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The Place of Writing in the World of Industrial Operators

The number of work documents of operators has grown in businesses due in part to the fact of Quality Assurance (ISO 9000), necessitating tracibility and reproducibility and in part to the fact of client service which proposes models adapted to short periods of time.

These work documents such as operating sheets, fabrication orders like the OF (Ordre de Fabrication), technical sheets and plans, equipment implementation specifications, and adjustment sheets, are concerned with product follow-up.

They might be presented in the simplified form of a page or in the form of manuals up to 30 pages in length which include text, drawings, blue prints and tolerance figures, the units of which are linked to the kinds of products and industrial means implemented (such as mm., degree Celsius, hertz, volts, bar, and tolerance % + or -).

Operators are obliged to use them more and more often as positions are vacated and filled or models are changed, which makes it necessary to read and understand orders, visualize the necessary pieces and parts to be assembled, adjust and use instruments of measurement, and calculate the necessary conversions at one's work station.

The concept of these documents generally follows a kind of logic adapted to the product, to the technology implemented, to the history of the business and the writers. This means that a change of workshop or type of equipment can destabilize an operator and limit his mobility as well as his multi-task potential within the establishment, between branches of the same establishment, or between different establishments.

Today, assisting operators in taking over work documents is essential to the employability of these persons, French or foreign, young or old, who have lost contact with the written word, object representations and figures. It is therefore a question of recognizing professional vocabulary, understanding the meaning of orders, the logic of the chain of operation of fabrication and machine functions, and locating information on a page or in a summary.

However, we must go beyond the adaptation of operators to fabrication documents, which would seem to say that the latter fully meet the needs of the former and are above reproach. Very often we have observed that form and content were not adapted to the operators since those who had written the documents were more accustomed to writing, drawing, and doing calculations due to their high level of training and their being unaware of the gap which separates them from the operators.

In order to reduce this gap between writers and operators, we propose the creation of action training for the writers of production documents and for the operators, in order to make the documents more relevant and efficient.