

**Print Service
Provider
Edition**

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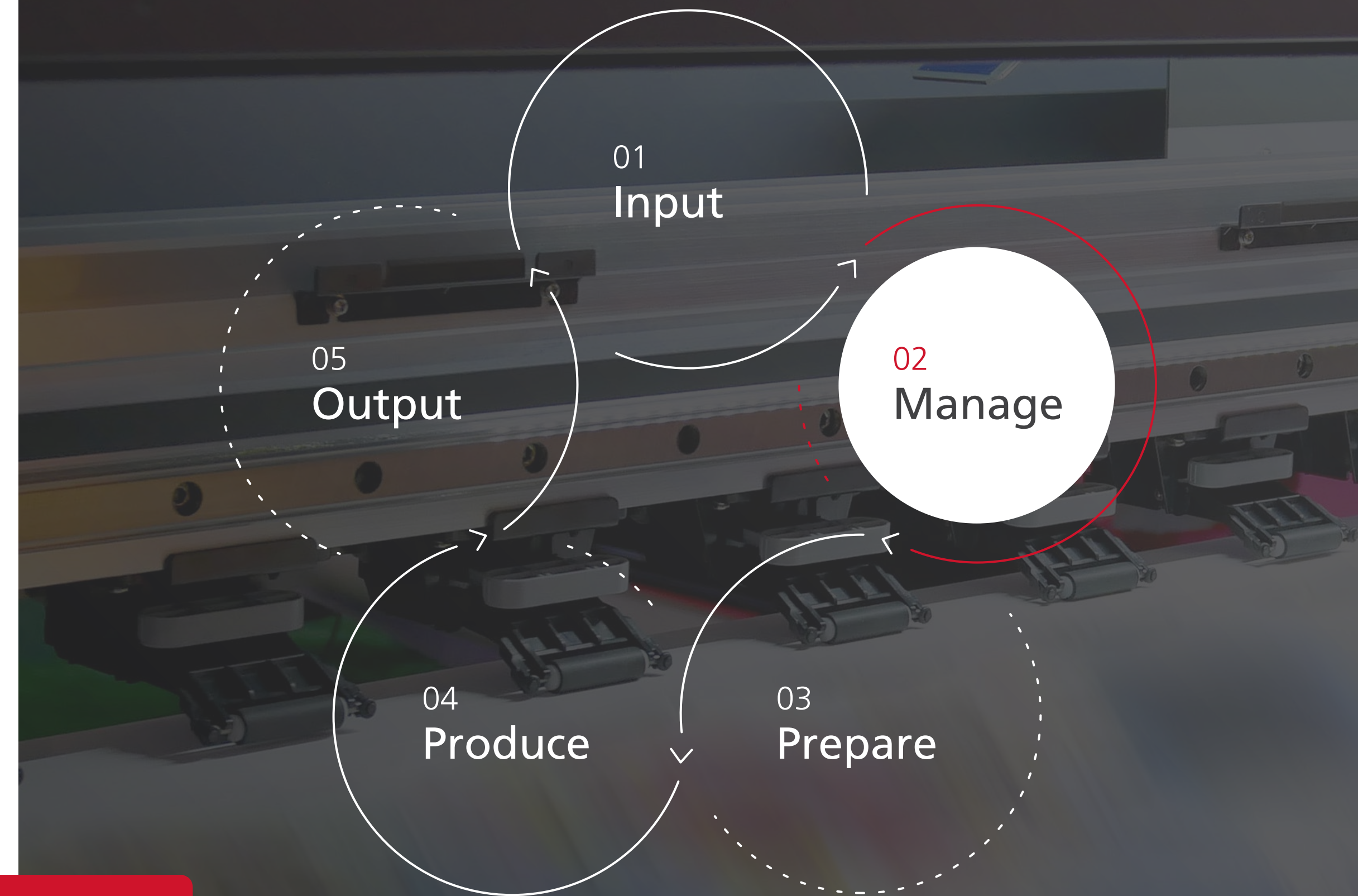
Manage: Making Sure Your Jobs Fly Through Production

Manage Your Print Shop So Jobs Fly Through Production

Have you ever wondered how pilots can land an airplane without being able to see the runway until the last minute? It is because they use and trust their instrumentation. There are two basic categories of flying: Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). Pilots begin their training under VFR conditions: nice weather and clear skies. As skills improve and pilots learn to leverage their airplane and instrumentation, they are certified to fly under IFR conditions, which allows them to fly even when there are adverse weather conditions.

