

10

ways

to optimise your panel building process

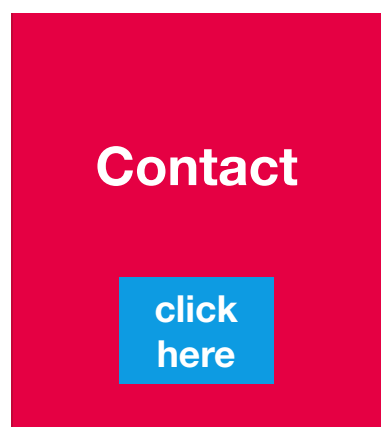
1 Collaborate with your team read more	2 Provide good input read more	3 Simplify the work preparation process read more	4 Separate the process steps read more	5 Create a good flow read more
6 Clean up the workplace read more	7 Provide Visibility read more	8 Improve ergonomics read more	9 Get rid of the printers read more	10 Get rid of the inventory read more

Fewer mistakes, more flexible production, shorter lead times and lower costs. What does it take to achieve all of that? Every workshop is different. There is no blueprint for the perfect production process, and everything depends on the customers, products, working method and strategy of your company. However, there are several things that every workshop manager in the panel building industry should think about. Here are 10 practical tips to keep in mind for the optimisation of your production process.

10

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Collaborate with your team

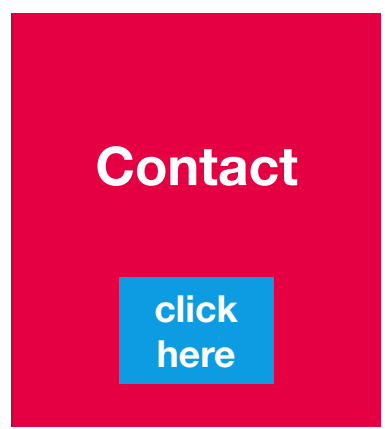
Change will only lead to improvement if it is supported by the entire team. You can achieve this by involving employees from the very beginning. Encourage everyone to consider potential improvements, or even better, take ownership of them.



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Provide good input

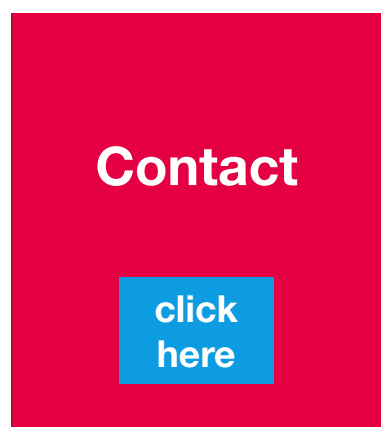
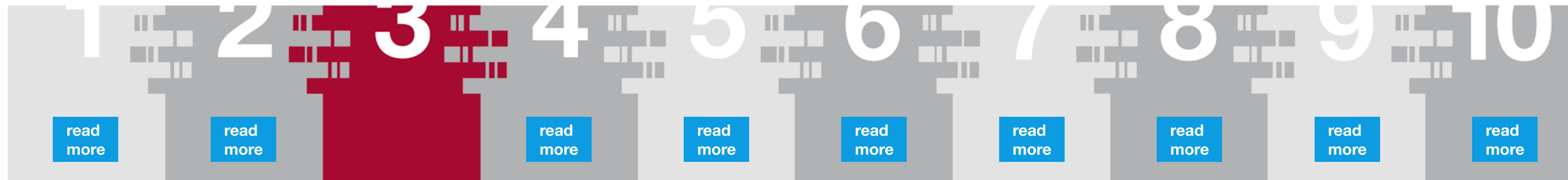
Whether you build cabinets for external clients or your internal engineering department, an optimal process depends on the right drawings and information. Sit down at the table and let the engineers know what your team needs, such as a good 3D drawing and wiring lists. This is also in the interest of the client. By working better with engineering, we can achieve shorter lead times, at lower costs with fewer mistakes.



10

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Simplify the work preparation process

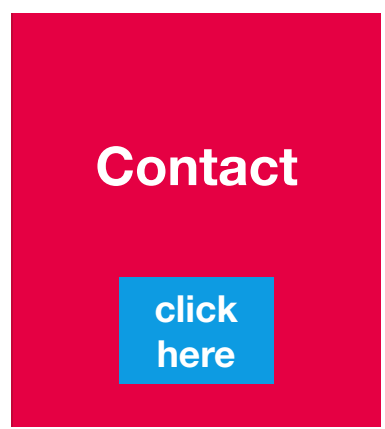
Work preparation means preparation, not the work itself. In other words: work preparation is the planning of the projects. Other activities such as ordering parts should be placed elsewhere, e.g., with the logistics department.



