aggressive and proactive product marketing.*** The sales and marketing functions of the firm should make change happen in the marketplace. The company should be the change agent that introduces the new models and products.
- ***Cannibalize successful products.*** The company should introduce new models to replace and obsolete its most successful current models.
- ***Frequent new product introductions.*** The company should maintain a high rate of new product introductions.
- ***Life cycle product support.*** The company must provide support for the product throughout its life cycle.
- ***Pricing by customer value.*** The price of the product should be established according to its value to the customer rather than according to its own cost.
- ***Effective niche market competitor.*** Many companies have become successful by competing effectively in niche markets. Using the same basic product platform, the product has been reconfigured to provide offerings for different markets. The sneaker industry is a good example here.

*Production Operations.* A substantial impact on the agility of the production system can be achieved by reorganizing factory operations and the procedures and systems that support these operations. Objectives in production operations and procedures that are consistent with an agility strategy are the following:

- ***Be a cost-effective, low-volume producer.*** This is accomplished using flexible production systems and low setup times.
- ***Be able to produce to customer order.*** Producing to customer order reduces inventories of unsold finished goods.
- ***Master mass customization.*** The agile company is capable of economically producing a unique product for an individual customer.
- ***Use reconfigurable and reusable processes, tooling, and resources.*** Examples include computer numerical control machine tools, parametric part programming, robots that are reprogrammed for different jobs, programmable logic controllers, mixed-model

production lines, and modular fixtures (fixtures designed with a group technology approach, which typically possess a common base assembly to which are attached components that accommodate the different sizes or styles of work units).

- ***Bring customers closer to the production process.*** Provide systems that enable customers to specify or even design their own unique products. As an example, it has become very common in the personal computer market for customers to be able to order exactly the PC configuration (monitor size, hard drive, and other options) and software that they want.
- ***Integrate business procedures with production.*** The production system should include sales, marketing, order entry, accounts receivable, and other business functions. These functions are included in a computer integrated production planning and control system based on manufacturing resource planning (MRP II, Section 26.6).
- ***Treat production as a system that extends from suppliers through to customers.*** The company's own factory is a component in a larger production system that includes suppliers that deliver raw materials and parts to the factory. It also includes the suppliers' suppliers.

To summarize, some of the important enabling technologies and management practices to reorganize the production function for agile manufacturing are listed in Table 27.2.

### 27.2.3 Managing Relationships for Agility

Cooperation should be the business strategy of first choice (third principle of agility). The general policies and practices that promote cooperation in relationships and, in general, promote agility in an organization include the following:

- management philosophy that promotes motivation and support among employees
- trust-based relationships
- empowered workforce

**TABLE 27.2** Enabling Technologies and Management Practices for Agile Manufacturing

| | |
|---|---|
| Enabling technologies | Computer numerical control (Chapter 6*) |
| | Direct numerical control (Chapter 6) |
| | Robotics (Chapter 7) |
| | Programmable logic controllers (Chapter 8) |
| | Group technology and cellular manufacturing (Chapter 15) |
| | Flexible manufacturing systems (Chapter 16) |
| | CAD/CAM and CIM (Chapter 24) |
| | Rapid prototyping (Section 24.1) |
| | Computer-aided process planning (Section 25.2) |
| Enabling management practices | Concurrent engineering (Section 25.3) |
| | Manufacturing resource planning (Section 26.6) |
| | Just-in-time production systems (Section 26.7) |
| | Reduced setup and changeover times (Section 26.7.2) |
| | Shorter product development times to increase responsiveness and flexibility (Chapter 24) |
| | Production based on orders rather than forecasts |
| | Lean production (Section 27.1) |

*Text chapter or section where this topic is discussed.

- shared responsibility for success or failure
- pervasive entrepreneurial spirit

There are two different types of relationships that should be distinguished in the context of agility: (1) internal relationships and (2) relationships between the company and other organizations.

*Internal Relationships.* Internal relationships are those that exist within the firm, between coworkers and between supervisors and subordinates. Relationships inside the firm must be managed to promote agility. Some of the important objectives include: (1) make the work organization adaptive, (2) provide cross-functional training, (3) encourage rapid partnership formation, and (4) provide effective electronic communications capability.

*External relationships.* External relationships are those that exist between the company and external suppliers, customers, and partners. It is desirable to form and cultivate external relationships for the following reasons: (1) to establish interactive, proactive relationships with customers; (2) to provide rapid identification and certification of suppliers; (3) to install effective electronic communications and commerce capability; and (4) to encourage rapid partnership formation for mutual commercial advantage.

The fourth reason raises the issue of the virtual enterprise. A ***virtual enterprise*** (the terms ***virtual organization*** and ***virtual corporation*** are also used) is defined as a temporary partnership of independent resources (personnel, assets, and other resources) intended to exploit a temporary market opportunity. Once the market opportunity is passed and the objective is achieved, the organization is dissolved. In such a partnership, resources are shared among the partners, and benefits (profits) are also shared. Virtual enterprises are sometimes created by competing firms.