Like pilots who rely solely on instrumentation and data to fly blind, printers need to identify and trust key performance indicators (KPIs) for monitoring and managing print production. The altimeter becomes the relationship between the costs of supplies and sales prices. Instead of airspeed, print service providers (PSPs) may use equipment efficiency as the KPI. Profitability is like the pilot's artificial horizon to let PSPs know whether they are above or below the line for making money. The heading indicators are the business and production dashboards that guide a shop and indicate how close they are to delivering all their jobs.

Having, and utilizing the right equipment and processes ensure you're getting to your destination in the fastest, most efficient, and profitable way.



How you gather, manage and use information will decide whether you win or lose.

Bill Gates

Planning a MANAGE Workflow

Manage

Job accuracy, tracking and management

Estimating

Capacity planning

Scheduling

Data management (system of record)

Job costing

Purchasing and receiving

Invoicing

Data hygiene

Job ticketing and tracking

Analytics

Inventory management

Customer journey mapping

The Cost of a Mis-MANAGED Workflow

Manage

Job accuracy, tracking and management

Profitability erosion

Delivery delays, reduced customer satisfaction

Loss of job tickets

Inaccurate reporting

Inaccurate job estimating

Increase in labor costs

Cash flow delays

Shipping, tracking and invoicing challenges

Lack of job monitoring ability

Missed KPIs

Lack of or low raw materials delaying work

Poor customer communication management



The PSP's Instrument Panel

Modern print shops should be flying by IFR rules, which requires a centralized business system of record, often a print management information system (MIS) to provide the instrument panel. However, many printers have tools but are not using the solution to its full potential. Staff often use generic tools like spreadsheets to manage print jobs outside of the approved systems, which is problematic. In most environments, spreadsheets are not shared, leading to the growth of competing information sources about jobs moving through the operation, creating bottlenecks, and removing any collaboration benefits. Is the scheduler's spreadsheet the correct one, or is the customer service representative's (CSR) the one to use? Most of these standalone tools cannot assign user rights and restrictions, so any user can delete or corrupt the information, not to mention the risk of deleting print files and job history. It is also more challenging to extract data and automate sharing with other business systems or downstream processes.

A single record of truth for all customer and production information is a requirement in commercial print operations, not a 'nice to have' as it should manage every element of customer and business data. When set up to be part of an automated and integrated environment, it captures data from estimating, quoting, costing, job ticketing, tracking, job costing, scheduling, inventory management, and purchasing. It should also integrate with other business systems, like customer resource management (CRM), enterprise resource planning (ERP), or customer business systems to streamline job onboarding and improve automation levels.

A centralized system of 'truth' is essential in other ways for today's commercial print shops because it:

- Facilitates accurate job pricing to cover production costs.
- Consolidates order intake, often from multiple sources like email, Web-to-Print, or application programming interfaces (APIs).
- Generates job numbers and tickets to communicate production plans and job details.
- Tracks the volume and status of every work-in-progress job.
- Captures important shop floor production data from the time spent on each task to the amount of waste and consumables used.
- Closes the communication loop with users through automatic notifications for completion and shipping.
- Creates invoices or integration with your preferred accounting software to send to customers.
- Provides standard or custom reports.

Getting Off The Ground

Managing your print operation to this level of accuracy and detail requires a commitment to implement and use the core tools managing your operations. Moving from manual processes and spreadsheet management, to a fully streamlined and automated print production takes time and requires buy-in from management and rigorous adoption by the staff.

So, where do you start?

Start by identifying the many ways that customers submit print orders. Some submission methods, like Web-to-Print or APIs, may integrate directly with your business systems to automatically generate orders. Other submission methods, like email or fax, may require manual entry by staff members, but there may be options to capture email and automate routing to the system.

Then, fully commit to reducing submission methods requiring manual entry so your staff can focus on higher-level tasks while minimizing the risk from data entry errors.

