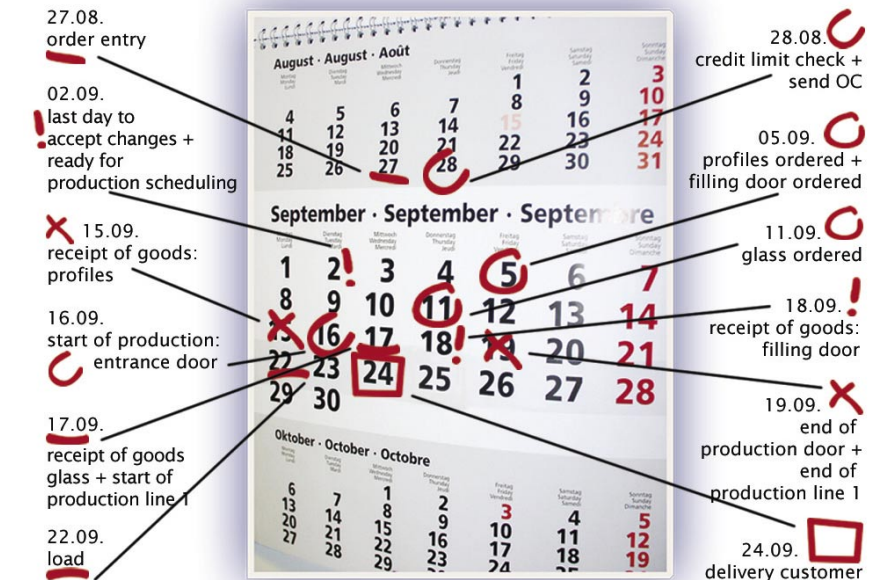


Planning of Dates in the Window and Door Industry

This sounds quite simple. A customer orders windows or doors from a manufacturer, to be delivered as soon as possible. The manufacturer quickly confirms an early date – and ships the goods exactly as confirmed. This is how it should be, and many companies achieve this – quite often with a lot of effort, however.

Unlike other products, windows and doors are usually not kept on stock, but are unique specimens. These are tailored to the customer's requirements; there are more variants than one can imagine. This means: Windows and doors are far from being standard products.

Let us look at the individual steps that are necessary to produce and ship this kind of item at the required date. The illustration shows these steps for an individual order: First, all technical and special features of the windows and doors need to be defined. The system estimates the production time based on the use of capacity, taking into account the average units produced during a week. Certain features such as special constructions, roller shutter top elements, front doors etc. will generally extend the delivery time by one to two weeks. The customer will be informed of the week in which the product will be shipped. The exact shipping date is usually communicated the week before the actual delivery. The material to be ordered from the supplier needs to be defined, by computer or manually. The supplier's delivery time depends on the product and has to be matched with production. This is the task of an experienced clerk who (hopefully) considers that the



delivery time will be longer in this case. Quite often, goods are ordered at the earliest possible date and are received much earlier than they are actually required – but storing place is expensive! A well-aimed, order-related reservation of material on stock is not done at all, or done manually. Many companies do not monitor the receipt of goods and will realise that parts are missing only after production has started. A simple file containing the information on orders is usually passed on from department to department. These papers are used for purchasing, production scheduling, for process control, and for information purposes.

Let us return to the calendar which only shows one single order. Imagine that you enter 30 orders per day in this calendar – do you think things still remain clear?

And there is another thing: It is quite uncommon that orders are produced free of disturbances. Changes of the order or of the date through customers are not uncommon. Finding the

customer file may take some time. Determining the order status may take a lot of time because you need to ask all the departments about the progress of the order.

What happens in the peak season? More often than not, there will be chaos and nobody really knows why it is still possible to keep delivery times after all.

Of course you will retort now that the work of your company is different from what we have described. Still, this very common organisation type has a decisive disadvantage: The costs. With enough well-trained and experienced staff, this system will work – only just – but at the peak of the season, errors increase as well as the work caused by rush jobs which are necessary to get the work load done. Nice to read about all that, you will say, but how does this help us in our daily struggle to meet delivery times? There is nothing one can do. This is not true! There are computer systems dealing with just these problems. With such a solution, your

daily order processing would look as follows:

The people at order entry only have to enter the orders into the system – they do not have to worry about delivery times of material, or the use of capacity. They just enter the delivery date requested by the customer.

The ERP*) software that links all departments of your company, will automatically do all the scheduling right after order entry. Product- and construction-related scheduling of the production date considering the use of capacity of each production line, determining the delivery date based on area standards, creation of

ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning:

The name for integrated, networked software systems capable of controlling and monitoring all scheduling and organisational processes throughout the company.

info@cantor-software.de

all purchase orders for this order, taking into account the suppliers' delivery times and the supply time for the products, reservation of the necessary goods on stock for the exact production date, and ordering supplies just in time should the stock run low. For every process, the system calculates the date on which it has to be performed – the day on which the P.O. has to be issued, and sent, as well as the day on which the goods have to arrive at your site.

All processes are run automatically right after order entry. In case of problems regarding dates or capacities, the system will issue a report for the user who can decide what steps need to be taken (e.g. postponement of dates). If there is no message, the order confirmation can be despatched to the customer within just a few minutes - including a confirmed and reliable delivery date as all processes that are necessary to process the order, have been scheduled already.

Needless to say that is possible to see the status of any process on screen. None of the departments will need a customer file any more – all necessary steps can be performed directly in the system. You may say new that this sounds like heaven and wouldn't it be nice if it became true in a couple of years. There is no need to wait: The described process is reality and is being employed by many customers of Cantor Software GmbH for many years now. Based on years of practical experience, we have developed a state-of-the-art system that can be adapted to the individual requirements of any company.

Now take the time and imagine again the effort it takes to manually organise a calendar, filled with 30 orders per day – with this in mind, we do not need to say any more about the advantages a system like ours can offer. Just contact us – we will be glad to show you how this works in practice.