

SOP POCKET GUIDE 1.0

**How to save
time making
manufacturing
instructions**

GEMBADOCS



Why SOPs matter

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are essential for ensuring consistency, quality, and safety in manufacturing processes.

They provide detailed, step-by-step instructions for performing tasks in a standardized way - crucial for maintaining high-quality outputs, minimizing errors, and ensuring compliance with industry regulations.

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), SOPs are particularly valuable because they help streamline operations, scale processes efficiently, and on-board new employees quickly.



Types of SOPs in manufacturing

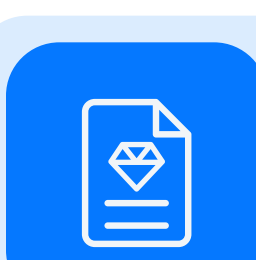
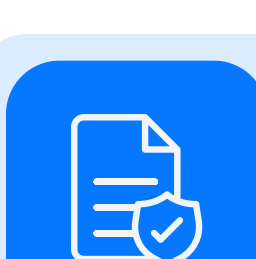
There are different types of SOPs tailored to specific needs in manufacturing:

- **Operational SOPs:** These guide the performance of day-to-day tasks such as machine setup, production processes, and equipment operation.
- **Safety SOPs:** These outline procedures for maintaining a safe working environment, including handling hazardous materials and operating machinery safely.
- **Quality control SOPs:** These ensure that products meet quality standards through consistent testing, inspection, and documentation.



What to include in a good SOP

An effective SOP involves:

-  **Step-by-step instructions:** Clearly outline each step required to complete a task, using simple and unambiguous language.
-  **Consistency:** Ensure that the SOP reflects consistent procedures and uses standardized terminology.
-  **Visual aids:** Incorporate diagrams, flowcharts, videos, or photos to make the instructions easier to understand and follow.
-  **Testing and validation:** Before finalizing the SOP, have it tested by the team members who will use it to ensure clarity and effectiveness.

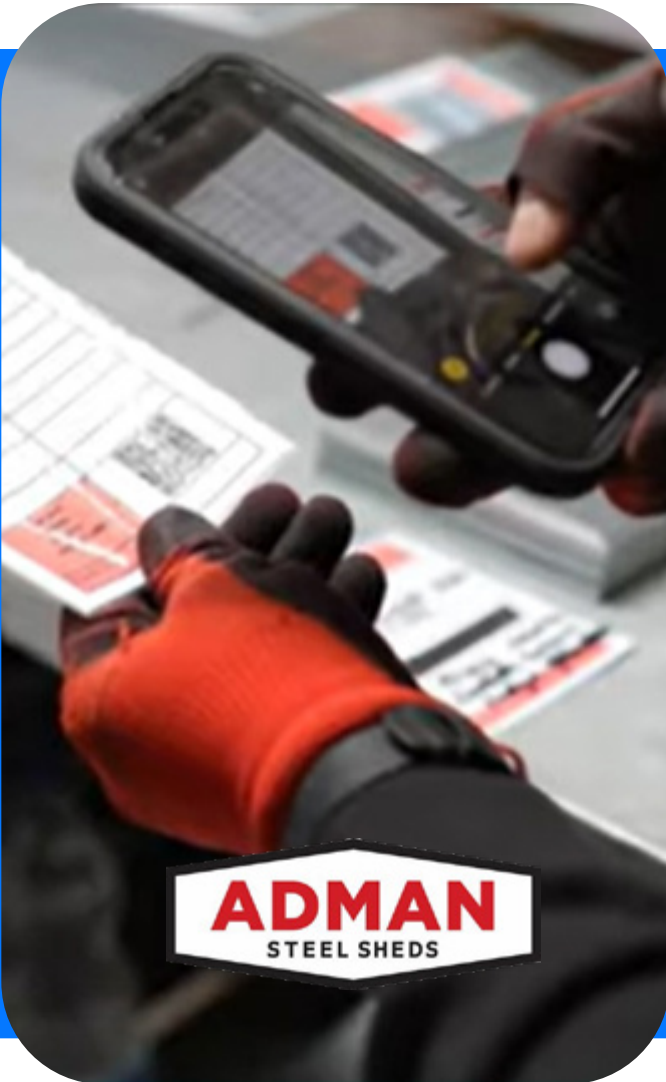
Use technology to save time

Leverage digital tools, like GembaDocs, to easily draft, store, and distribute SOPs, making it simple to keep your procedures up-to-date and accessible to all employees.

Templates and software can also help standardise the format of your SOPs, ensuring consistency across the board. Look for a tool that:

- **Is easy to update:** Edit, insert and move steps into SOPs in seconds taking the struggle out of revisions.
- **Is easy to access:** Via mobile device, PC, printed version and QR codes - all with up to date live links. Easily added to your existing documents.
- **Has integrated photo editing:** Take photos, upload, write, highlight and draw on photos all within GembaDocs app.
- **Has videos enabled:** Use a photo or a short video to describe your process step.
- **Can document control:** Reference and revision numbers are centrally managed. Approval process for compliance against standards like ISO9000 / AS9100D.





