

Title: *What do I do when?*

Problem:

A natural dog food supplier was growing and found that demand peaked irregularly. In the throes of a new business, it was difficult for the owner to manage the operation and take care of the marketing and sales. Yet funds were not yet available to hire an operations manager.



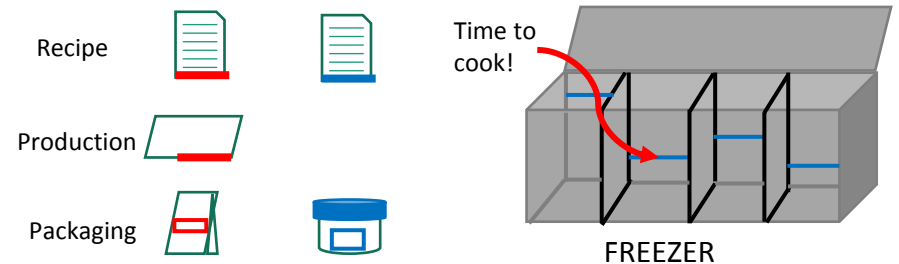
Analysis:

Observing the operation, it was clear that there were a few areas needing attention:

- Managing finished goods inventory to assure nothing expired on the shelf*
- Coordinating cooking activities with inventory needs*
- Improving information flow to avoid errors, particularly in recipe management and labeling*

Countermeasure:

- Visual management was key to all the improvements:*
- Quick calculations determined that one week of inventory was sufficient to meet demands given the rate at which replenishment occurred. A card in the freezer marked the one week point to trigger cooking.*
 - Color coding labels that could travel with product from cooking utensils to final packaging eliminated errors.*
 - Recipes that could be marked with dry erase pens to indicate quantities and steps completed eliminated confusion and recalculating.*



Results:

- The owner was able to spend less time in the kitchen and more time growing the business.*
- The staff could manage the operation based on information in the kitchen rather than communication from the owner.*
- Hiring an operations manager was delayed saving \$\$\$s for the business.*