10

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Separate the process steps

When constructing a panel, it is common to follow several steps such as logistics, mechanical processing, parts assembly and wiring. However, in many workshops, these steps are often carried out by the same employee in the same location. To improve the process, it is advisable to separate each step into its own designated workspace.

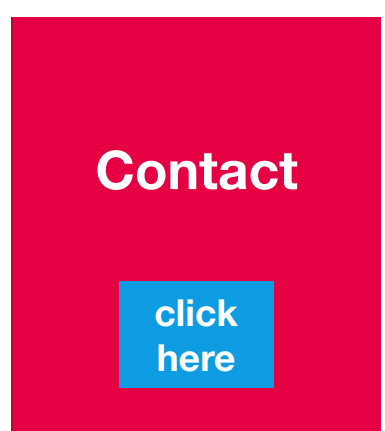
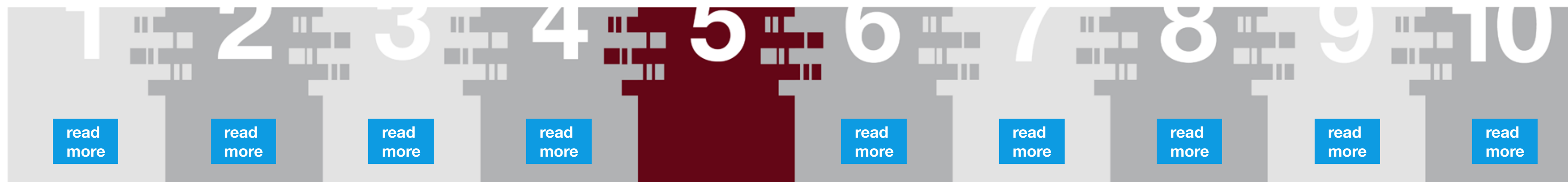
This approach offers several benefits, including the ability to utilize the employee's knowledge for a specific task, making the process easier to plan and manage, reducing the amount of necessary inventory and lowering logistics costs. Additionally, separating the steps enables better standardisation and automation of the process, making it more flexible and adaptable to changing business needs. Finally, this approach leads to lower and more transparent costs, allowing businesses to stay competitive and thrive in the long run.



10

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Create a good flow

The next step is to arrange the production space according to the steps in the production process. A good 'flow' is crucial. Distribute the different process steps on the shop floor in such a way that the product can be moved along each step.

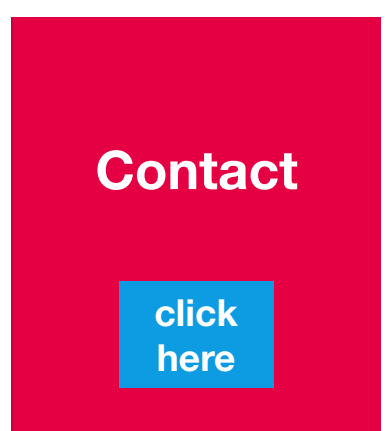
With a good flow, the process determines the layout of the shop floor enabling you to work with as little unnecessary movement as possible: Logistics in -> Mechanical processing -> Infrastructure parts -> Components parts -> Wiring -> Testing -> Customer decrease -> Logistics out -> After sales.



10

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Clean up the workplace

At the end of the workday, cleaning up the workspace is a crucial aspect of optimising workplace efficiency. To achieve this, it is important to ensure that only the essential tools, materials, and information are available at each stage.

The following list may serve as a useful guide to achieve this goal:

The first step is to sort and remove any items that are not essential for the work process. This is followed by arranging the necessary tools and materials in an orderly and accessible manner. The next step is to clean the workspace thoroughly, removing anything that may hinder the work process. Standardising the process involves creating a consistent and repeatable cleaning routine that ensures that the workspace is always clean and organized.

Finally, optimising the process involves incorporating the cleaning routine into the overall work process, ensuring that it becomes a natural and automatic part of the daily routine. By following these steps, businesses can ensure that their workspaces are always clean, organised, and optimised for maximum efficiency.

