Reducing Value Added Time

Value added time consists of process steps that directly contribute to outcomes the customer values. Methods to optimize value added time include:

Automation - Automating manual value added steps through technologies like robotics, AI, and industrial control systems. This reduces cycle times.

System Integration - Linking islands of automation into fully synchronized systems to remove idle time between connected processes. Enables flow.

Parallel Processing - Performing multiple value added steps concurrently wherever possible rather than sequentially. Improves velocity.

Resource Scheduling - Coordinating shared resources like equipment or specialists across tasks to minimize wait times in queues.

Capable Systems - Selecting machines, equipment, and tools with sufficient capacity and uptime as not to constrain value added activities.

Standardized Work - Documenting and enforcing standardized procedures so workers don't waste time figuring out ad hoc methods.

Error Proofing - Design processes to prevent defects from occurring so no value added time is lost correcting mistakes.

Training - Developing staff skills to perform value added work proficiently, safely, and consistently without wasted activity.

While automating manual work offers the biggest opportunity, various process design techniques can also streamline essential value added steps.

Care should be taken though not to overly optimize value added time at the expense of quality, safety, or required cycle time buffers. Value added activity enables the business so should not be compressed to dangerous extremes.

When designed holistically, smoothed value added time leads to increased efficiency, throughput, and flexibility.