

Business is not Hockey!

(Though Hockey (NHL) is a Business)

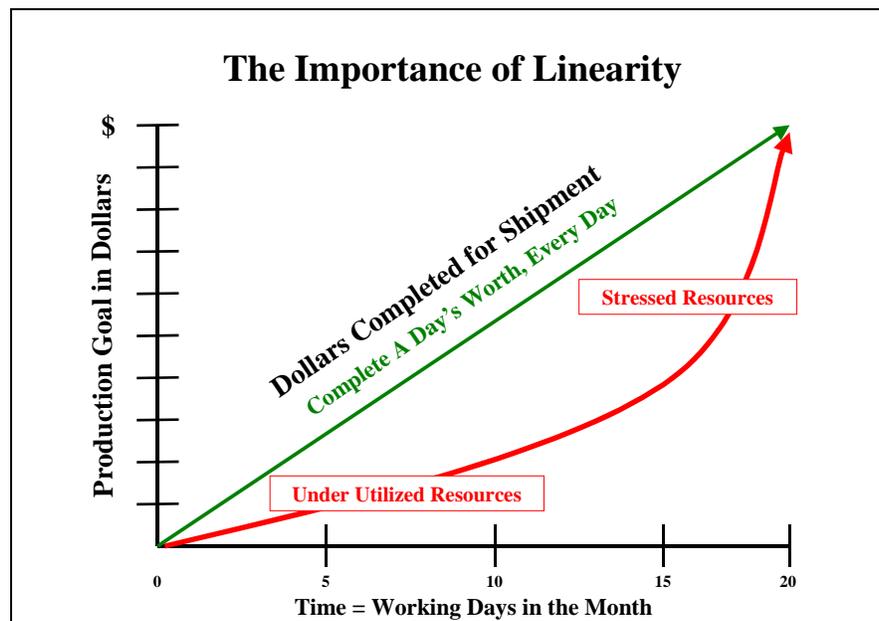
Michael Stickler

Do any of the following situations exist in your company?

1. More orders/product/dollars ship out the last ten days of the month than in the prior twenty?
2. More bookings occur in the last few weeks of the quarter than in all of the prior weeks?
3. Are there any orders past due to customers?
4. Do you ship orders “early” to try to make the revenue target for the current month?
5. Do you work lots of overtime and expedite materials for production at the end of the month and then not have enough work early in the new month to keep everyone working?
6. Does engineering constantly miss its schedules and deliver design late or incomplete to production?
7. Do actual bookings ever match the sales forecast?

If you were like most companies that we have visited (and some that we should), your answers would be: YES, YES, YES, YES, YES, YES, and a qualified YES eventually...

These Hockey Sticks will kill you! Linearity is the GOAL!



These YES answers are indicators of some very fundamental problems and probably a serious lack of discipline in your company. Most people won't look at the business critical issues until it's too late, and then there is very little that they can do about it, except panic.

The good news is that they are all fixable. Now the bad news...most of you won't fix it...because it means changing your approach to the way you do things every day. You see, I firmly feel that there are a few critical things that you should know about in your business every day, not once a month after the financials come out for the prior month.

On the other hand if you want to fix it...let me get you started. About 25 years ago I was visiting a company down south (in a dry county) on a weeklong consulting assignment. The general manager, Landis Morgan, really had it figured out. His advice to me was simple and direct and I want to share it with you.

He said " Make your numbers every hour of every day and you make your week, make every week and you make the month and if you make every month, you make the quarter, and if you make every quarter you won't get help from corporate". That's how he ran the business. The performance tracking that he looked at every hour or so, showed him the business critical issues that either made or broke the business.

Now a few questions: Have you clearly identified your business critical issues? Have you established a performance plan for them? Do you have the ability to track your performance to them on a daily basis? Do you have the guts to try? Do you have the guts to take corrective action when it's necessary?

If you need help doing these things, call us, we can help!