

4. OPERATIONS

4.1 Operational Processes

4.1.1 Communications

At present, when a quotation has been accepted, a manual Job Sheet is raised from the initial Customer Quote specification, which is then passed through to the workshop operatives. Whilst this system is generally satisfactory, it is intended to install a computerised system, which will integrate with the accounting software so as to produce a seamless process. This will improve administration efficiency and minimise communication errors.

All staff are given an Operations Manual, setting out the policies and procedures of the company and this includes a section on all Health & Safety issues.

Weekly meetings are held each Monday morning, with the two Directors and Workshop Foreman to discuss and plan the week's work ahead. Monthly management meetings are also held mid-month to review financial progress, orders and other issues that may be relevant.

4.1.2 Production Procedures

Whilst both Directors are equally conversant with all the procedures, Douglas Smith assumes the main responsibility for client liaison, estimating and drawing up specifications, including any design work required on the CAD system. Dale Hammond is mainly responsible for production - managing the workshop activities and monitoring the progress of jobs and quality of workmanship.

It is the responsibility of the Workshop Foreman to assign Job Sheets to the appropriate operatives, to ensure that the materials are available and manage the day-to-day production in the workshop.

4.1.3 Efficiency & Productivity

The efficiency of the business will be much improved with the introduction of the new job costing and cost management software. This should lead to increased productivity by improving the accuracy and speed of estimating, purchasing, invoicing and also keeping track of time and expenses - so profitability per job can be measured.

Whilst most of the workshop equipment is adequately up-to-date, we need to purchase a new CNC woodworking machine to increase operating speeds and facilitate easier methods of dealing with repetitive tasks – particularly for our new staircase range. We also need to upgrade our dust extraction plant, to improve the efficiency of dust extraction and minimise downtime on cleaning machinery and the work areas.

We believe that these improvements will make us much more competitive when quoting for work and this should lead to an increase in turnover.

4.2 Premises

The new premises will give also improve our work methods by having more space for production, storage of materials and finished work. We will be able to achieve a better layout for our production processes, better administration offices and also a reception area which will provide room to display some of our products, so customers can see the quality of our work.