

**Q: I am the manager of a small (15-employee) company. Our product requires manual assembly, which is both slow and expensive. Is there a way to improve the productivity of this operation?**

A: A few simple calculations indicate that assembly is indeed a substantial cost in your product, so you are right to look into methods to improve the productivity of this operation.

There are several ways you can improve your assembly operation. First, I noticed that your assemblers must bend over the product as they work, which can cause back strain and reduced productivity. Lift and reorient the product so that workers can sit in a normal upright position, as if they were working at a desk.

Second, replace the simple hand tools used by your assemblers (manual wire strippers, manual coil winding tools, etc.) with more productive (i.e., faster) tools, such automatic wire strippers and electric coil winders.

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