

Video: Four Signs Your Welding Operation Has Room For Improvement

Want to be more competitive? Of course you do. Manufacturers and metal fabricators are obsessed with increasing productivity—making more parts in less time, without compromising quality—all in the name of being more competitive and more profitable.

But finding cost-effective ways to achieve those goals can be challenging, especially when you're already running a tight ship. That's why welding operations across the country reach out to experts like Fred Schweighardt, Advanced Fabrication Project Manager and International Expert at Airgas, an Air Liquide company.

"Manufacturers are asking daily what can they do to be more competitive," Schweighardt says. "How can they [improve their manufacturing operation](#) to be more profitable, more productive, more effective and all of those things together [to] make them more competitive?" The answer, he believes, may lie in small details that are often overlooked.

Watch the video below to learn why Schweighardt believes these four things indicate that your welding operation may not be as efficient as you think it is:

- Burning through consumables
- Decreasing arc-on times
- Using a large amount of abrasives
- Hiring more staff to improve production

Want a more competitive welding operation? Consider these four simple things.

(Video Transcript)

Everyone wants to be more competitive

Fred Schweighardt: Manufacturers are asking daily, what can they do to be more competitive? How can they improve their manufacturing operation to be more profitable, more productive, more effective, and all of those things together would make them more competitive.

1. Consider your consumables

Fred Schweighardt: So if we notice you're using far too many contact tips, there's potentially some problems in your welding process. Maybe your ground clamps are not working properly, or maybe you have some parameters that are not set correctly that causes you to use more of that particular consumables than you really should.

2. Consider your arc-on times

Fred Schweighardt: A lot of people don't know how often the welder's actually welding. Would it surprise you to know that the average—nationally—is 15 percent? 15 percent of the time the welder has actually got the weld being performed. 15 percent—that's not very much.

3. Consider your abrasive usage

Fred Schweighardt: Typically the need for grinding wheels indicates that there's a quality problem, or there's a consistency problem somewhere in the process. And by noticing that that grinding wheel ratio has gone up, we can often identify a root cause for that, that really has nothing to do with grinding, it's perhaps because the machine had a problem, and it's not welding quite right anymore and it's making a lot of spatter that has to be removed for the product to be commercially viable.

4. Consider how productivity can impact staffing costs

Fred Schweighardt: We continually hear from senior management, that some of the toughest challenges facing them is the ability to acquire skilled welders. Everyone is always hiring. What if you didn't have to hire those people, and you were able to maintain or even increase production with your current headcount?



Airgas talks too.

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