



In lean terminology, there is a term called Poka-Yoke, which, roughly translated from Japanese, means to mistake-proof the manufacturing process. A more accurate translation could be “inadvertent error prevention.” In a nutshell, one tries to make any manufacturing process bulletproof so that inadvertent errors are not created because the system process is simplified and does not allow for errors (or is “idiot-proof”). **One can understand that much of the**

manufacturing process becomes a higher degree of mistake proofing through automation, but what about the rest of the project processing? What about from the time the customer initiates the communication all the way until invoicing? The majority of the time spent processing any project is languishing in the communication and quote/design process.

Think about your current practices for any order or quote in your company. Does your company only process one type of product such as manufacturing modular units, or does it have many different products and services to offer any one customer? The more departments and personnel that are involved, the more likely it is that an error will occur. **Often, the only response is that “more training” is needed to prevent reoccurring errors.** If an error is occurring, one should always review the process first, not the people. Are people following a well-defined process, and are the tools they use for this process error proof? If not, why not?

All the various forms of communication—static written forms, phone calls, e-mails, text messages, schedules, project documents, and company, customer and project standards—become even more complex when more than one user group is affected. Too often, too much is being handled by someone’s memory and non-linked systems. An example of the different groups such sales, design, manufacturing, field crews and the admin. **Everything is communicated via a disjointed process with no tracking or monitoring by a non-mistake-proof single system.**

Just as you do the in the manufacturing process, automate your communication and project process to make it mistake proof. Here are some suggestions to make the project process more automated and therefore enhance inadvertent error prevention.

- ✓ **Create an automated system that works in every department, not just manufacturing!** Have a system that links every department with the same information and yet is flexible enough that each department only has the pertinent information it needs.
- ✓ **Integrate with other Line-of-Business systems Software using application programming interface (API)** – both outbound and inbound for integrating with your existing accounting systems and other line-of-business applications. An example would be an accounting application, AutoCAD/BIM, and other applications. Import jobs and resources, export task updates and schedule changes.
- ✓ **Automate the method of knowing what is needed next and what has yet to be done into one seamless system.** Know what, when and how to do something via automated notification, reminders, and schedules that inform each person or group. This would be not just the manufacturing groups but all admin areas that are all being monitored and tracked for the work being done via an automated system. Every study shows improved productivity when people know they are being monitored and benchmarked.
- ✓ **Automate the communication of the defined standards for the company, customer, and project.** Why not have a simple means that shows if the user clicks an





option, up pops a screen on which the user must choose one of the multiple defined choices before proceeding to the next step? Once the user chooses an option, it is conveyed to all the right people throughout project processing. This way you can define each of the company, customer and project standards and *simplify* them.

- ✓ **Automate the method of project communication so that *everything* is linked to each project.** Why not have all the CAD drawings, e-mails, text, notes, documents and schedules linked to each project? Grouping information like this always makes errors less prone!
- ✓ For the love of everything that is good in this world, make sure you make this **automated system a true web browser system**, not some client terminal-server make-believe cloud wannabe. There is a huge difference between a true web browser system and a shared client terminal system. With a true cloud web browser system, all project information can be processed via any web browser on a cell phone, tablet or computer, which is almost impossible on a terminal server system.

So, how do you implement an automated web browser communication system to create a less error-prone system? Well, there are multiple ways with different levels of needed money and effort.



The all-too-common method is hiring expensive coders or IT gurus who claim, “I can get all of that done for you in-house in about six months to a year. No problem!” If you speak with anyone who has gone the coding-in-house route, you will hear a commonly repeated phrase about the number three. Whatever cost and amount of time these gurus tell you, multiply it by three, and it will be somewhere close to that number to have something resembling what you requested. One thing to keep in mind is that all IT/coders are mechanical gurus who know how to create and fix code, but very few understand user interface issues and can ensure that systems are easy to use.

Another version of the same IT gurus will use a **hodgepodge of different software programs** semi-bundled together to solve different tasks that ***fails to be automated and mistake proof.***

In the end, these two common methods end up with hard-to-use software not doing everything it was meant to provide, and only the IT/coder knows how to keep everything running, which is a formula for disaster. **What works best for the in-house IT group is to use a fully developed browser-based application that does everything mentioned so they can focus their efforts on the project processes and not the coding.**

Many try using an application like SmartSheet™ software for a department. Apps like this are somewhat okay for a department, but what about scaling up for every other division or even more daunting, what about multi-location corporations? Also, that type of software does not have all the items mentioned. Wouldn't it be nice to know the actual status of any project, at every stage from the time of customer contact to invoicing for all divisions, with just a glance at your cell phone?

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So, what is capable of creating an automated Poka-Yoke (mistake-proof) web browser system? AppWright software. Your company would be able to use e-mails, send texts, schedule people, workgroups and departments with capacity schedules, and link all electronic files and documents, and AppWright has custom user “mistake-proof,” very easy-to-use interface screens. It is already proven and used daily by very large multi-location and small single-location home builders, lumberyards, component manufacturers and many other industries. Let AppWright build or work with your in-house IT department to create your automated cloud-based web browser project communication system today. [AppWright Brochure](#)