Day 2: Changes

At the end of Day 2, the team fine-tuned Day 1’s reconfigurations. Again, operators’ requests for additional tools, closer power outlets, screwdriver holsters, and workstation shelves were accommodated. Work areas were cleaned and organized, making the kitted electronic materials easily accessible for attachment to dispensers.

In order to relieve operators 5 and 6 of the non-value-adding activity of folding “rubbish” boxes and stacking them properly for pickup, the testing assistant would now be responsible for that task and would assume a “roamer” role.

Day 3

The B-line Kaizen team became excited as the production numbers went up during the shift’s first four hours. By the end of the fourth hour, the line was at pump number 11. If that run rate could be maintained, the operators might produce 22 pumps, a number significantly greater than their usual 16.

The team evaluated the issues that were being addressed by the moving line:

The higher number was a result of a moving line where operators were now moving in sync with one another rather than independently. The pull system had also created a large degree of accountability to meet takt time, and the additional bathroom breaks were noticeably reduced across the entire line.

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1 Just-in-time processes implemented the “kitting” of materials for use. In this example, each dispenser order would have an assigned kit put together by a kitting department. The kit would contain the exact quantity of materials (wires, LCDs, etc.) needed for one dispenser to be assembled.
Meanwhile, Reynaldo Roche was worried about the number of units that could be built over the next four hours. He was afraid that the only reason the operators had been able to produce 11 pumps during the first half of the shift was that those 11 units had been fairly easy to assemble. Easy units were defined as the relatively simple Encore 300 versus another model called the Encore 500, which required a full range of options. The production planning for different pumps was done with a back-to-back system, meaning that gas-dispenser units with similarly complicated options would run next to each other, and simpler units would also run back to back.

Unfortunately, the high run rate could not be sustained: the operators had assembled only 18 pumps by the end of the day. The team had more work to do.