

Overview

A national food manufacturer operating multiple high-mix production lines partnered with POWERS to improve throughput, labor productivity, and execution discipline across its operations. As part of a 26-week engagement, POWERS deployed DPS (Digital Production System) as the operational backbone for daily management.

DPS gave frontline leaders a consistent way to see when capacity was off, quickly focus attention, and take action before losses compounded. The result was measurable, sustained improvement at the shift, line, and value-stream levels.

The Starting Point

Strong Demand. Limited Visibility.

The operation was growing, but performance was inconsistent.

- Slow shift startups were eroding available capacity.
- Bottlenecks moved daily, yet leaders lacked a clear signal showing where losses were occurring.
- Downtime and lost production were discussed, but were neither consistently measured nor reviewed.
- Shift handoffs lacked structure, leading to repeated issues and missed follow-through.

Leadership knew improvement was possible but lacked a reliable, shared view of performance at the pace of production.

POWERS identified the core issue early: the operation lacked a consistent way to surface capacity problems quickly enough to win the shift

Enter DPS

Turning Capacity Into the Signal

POWERS implemented DPS as part of the plant's Management Operating System, embedding it directly into daily routines rather than treating it as a standalone tool.

With DPS in place, supervisors and leads began tracking:

Plan vs Actual production by shift and line

Startup effectiveness measured through structured Startup Scorecards

Capacity utilization broken down into Attainment, Lost Time, Reject/Waste, and Unidentified Losses

Downtime events categorized by cause and reviewed through Paretos



DPS did not diagnose root causes. It made capacity gaps visible early, signaling that something was off and prompting immediate follow-up by the people closest to the work.

What DPS Exposed—And Why It Mattered

Startup Losses Were Setting the Tone for the Shift

Startup Scorecards revealed recurring early-hour losses that routinely put shifts behind plan. Teams were spending the rest of the day reacting rather than executing.

With this visibility, supervisors tightened startup procedures, clarified readiness expectations, and addressed gaps before production ramped up. Startup performance stabilized, giving teams a stronger foundation to win each shift.

Micro-Stops Were Quietly Consuming an Hour per Shift

As DPS data matured, trend reviews exposed frequent micro-stops that had previously gone unnoticed. Replenishment delays of 1 to 2 minutes, occurring dozens of times per shift, were collectively costing nearly an hour of production time.

Once visible, these losses were addressed through layout adjustments, clearer operator standard work, and upstream coordination. The fixes were straightforward, but only possible once the signal was clear.

One High-Volume Line Was Severely Overstaffed

Cycle time studies supported by DPS data revealed major imbalances on a high-running SKU. Using objective capacity data, operations leadership rebalanced the line, reducing headcount by 35 percent while increasing the expected run rate.

This change immediately improved labor productivity and execution discipline without sacrificing output.

A Value Stream Was Operating Far Below Potential

At the value-stream level, DPS trend analysis showed frozen packing operations running at roughly 50 percent capacity utilization due to misaligned work-in-process strategies.

With this insight, leadership adjusted upstream production and flow. Capacity utilization climbed dramatically to 97 percent, improving stability and labor efficiency.

Winning Shifts, Repeatedly

Results Enabled by DPS

By embedding DPS into daily management routines and making performance visible where work was being done, the operation created a tighter connection between plan, execution, and response. Capacity signals were no longer reviewed after the fact. They were visible during the shift, enabling faster decisions and more consistent follow-through.



Winning Shifts, Repeatedly (continued)

To support this, the team expanded DPS into a visual management tool on the shop floor. Large-screen monitors were installed at production lines and in key management visibility areas at a critical moment, as the operation ramped up a major production run for an important customer.

WITH DPS EMBEDDED INTO BOTH DAILY ROUTINES AND THE PHYSICAL PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT, THE OPERATION ACHIEVED:

33%

increase in cases per shift within one month on a key packing line

1,300

cases per shift—record output across stabilized operations

11%

improvement in labor productivity, measured in pounds per labor hour

10%

reduction in direct labor costs through improved balance and utilization

ANNUALIZED SAVINGS POTENTIAL

\$750,000

tied to capacity and downtime improvements

35%

improvement in labor productivity, measured in pounds per labor hour

50% > 97%

capacity utilization improvement in frozen packing value stream

Just as important, the gains held strong. DPS kept performance visible shift after shift, reinforcing accountability, alignment, and execution discipline.



The POWERS Role

Making DPS Stick

POWERS led the implementation of DPS and integrated it into a broader execution system that included supervisor standard work, tiered meetings, structured performance reviews, Action Item ownership, and disciplined shift handoffs.

This ensured DPS was not just adopted, but used consistently by frontline leaders and reinforced by management behaviors.

Why This Matters

DPS proved effective not because it automated decisions, but because it equipped leaders with timely, structured visibility into capacity. When teams could clearly see that performance was off, they acted sooner, focused better, and won more shifts.

That is the role DPS is designed to play.

Ready to Win More Shifts with Clear Capacity Signals?

In this operation, DPS gave frontline leaders early visibility into when capacity was off, where to focus, and how to take control before losses compounded. That visibility turned inconsistent execution into repeatable shift wins.

If your teams are working to tighten shift startups, improve Plan vs Actual conversations, or bring greater discipline to daily performance, DPS can provide the shared visibility needed to act sooner and lead with confidence.

Schedule a Demo



See how DPS helps teams spot capacity gaps early and win every shift.

