

Working on Projects “Upstream” to the Assembly Process

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Often there are compelling reasons for working on Manufacturing projects “Upstream” to the Assembly Process. This might include: Design Engineering, Tool Design & Fabrication, Supplier Visits, Transportation & Shipping, Parts Storing & Warehousing, Support Functions, and Material Handling. See the diagram of the “*Product Development Cycle*” (shown below).

To significantly influence the major impacts, the “upstream” activities can often become the primary focus. By the time some of these “upstream” issues have come all the way “downstream” to Manufacturing Operations (including Final Assembly) it may be too late to resolve the earlier Root Causes.

It often helps to include the entire Product Development Cycle in the early analysis, before just focusing on the problems being observed in Manufacturing Operations. There are significant dividends to including the entire Product Development Cycle in any major analysis of a Manufacturing activity.

Working with the different groups and individuals that own these “upstream” operations, may require some broadening of your Project Team and some increased collaborations, but it is well worth the extra effort.

