

**We are trying to develop a method of tracking the length of time between receiving a customer's specs and Customer Service getting the job into production. Does anyone have a measuring method?**

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Our tentative preferred process between a client sending in a design request and sending the job to production is three weeks, all new/revised design jobs are tracked using SharePoint. Once artwork is received for print or copy production we state a three week turnaround time per policy for printing. However we average a six day turnaround time for 450 jobs processed per month in addition to all of the rush jobs completed in which policies and preferred process go out the window to meet our organizational needs.

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Too many variables to answer this question. IE: Is it a simple job spec or complex with lot of details. What other processes are required to get job into production? Customer proofs, samples, sign-off, P.O. , credit approval, etc. can delay job going to production. When do you start the clock and end the clock for this measurement needs to be defined if you are going to have expectations. Perhaps develop an average expectation for jobs depending upon complexity. Simple – 1 hour ; Complex 8-hours ?

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Yes ASAP!

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Our system is Zebra. All sent in written specs or RFQ in written form are assigned a sequence # which follows the inquiry. All scratch or correspondence paper used is a color pastel. And inserted into the spec pocket. All emails must carry and contain the sequence # and date received. The job # can be the old sequence # or a next job number in different sequence to prevent mixing of jobs & RFQ's. At the job pocket generation point the generator places RFG sequence date and time on job doc along with Job sequence date and time which is electronically stored/shared with others; the paper ticket job pocket moves thru the plant. Each 24 hr. period the dept. of work in process where the pocket resides is identified by scanner input. Our system sets due / completion dates as a target which shows up separately

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*Something I experienced at a previous position would be applicable to what you are looking for now. This is a bit long-winded to explain the method, but I think there is potential to be transferable and useful. Bottom line, Excel is very handy, especially because it can do calculations using dates.*

I worked for a copier dealer, and we were growing concerned with how long it was taking our delivery department to install new equipment orders. All we had was anecdotal evidence; but, our sales team was complaining that delivery was making them look bad by taking weeks to install a new machine. My company owner decided on a target fulfillment timeline, which was 21 days from the time the completed paperwork was turned in.

I was charged with collecting the data upper management wanted. I was the purchasing manager, and I processed all the new equipment order paperwork from the sales reps. The delivery team already was required to submit the date the equipment was installed to me (along with some other data for setting up the client's service contract); so, I was a natural, neutral choice.

I had been keeping a Log of Pending Sales Agreements, which was an Excel spreadsheet. Each new deal was a row in Excel showing the name and city of the client; the copier model; and the status of the equipment purchase, color coded "green" for everything in our warehouse; "yellow" for on order with the manufacturer and in transit; and "red" for back-ordered with the manufacturer.

Every time a deal was installed, I moved the entry from the Pending tab to a new Completed tab. I added some more columns to the Completed tab to record the date the paperwork was turned in, the date all the equipment was in the warehouse, and the date the equipment was installed at the client's location. Another column calculated the number of days it took to fulfill each order. A summary section calculated the current yearly average number of days to fulfill, number of installs over the target, number over, and total number of installs for the year. I updated this spreadsheet and emailed it to the service manager and delivery team daily. An automated process pushed a copy of the Excel file out into a "Sales Team Tools" resource folder, where the sales reps could access it. I also printed the Pending tab out and hung it in a high traffic place near our staff entrance for every staff member to see.

Periodically, the service manager would review the fulfillment averages, and he would meet with the delivery team to discuss any challenges. The service manager would add a note to each deal to explain why an install took longer than the target. The spreadsheet also tracked exceptions to our process, such as equipment being on back order or a sales rep missing a critical piece of paperwork; so, the delivery team wasn't held accountable for things beyond their control. Eventually, the service manager used the spreadsheet to set a performance goal for the delivery team to earn a bonus when they consistently installed below the 21 day target.

The end result was better awareness and communication throughout the entire company and much better fulfillment times (dropped from almost a month to 7-10 days, as I recall). The sales team was delighted that they had a fact-based delivery target they could promise new clients and they were being kept in the loop about the status of their deals. The delivery team had better morale because they looked like heroes when they were faster than the target.