

# Dr. Die Cast



## Is Your Company Full of “One Man Bands” or an Orchestra?

The image of a one man band is one that makes us smile. We picture a man or woman along the street in a vacation spot, such as Santa Monica or Disney Land that entertains us while wrestling with multiple instruments. The one man band doesn't have to be “in tune” with anyone but himself. At best, it's entertaining. At worst, it can be painful to the ears.



At the other end of the spectrum is the symphony orchestra. A group who are professionals both individually and most importantly, as a team. It's not just important for their instruments to be tuned but they must be in harmony with the rest of the musicians. Whether their particular musical selection is or isn't in your top 10 list, you cannot help

but be pleased at their performance. At this point you're asking, “What's the point? What's this got to do with my operation?”



In any organization it is important to have well trained employees. But it is also important, no, make that imperative, that they function well together. Many of us have witnessed dysfunction in various organizations, be they volunteer, sports, political, or business. How do we as leaders and managers take the individuals that join our companies and convert them into team players? I remember one small town company owner complaining and asking his competitor, “How do you always get the good people?” While you could argue that one had a better screening system, I would suggest that there was culturally a difference that encouraged peak performance from existing employees.

In addition to the team and people aspect of coordinating operators, there is also the physical aspect of equipment layout that we sometimes refer to as “machine cells”. When

laying out machinery, how much time do we devote to the art of ergonomics? If we imagine the machine operator as a “cell manager” similar to the orchestra conductor it might help us to construct a more effective layout. Our goal should be a cell in which few or no steps are required in order to safely and efficiently start up the various components. In addition, it is essential to have an effective and accessible system to monitor the key parameters and productivity. Our customers don't pay us by the miles traveled to produce our products. In fact you could make an argument for the opposite. The easier (and more effectively) we produce our products the more timely and profitably we can be.

SMED (Single Minute Exchange of Dies) is generally focused on “exchanging dies”, but it doesn't have to end there. Specifically, SMED is about “Continuous Improvement”. Every time we restart a cell can be a painful exercise in excess effort. Continuous improvement should point us in the direction of looking at every aspect of our operations. I have found that for any given machine there is an “average down time” loss for each interruption. If you simply record the number of interruptions throughout each shift you will have identified the source of much of your in-house scrap and lost efficiencies. While it is often possible

### Who's Dr. Die Cast?

Robert P. McClintic  
*Die Casting Consultant*

Bob McClintic & Associates  
2544 Almar Street  
Jenison, MI 49428-9108

rmcclintic@ameritech.net  
www.drdiecast.com  
616.669.2932

to achieve faster cycle times, the greatest improvements are generally to be found in improving reliability A.K.A. eliminating the root cause of the interruptions.

Each step we take toward improving our operations brings us closer to the goal of harmonizing the team. Ready conductor, “tap-tap-tap”!

## Did you know...

The goal of SMED is a die changeover in less than 10 minutes. The SMED methodology is simple and applies to all die or tooling exchanges. It works in all languages and companies around the world. NADCA has publications, as well as a 3-part course on SMED. These tools will guide you in understanding and implementing SMED. In addition, installation steps, design standardization and training strategies are discussed. The purchase the publication or access to the courses on SMED simply visit the NADCA Marketplace and type “SMED” in the search box.

## NADCA MARKETPLACE

### What is the Marketplace?

The Marketplace is NADCA's new online store. You can purchase the items below. Trying to register for someone else? No problem! This is also an option in the new Marketplace.

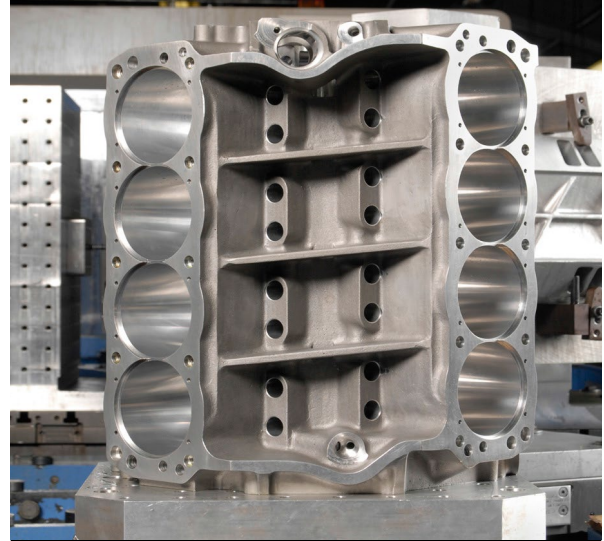
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Simply add the item or items to your shopping cart and proceed to checkout! To view more details on items available in the Marketplace visit: [www.diecasting.org/store](http://www.diecasting.org/store).



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For more information contact [robert.esling@arcelormittal.com](mailto:robert.esling@arcelormittal.com)

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