

FactoryFLOW

Material flow optimization for compressed time-to-launch and reduced indirect labor cost

Benefits

- Create initial layouts easily
- Improve layout productivity by determining the best location of machines and departments
- Reduce material handling needs and storage requirements
- Design workstation layouts on the process plan
- Optimize layouts based on qualitative factors such as supervision, energy, noise and dirt requirements
- Diagram material flow intensity
- Calculate material handling costs and requirements

Features

- Flow chart feature to develop material routings
- Ability to cut, copy and paste multiple activity points
- Rapid editing of the material routing file
- One project database instead of many individual data files
- Material handling device utilization calculation
- Data editing via Microsoft Excel
- Automatic container placement routine

Summary

FactoryFLOW™ software is a graphical material handling system that enables engineers to optimize layouts based on material flow distances, frequency and costs. Factory layouts are analyzed by using part routing information, material storage needs, material handling equipment specifications and part packaging (containerization) information. For manufacturers worldwide, more efficient factory layouts directly result in reduced material handling costs and improved structured material flow. FactoryFLOW layout evaluation tools reduce the cost associated with errors caused by physically reworking inefficient layouts. The optimized factory designs bring factories online faster and improve production efficiency. Customer testimonials show that users often recover their investment upon completion of the first study.

FactoryFLOW business value
Manufacturers invest millions of dollars, including hundreds of industrial engineers, to squeeze as much productivity as possible out of their direct labor; the machines on the line, the tooling and fixtures, the workers at their stations and their production processes. Meanwhile, little focus is directed toward the issue of indirect labor – the people and the processes employed to get material from the loading dock to the production line. FactoryFLOW is a unique solution not only in its focus on optimizing indirect labor, but also in its simple yet powerful approach to the issue.



The FactoryFLOW advantage

Typical factory layout or engineering efforts include layout considerations and capacity, utilization, throughput and resource constraint analysis. FactoryFLOW stands alone in situations where the layout is the focus of the project. In situations where there are capacity or process issues, FactoryFLOW adds significant value to the simulation effort and improves the quality of the overall engineering work.

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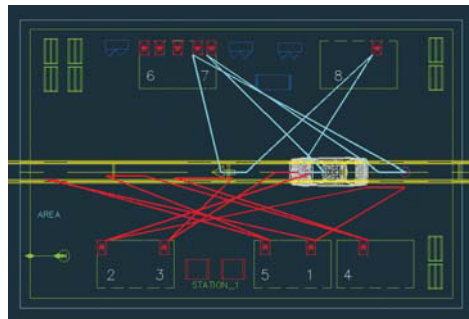
What are the major advantages of FactoryFLOW?

- Lean factory layouts reduce part travel distances, lot sizes, inventory levels and improve communication and throughput, resulting in decreased manufacturing costs and increased productivity
- With improved communication and justification, team buy-in is faster and easier because users can quickly evaluate hundreds of part flows graphically, which is very difficult to do using manual methods
- A systematic, graphical and quantitative approach focuses groups on engineering issues that offer the greatest potential benefits
- No other application offers such a powerful and simple solution for improving the indirect labor often neglected in manufacturing

Using FactoryFLOW

FactoryFLOW uses aisle network information to find the shortest distance between any two points to identify the closest incoming dock and storage area to the point of use for a given part. Material flow studies are performed on alternate layout configurations and automatically compared to determine which layout is better. FactoryFLOW can also be used to compute material handling equipment requirements and optimized tugger (milkrun) routes. Users can also take

advantage of the available container information to auto-populate containers and bins on storage areas and racks in order to create operator walk paths. Factory layout information is stored in a FactoryFLOW database. FactoryFLOW uses this information to help engineers develop layouts that facilitate the manufacturing process. FactoryFLOW generates Euclidean (point-to-point) material flow diagrams, actual path flow diagrams, aisle congestion diagrams and quantitative reports so engineers can compare layout options and improve production efficiency.



Major capabilities

Flow charts The flow chart feature allows you to develop material routings using standard process symbols. You can select multiple activity points and move arrows in the flow chart for mass routing changes. Also, there is a capability to cut, copy and paste multiple activity points for rapid editing of the material routing file.

Data templates and equations

FactoryFLOW provides data templates that contain standard information, enabling you to compute and track micro-activities, such as the amount of time spent cutting open cardboard boxes or walking.

Material flow calculations FactoryFLOW checks the data to verify that the proper devices are being used, and notifies you when material handling devices are under- or over-utilized, so that you can track the use of your operating assets.

Material handling equipment utilization

FactoryFLOW provides tools to assess the requirements for material handling equipment, such as forklifts and tuggers. Optimized routes and schedules for tugger deliveries that occur regularly each day are easily created. Upon analysis a variety of reports can be created including the type of equipment, number of trips by route and material, and the level of utilization. This information is a key to understanding where savings could be made in equipment requirements by adjusting aspects of the factory layout.

Container packing The container placement routines automatically place containers on the shop floor, as well as on racks, using an optimum container packing routine.

Activity points Activity points allow FactoryFLOW to determine exact work center locations when material flow diagrams are created.

Walk path generation Intelligent walk path creation algorithms allow you to see the effect of material placement in a workstation almost immediately.

Reports Besides producing color-coded flow diagrams and graphs, FactoryFLOW allows you to create many types of detailed reports on the layout, material flow, time and cost saving comparisons.

Contact

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