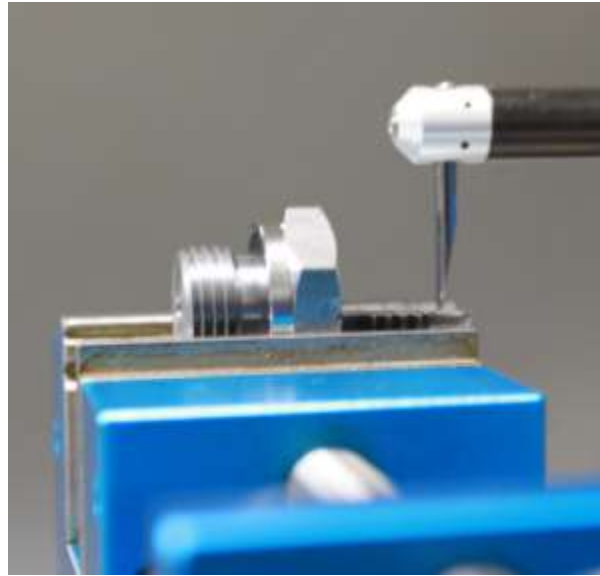


# INCREASING QUALITY STANDARDS



Quality has taken on a whole new level of importance for manufacturers. The brand damage that resulted over the past few years due to low quality products has been substantial. With steadily increasing quality standards, the IT systems supporting production processes must also be capable of continuous improvement. As new processes are created, they must also be managed and measured, causing a ripple effect of difficulty. No longer is it sufficient to simply identify a quality problem. It must now also be possible to take immediate action to contain any potential fallout from a quality issue. With today's tight production schedules, Lean manufacturing initiatives and Just-In-Time inventory strategies, a quality problem left unchecked can quickly balloon into a very serious issue, one that significantly impacts brand integrity and the bottom line.

For example, in the automotive industry, vehicles used to be primarily mechanical devices, with options limited to different exterior colors and a few interior appointments. Today, however, the complexity involved in making an automobile is unprecedented, with a vast range of options from Bluetooth capabilities, to automatic parking and voice-based commands. The software required to activate these new options is staggering, with base models requiring up to one-and-a-half million lines of code per vehicle! This added complexity has made quality control much more difficult. Increasing the number of quality checks may improve product quality. However, it could also slow down production, resulting in increased labor and inventory costs in an environment that calls for greater efficiency.

This scenario illustrates a fundamental challenge for manufacturers, and points to the reason why steadily increasing “big data” requirements have become the modern manufacturing challenge. In order to strike the delicate balance between quality, cost and managing product complexity, many manufacturers must now consider new ways to generate efficiency while maintaining brand equity. This includes streamlining operations, performing continuous improvement and working with new suppliers and partners all over the world. And, even more importantly, the need to achieve greater visibility across operations has been exacerbated – both within your own four walls and out into your supply chain.

Source: <http://www.aprison.com/blog/2013/10/increasing-quality-standards/>