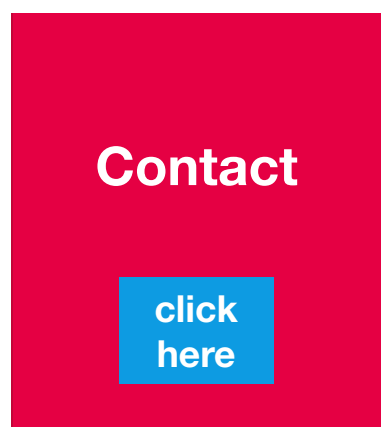
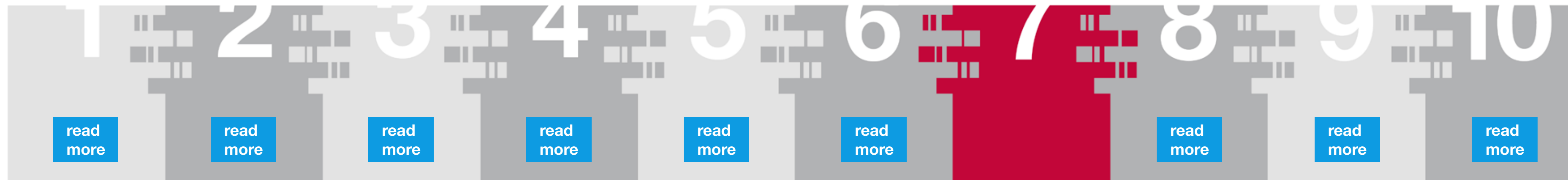
In other words, remove everything you don't need, give everything a fixed place and do all this with fixed procedures and regularity.



10

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Provide Visibility

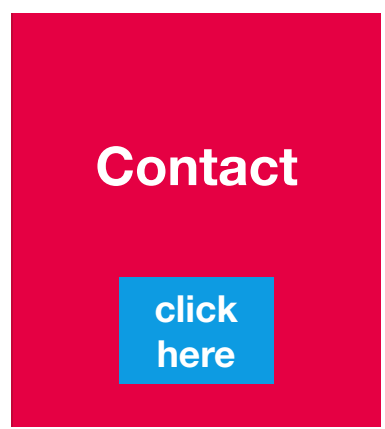
Where is each product located in the workshop? The who, what, where and when of each product must be clear to everyone. This can be achieved, for example, with a large status sign in the workshop.



10

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Improve ergonomics

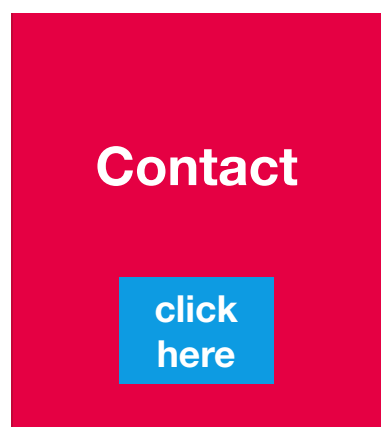
The functional design of the workshop also has a disadvantage: products are moved more often. Transport in the workshop therefore requires extra attention. An important principle is that we eliminate heavy lifting as much as possible. In other words: not more than 23 kg and not frequently. Don't forget that colleagues who help each other with the lift are not at work - there are better solutions for moving heavy panels.



10

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Get rid of the printers

By automating mechanical operations, you can take flexibility and speed to the next level. Advanced CNC machines only deliver what they need if the entire flow of information - from engineering to delivery and service - is digital. So, get rid of the printers!

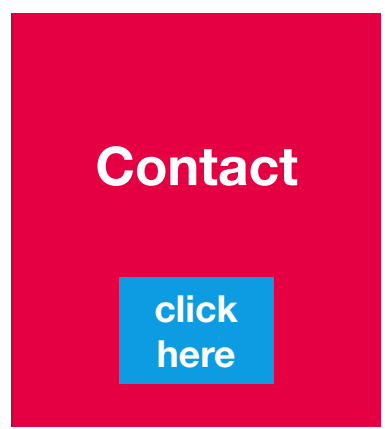
This means that the 3D cabinet design must also be digital. This in turn requires more consistency of the various products or projects. If your department works for various external clients, this may mean that you agree on a standardisation for each client. You may also consider outsourcing the mechanical operations to the supplier of your panels.



10

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Get rid of the inventory

If the production is easier to plan, you will also know exactly which parts are necessary and when. This implies that you can coordinate with suppliers to deliver goods just as they are required. No more inventory: from now on, items will only be delivered when they are needed!



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