The formation of a virtual enterprise has the following potential benefits: (1) It may provide access to resources and technologies not available in-house, (2) it may provide access to new markets and distribution channels, (3) it may reduce product development time, and (4) it accelerates technology transfer. Some of the guidelines and potential problems associated with virtual enterprise are listed in Table 27.3.

*Valuing Knowledge.* We must begin discussion of this topic by stating a fundamental premise. It is that the people in an organization, their skills and knowledge and their

**TABLE 27.3** Virtual Enterprises: Guidelines and Problems

| | |
|---|---|
| Guidelines | • Marry well; choose the right partners for good reasons.<br>• Play fair win; win opportunity for all concerned.<br>• Put your best people into these relationships.<br>• Define the objectives.<br>• Build a common infrastructure. |
| Problems | • Legal issues-protection of intellectual property rights.<br>• How to valuate each participant's contribution, so profits can be equitably shared.<br>• Reluctance of companies to share proprietary information.<br>• Loss of competitive advantage by sharing knowledge. |

ability to use information effectively and innovatively, are distinguishing characteristics of an agile competitor. To whatever extent this premise applies to a given organization, the skill and knowledge base must be encouraged, developed, and exploited for the good of the organization. Some of the important objectives include: (1) open communication and information access, (2) openness to learning is pervasive in the organization, (3) learning and knowledge are basic attributes of an organization's ability to adapt to change, (4) the organization provides and encourages continuous education and training for all employees, and (5) there is effective management of competency inventory, meaning that the organization knows and capitalizes on the skills and knowledge of its employees.

### 27.2.4 Agility Versus Mass Production

Like lean production, agility is often compared with mass production. In this comparison, we must interpret mass production to include all of the requisites that made it successful, such as the availability of mass markets and the ability to forecast demand for a given product in such mass markets. Our comparison is summarized in Table 27.4. Let us elaborate on the items listed in the table.

In mass production, companies produce large quantities of standardized products. The purest form of mass production provides huge volumes of identical products. Over the years, the technology of mass production has been refined to allow for minor variations in the product (we call it "mixed-model production"). In agile manufacturing, the products are customized. The term used to denote this form of production is ***mass customization***, which means large quantities of products having unique individual features that have been specified by and/or customized for their respective customers. Referring to our PQ model of production in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3),

$$\text{In mass production, } Q \text{ is very large, } P \text{ is very small, and}$$

$$\text{in mass customization, } P \text{ is very large, } Q \text{ is very small (in the extreme } Q = 1\text{),}$$

where $P$ = product variety (number of models), and $Q$ = production quantity (units of each model per year).

Along with the trend toward more customized products, today's products have shorter expected market lives. Mass production was justified by the existence of very large markets for its mass-produced goods. Mass markets have become fragmented, resulting in a greater level of customization for each market.

In mass production, products are produced based on sales forecasts. If the forecast is wrong, this can sometimes result in large inventories of finished goods that are slow in sell-

**TABLE 27.4** Comparison of Mass Production and Agile Manufacturing

| *Mass Production* | *Agile Manufacturing* |
|---|---|
| Standardized products | Customized products |
| Long market life expected | Short market life expected |
| Produce to forecast | Produce to order |
| Low information content | High information content |
| Single time sales | Continuing relationship |
| Pricing by production cost | Pricing by customer value |

ing. Agile companies produce to order: customized products for individual customers. Inventories of finished products are minimized.

Products today have a higher information content than products of yesterday. This is made possible by computer technology. Think of the many products today that operate based on integrated circuits. Nearly all consumer appliances are controlled by IC chips. Modern automobiles use engine controllers that are based on microprocessors. The personal computer market relies on the ability of the customer to be able to telephone an 800 number for assistance. The same is true of many appliances that are complicated to operate, for example, video cassette recorders (VCRs). Manufacturers of these appliances keep adding more and more features to gain competitive advantage, further complicating the products.

Single time sales was the expectation of the merchandiser before agility. The customer bought the product and was not expected to be seen again. Today, companies want to have continuing relationships with their customers. Automobile companies want their customers to have their new cars serviced at the dealer where the car was purchased. This provides continuing service business for the dealer, and when the customer finally decides that the time is right to purchase a new car, the first logical place to look for that new car is at the same dealer.

Finally, pricing of the product is traditionally based on its cost. The manufacturer calculates the costs that went into making the product and adds a markup to determine the price (Example 2.8). But some customers are willing and able to pay more. The product may be more valuable to them, especially if it is customized for them. The marketplace allows different pricing structures for different customers. Instead of standard prices for everyone, different prices are used, according to the value to the customer. The airline industry is a good example of multi-level pricing structure. Tourists who fly and stay over Saturday night pay sometimes one third the airfare of business travelers who travel round trip during the same week. Automobiles produced in the same final assembly plant on the same body frame can vary in price by two-to-one depending on options and nameplate. In the higher education industry, we have different tuition rates for different students. We use a different lexicon for the lower rates than other industries use: We give a discount on the tuition price and call it a scholarship.