Success requires trust in your systems, particularly the estimating engine, which is the foundation for order taking, quoting, and job ticketing. Estimates are built based on costs – all the costs that can occur as a job progresses from onboarding to completion. These include fixed expenses like equipment leases and variable costs like ink and paper. Labor rates are also part of the equation, requiring an understanding of each touchpoint in the job workflow. These costs must be identified, captured, and configured in the estimating engine. Updating your costing information in real-time is ideal, but if purchasing and inventory functions are not yet integrated, updating on a regular cadence is best practice, particularly when input prices like materials and labor are fluctuating.

No plan is perfect, but you *need* a plan, buy-in, constant checks and balances and tracking.

What Does Your 'Manage' Workflow Really Look Like?



Do you know?

- **How accurate are your job estimates versus actuals?**
- **If you are able to measure equipment utilization, uptime and material consumption?**
- **If your systems measure overall equipment effectiveness (OEE)?**
- **How many steps are automated?**
- **How could you become more automated?**

Without data you're just another person with an opinion

Important KPIs:

- Estimate versus actual comparisons
- Overall equipment effectiveness (OEE)
- Equipment uptime
- Material consumption (substrates and ink/toner)
- Waste levels and causes
- Labor efficiency
- Productive versus non-productive time
- Percentage of on-time vs. past due orders

Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE): Make sure your investments are working together, hardware and software

Instruments Need Measurements

Over time other functions, capabilities and modules can be added to extend the value including inventory management, scheduling, variable data, personalization and fulfillment. There may be others based on business and production needs. After the core functions related to estimating are locked in, collecting data from the production floor is a logical add-on. Production floor data measures the critical data of print production that feeds your instrument panel for smooth operation. Which metrics matter depends on your operational goals. No matter which metrics are monitored, the numbers provide the data to know where you were, where you are now, and how to get to the destination smoothly and error-free.

The golden rule of shop floor data collection is to capture the minimum amount required for the maximum amount of analysis. This approach minimizes the burden on staff to enter the data when it is not available through other sources. As new equipment is onboarded, it is likely that some data can be automatically supplied by the device.

Regardless of how you collect data, the critical requirement is to actually collect it. Without data, you are operationally blind and risk overburdening staff and disappointing customers by not meeting their specifications.

ROI: Manage Use Case - Healthcare In-Plant

Without Automated MANAGE Systems

- Job pricing provided per Customer Service Representative (CSR)
- Manual estimating, collecting details from disparate sources
- Zero job tracking or stakeholder notifications resulting in job delays
- Lack of invoice integration contributing to cash flow delays

With Automated, Integrated MANAGE Workflows of WebCRD W2P, Avanti® Slingshot MIS, and RICOH ProcessDirector™ Workflow Automation*

- Integrated input/intake systems
- Custom pricing, no rekeying
- Capacity planning and inventory management
- Production floor management: real-time data capture and tracking
- Document and job-level audit

5,000 orders x 12 minutes to rekey / 60,000 minutes = 1000 hours

Savings: 80+ hours per month

*Customer example. Please check with your local representative to determine a solution for your workflow needs.



Benefits of a MANAGE workflow

- Facilitate accurate job pricing to cover production costs
- Consolidate intake from multiple sources (email, W2P)
- Generate job numbers and tickets to communicate production plans and job details
- Track the volume and status of every job
- Capture important shop floor production data from the time spent on each task, waste and consumables
- Close the communication loop with users
- Create invoices or integration with accounting software
- Provide standard or custom reports



The Bottom Line

A well-managed production floor can improve operational execution, boost profitability, and increase customer satisfaction. Doing any of these by using manual processes and generic tools is simply impossible.

If you're a PSP stuck on spreadsheets and sticky notes, it is time to pivot and maximize the use of purpose-built tools to handle your templates, customer management, estimating, scheduling, inventory management, job costing and tracking.

Leverage your tools and your data to make your operation smarter and more resilient in the face of any potential turbulence ahead.

If you're ready to optimize your print production management, [contact us](#) for more information and how a workflow assessment may help determine your workflow needs.

[Get The Next eBook: Prepare](#)

About Ricoh

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services enabling individuals to work smarter. For more than 80 years, Ricoh has been driving innovation and is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communication services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group operates in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2019, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,013 billion yen (approx. 18.1 billion USD).

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