



AS SPARRING PARTNER OF A VEHICLE MANUFACTURER, WE SUCCESSFULLY SAFEGUARD ITS SERIES RAMP-UP

BACKGROUND

High price and competitive pressure in globalized markets and intensifying complexity of products and variants due to individual customer requirements pose major challenges for companies. Product lifecycles, and in turn, the timeframes until costs of investments made are recouped are becoming shorter and shorter while costs and efforts needed for development are swinging up in parallel.

To ensure competitiveness, the entire product development process, including the start-up and ramp-up phase, must be shortened. This reduction is especially accompanied by tremendous challenges during the complex ramp-up phase. Development, production, logistics and procurement activities must be synchronized and coordinated for the first time. To complicate matters, unanticipated changes in external influences can further increase the complexity of a series ramp-up. Ramp-up management's primary goal is to make all hardware and software components available on the production line just in time in the planned quantity and quality and to safeguard series production. Missing transparency across divisions and a lack of flexibility in the processes relevant for the start-up can lead to considerable problems here.

This presents a risk of standstills in the production line, long rework times, expensive retrofitting measures in the field or, even worse – recall actions. If customers are not served in a timely way or they get qualitatively inferior products, both customer loyalty, the company's reputation as well as economic profitability suffer a blow.

STARTING SITUATION

Due to delays in a tightly scheduled product development process, hardware and software components at a vehicle manufacturer cannot be provided with the necessary degree of maturity on the scheduled date for production line deployment. In addition, various changes in the organization combined with high product complexity lead to numerous changes in orders.

In production, that's why there are an increasing number of defective or incorrect parts during the start-up and ramp-up phase when designing pre-series vehicles. As a result, rework efforts increase substantially.

This critical situation reveals that activities of the areas relevant for the start-up are insufficiently synchronized and are not transparent enough. There's a lack of overriding, overall coordination of all single activities and a shared understanding of problems and goals between the management and working level.

It's imperative to prevent delays in series ramp-up and the impacts connected with this on customers. The timetable including vehicle provision dates for market preparation activities must urgently be adhered to.

At this point in time, a prudent manager asks Hanselmann & Compagnie for support as soon as possible. Shortly afterwards, we start our work right on site.

THE CHALLENGE

The creation of cross-divisional transparency over information is a must for a successful series ramp-up - deficits and gaps must be identified. To make sure production is supplied continuously, it's necessary to pinpoint problems in the supply chains at an early stage and to eliminate them with corresponding countermeasures. If the maturity of products and processes is insufficient, solutions must be implemented as quickly as possible during ongoing production. For this purpose, all processes must be designed in a flexible and dynamic way.

SHARED PATH TO SUCCESS

We support our customer right on site to ensure efficient collaboration, which guarantees short communication channels and fast action. Thanks to close interaction with our customer, we can support all start-up-related processes in daily project business, consistently analyze them with regard to "pain points" and respond to new challenges in real time. We leverage our expertise to find the right optimization measures and we implement them directly. In doing so, we consistently follow our tried and proven formula: "analyze, optimize, implement and check effectiveness."

Given the tight timeline, we're mainly in "firefighting" mode and on the go in a very operational way. However, we do not only aim to put out fires short term, but also to simultaneously optimize our customer's processes over the long term. Very specifically, we're setting up a "war room" to enhance cross-divisional communication and ensure the transparent presentation of product and process maturity. This special meeting room contains all key information on efficient project management. During weekly stand-up meetings, reports are given to top management on all critical issues with proposed solutions. Thanks to the attendance of all necessary decision-makers, issues can be driven forward quickly.

Priority fields of action are transparently presented in a timely way and the right measure can immediately be put into action.

If there's an imminent risk of production line standstills due to acute supply bottlenecks, we call for problem-solving rounds (task forces) at short notice with the contact persons from all start-up-related divisions. During these rounds, all information is compiled and problem-solving strategies, including the impact on future vehicle construction, are worked out. Modifications to hardware and software components at our customer's site shortly before vehicle construction go through an inefficient process with a sluggish response. In a workshop with participation of all divisions relevant for the start-up, we come up with quick solutions and decide on their implementation directly in the meeting.

For example, the quality of change requests is often so insufficient that several time-consuming correction loops are required. That's why we create an additional quality gate and support for the person making the change request in order to prevent change requests containing errors. By involving production right at the start of the change process, preventive measures are taken in vehicle construction to prevent production line stillstands.

In the further course of the project, we continually monitor the status of all changes together with the start-up experts and support efficient implementation. If deficits appear along the process chain, we immediately re-sharpen the critical points.

We measure the success of our activities in the project based on meaningful KPIs, like, for example, throughput and rework times and number of missing/defective parts in production.

We track these and prepare them transparently in the form of a KPI reporting. During a daily status report, this information is given to all start-up-related divisions. Based on the findings it contains, we define further action plans together.

RESULT – SUCCESSFUL MARKET LAUNCH ENSURED

- Information transparency created for all divisions relevant for the start-up
- Supply of components ensured on the production line
- Change management accelerated
- Continuous performance tracking implemented
- Peak production achieved at the scheduled time
- Deliveries to customers ensured right on time