## 27.3 COMPARISON OF LEAN AND AGILE

Lean production and agile manufacturing are sometimes compared, and in this final section we attempt such a comparison. Are lean and agile really different? They certainly use different statements of principles. The four principles of lean production are compared with the four principles of agility in Table 27.5. We also compare the main features of the

**TABLE 27.5** Four Principles of Lean Production and Agile Manufacturing

| *Lean Production* | *Agile Manufacturing* |
|---|---|
| 1. Minimize waste | 1. Enrich the customer |
| 2. Perfect first-time quality | 2. Cooperate to enhance competitiveness |
| 3. Flexible production lines | 3. Organize to master change |
| 4. Continuous improvement | 4. Leverage the impact of people and information |

**TABLE 27.6** Comparison of Lean Production and Agile Manufacturing Attributes

| *Lean Production* | *Agile Manufacturing* |
|---|---|
| Enhancement of mass production | Break with mass production; emphasis on mass customization. |
| Flexible production for product variety | Greater flexibility for customized products |
| Focus on factory operations | Scope is enterprise wide |
| Emphasis on supplier management | Formation of virtual enterprises |
| Emphasis on efficient use of resources | Emphasis on thriving in environment marked by continuous unpredictable change |
| Relies on smooth production schedule | Acknowledges and attempts to be responsive to change. |

two systems in Table 27.6. The emphasis in lean seems to be more on technical and operational issues, whereas agility emphasizes organization and people issues. Lean applies mainly to the factory. Agility is broader in scope, applicable to the enterprise level and even beyond to the formation of virtual enterprises. One might argue that agility represents an evolutionary next phase of lean production. Certainly the two systems do not compete. If anything, agility complements lean. It extends lean thinking to the entire organization. Agility is to lean as manufacturing resource planning is to material requirements planning.

If there is a difference between these two production paradigms, it is in the area of change and change management. Lean tries to minimize change, at least external change. It attempts to smooth out the ups and downs in the production schedule. It attempts to reduce the impact of changeovers on factory operations so that smaller batch sizes and lower inventories are feasible. It uses flexible production technology to minimize disruptions caused by design changes. By contrast, the philosophy of agility is to embrace change. The emphasis is on thriving in an environment marked by continuous and unpredictable change. It acknowledges and attempts to be responsive to change, even to be the change agent if it leads to competitive advantage.

Is this distinction in the way change seems to be viewed in the two systems a fundamental difference? This author would argue that although there may be a difference in viewpoint and perhaps strategy with regard to change, there is no difference in method or approach. The capacity of an agile company to adapt to change or to be a change agent depends on its capabilities to have a flexible production system, to minimize the time and cost of changeover, to reduce on-hand inventories of finished products, and to avoid other forms of waste. These capabilities belong to a lean production system. For a company to be agile, it must also be lean.

## REFERENCES


[1] ANDERSON, D., *Agile Product Development for Mass Customization*, Irwin, 1997.

[2] ANDERSON, D., "Implementing Mass Customization," *Agility & Global Competition*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring 1998, pp 36–49.

[3] BLACK, J T., *The Design of the Factory with a Future*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1991.

[4] BYRNE, J., "The Virtual Corporation," *Business Week*, February 8, 1993, pp 98–102.

[5] DOVE, R. *Tools for Analyzing and Constructing Agile Capabilities*, Agility Forum, 1996.

[6] GOLDMAN, S. and K. PREISS, Editors, *21st Century Manufacturing Enterprise Strategy - An Industry-Led View*, Volume 1, Iacocca Institute, Lehigh University, 1991.

[7] GOLDMAN, S., "Agile Manufacturing - A New Production Paradigm for Society," *Working Paper*, Agility Forum, Iacocca Institute, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1993.

[8] GOLDMAN, S., R. NAGEL, and K. PREISS, *Agile Competitors and Virtual Organizations*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1995.

[9] GOLDMAN, S. L., "The Agility Revolution," *lecture* presented at Agility Forum, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, October 15, 1996.

[10] GROOVER, M. P., "Agility and Agile Manufacturing," paper presented at the First Surface Mount Technology Convention in Puerto Rico, November 1996.

[11] KIDD, P., *Agile Manufacturing - Forging New Frontiers*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1994.

[12] MONDEN, Y., *Toyota Production System*, Industrial Engineering and Management Press, Norcross, Georgia, 1983.

[13] OHNO, T., *The Toyota Production System: Beyond Large Scale Production*, Productivity Press, Portland, Oregon, 1988.

[14] ROOS, D., *Agile/Lean: A Common Strategy for Success*, Agility Forum, 1995.

[15] SHERIDAN, J. H., "Agile Manufacturing: Stepping Beyond Lean Production," *Industry Week*, April 19, 1993, pp 30–46.

[16] SPIRA, J. S., and B. J. PINE II, "Mass Customization," Reprint from *Chief Executive*, March 1993.

[17] WHITNEY, D., and Colleagues at MIT, "Fast and Flexible Communication of Design Information in the Aerospace and Automobile Industries: A Project Conducted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Lehigh University," *Agility & Global Competition*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter 1997, pp 30–41.

[18] WOMACK, K., D. JONES, and D. ROOS, *The Machine that Changed the World*, MIT Press, 1990.

[19] WOMACK, K., and D. JONES, *Lean Thinking*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996.

# Index