

Opportunity Discovery Questions

These questions can be used to assess whether a company may be a good fit for Advanced Planning & Scheduling in general, and PlanetTogether specifically.

Return on Investment Potential

1. How much output (\$ per week) is lost due to downtime on critical machines for changeovers, clean-outs, or material shortages?
2. How many working hours are spent per week on: production planning, materials planning, order release, and production meetings?
3. How much additional sales per year could be gained if your lead times were cut in half?
4. What would a 10% reduction in output for three months cost the company due to inability to create efficient production schedules caused by the unexpected departure of a production scheduler?
5. How much working capital would be freed by producing more just-in-time and reducing work-in-process and finished goods inventory by 20%?

Company Goals and Opportunities

1. How does your company compete to win business (quality, flexibility, price, service, etc.)? (PlanetTogether can help with quicker order turnaround and agility to accommodate order change requests)
2. At what rate have your sales and market share been growing? (Growing companies pushing against capacity limits benefit more from optimized planning)
3. What's the company's primary performance measure? (We mostly help with on-time delivery, increasing capacity, and operational cost savings)
4. What's the company's single biggest challenge?
5. Do you have challenges around on-time delivery or shortening lead-times? What's your average lead-time versus actual work time? (Longer lead-times versus work content indicates high delays in the process that we may be able to reduce substantially)
6. Is reducing inventory an important goal? (APS can help produce more just-in-time to reduce inventory)
7. Do you have any significant bottleneck production resources? (Resources that are bottlenecks to output need to be managed carefully to avoid starving them or causing extensive cleanouts/setups)
8. How significant are your changeover or cleanout times on your equipment? (Larger cleanouts mean more potential savings by scheduling in sequences that reduce this.)
9. Is there an initiative to improve OEE (overall equipment effectiveness)? (Keeping resources utilized by avoiding starvation, cleanouts, and setups contribute to OEE)
10. What system/process is used for detailed production scheduling? Is the process standardized? (Most companies use manual spreadsheet systems that rely on knowledge that is only in people's heads and disconnected from other systems, creating risk and errors)
11. How are scheduling decisions and trade-offs made? (APS allows data-driven scenario and metric driven decisions instead of more subjective ones)
12. How much time is spent by planners, schedulers and other production management each week dealing with schedule changes, setting production priorities, and expediting? Are there other significant costs around expediting? (Constant juggling of schedules often creates chaos and wastes the time of important people. APS systemetizes this to reduce time spent significantly.)

13. How much visibility is there on production load and capacity? Would more visibility be helpful? (Most companies are limited to a few days or weeks of schedule visibility because it takes so long to create manual schedules. With APS, visibility can extend to a year or beyond, helping to spot problems and opportunities well in advance.)
14. What's the current process for quoting new order ship dates for non-stock items? (Most companies struggle to get accurate schedule dates quickly, putting orders at risk. With APS, they can quote often in minutes.)
15. How does your planning team make decisions around capacity management, such as adding overtime, shifts, or equipment? Are they able to run scenarios or simulations to support these decisions? (Without a system to run scenarios, decisions can be made with very limited understanding of impact. APS makes it more clear and data-driven.)
16. Do you have issues with your vendors' on-time delivery performance to you? (Many companies have their schedules disrupted by late material deliveries. We can help their suppliers delivery on-time and faster, thus improving their own performance.)
17. Which ERP, if any do you use? Do you use it to manage manufacturing? (We can integrate with virtually any ERP and have integration templates for most modern ones. Many companies run manufacturing outside of their ERP. They can start with PlanetTogether as a disconnected tool and later integrate when the data is improved in the ERP.)