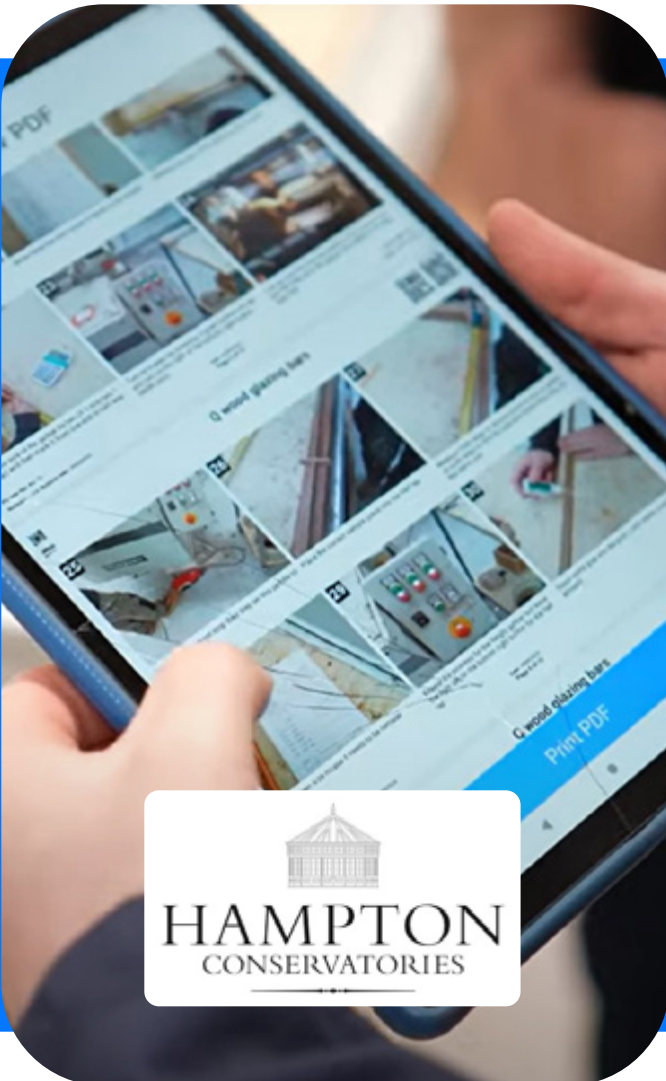
CASE EXAMPLE

WATCH VIDEO

Adman Steel Sheds

Adman Steel Sheds experienced a significant boost in efficiency and morale when they adopted a lean manufacturing approach and standardized their processes.

The visual nature of these standardized SOPs greatly enhanced staff onboarding, making it easier for new employees to learn their roles. For example, when Oshing joined Adman Steel, he mastered his tasks and machinery twice as fast, thanks to having access to clear visual SOPs - and the ability to revisit training videos as needed. This ensured he could perform tasks correctly on the first attempt, reducing errors and boosting productivity.



CASE EXAMPLE

WATCH VIDEO

Hampton Conservatories

Hampton Conservatories streamlined their operations by creating SOPs for internal process documentation through to detailed 90-page installation guides which have been used by international installers.

By breaking down complex processes into manageable chunks, they made them easier to understand and more accessible. Production manager, Dwain Steel, observed that before GembaDocs, the company risked losing critical knowledge when experts retired. Now, with SOPs as the knowledge base, they can easily upskill staff, implement lean manufacturing, and transfer knowledge to apprentices. This approach has “cut the learning process in more than half”.

Watch over 400 videos of GembaDocs, SOPs and lean manufacturing in action

WATCH VIDEOS



How SOPs improve operational efficiency

SOPs can dramatically improve operational efficiency in your manufacturing processes by:

- **Reducing errors:** Clear, precise instructions minimise mistakes, leading to fewer disruptions and less rework.
- **Speeding up training:** New employees can quickly get up to speed by following well-documented procedures, reducing the time needed for training.
- **Enhancing productivity:** SOPs streamline tasks, eliminating unnecessary steps and ensuring that work is done right the first time.
- **Improving communication:** SOPs serve as a reference point, reducing the need for repeated explanations and instructions.
- **Facilitating continuous improvement:** SOPs provide a baseline that you can analyse and improve upon, driving continuous operational excellence
- **Facilitates automation:** Clear SOPs make it easier to identify and implement automation opportunities, further saving time and resources.



In numbers

50%

In numbers
Implementing SOPs reduces process lead time by 30% and organizations that follow SOPs see a 50% reduction in production downtime

35%

Error reduction
Following standard operating procedures can reduce errors by 35%

40%

Training efficiency
SOPs cut employee training time by 40% on average and those with well-documented SOPs experience a 35% faster on-boarding process for new employees

20%

Cost savings
Implementing SOPs can reduce operational costs by 20%, lead to a 20% increase in product quality and adherence results in a 30% decrease in rework

70%

Improved compliance
Companies with SOPs experience 50% fewer compliance issues and 70% more likely to pass audits successfully

Continuous improvement

SOPs are not static documents—they should evolve as your processes improve. By regularly reviewing and updating your SOPs, you can ensure they remain relevant and effective, supporting continuous improvement initiatives like Lean Manufacturing and Kaizen.

- Lean manufacturing: SOPs support lean practices by standardising processes, reducing waste, and ensuring that every task adds value to the final product.
- Kaizen: Continuous improvement is at the heart of Kaizen. SOPs provide a baseline from which to measure improvements, making it easier to identify areas for enhancement and track progress.
- Quality assurance: SOPs are the backbone of quality control, helping to ensure that every product meets the company’s standards. A SOP is vital for documenting and maintaining the consistency required for the likes of ISO 9001 certification. It ensures that all processes are clearly defined and followed, which is critical for passing audits and maintaining certification.



Pitfalls to avoid

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Over complication: Keep the SOP simple and focused. Avoid unnecessary details that could overwhelm the reader
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Lack of regular updates: SOPs can quickly become outdated if not regularly reviewed. Make it a priority to update them whenever there are changes in processes, technology, or regulations.
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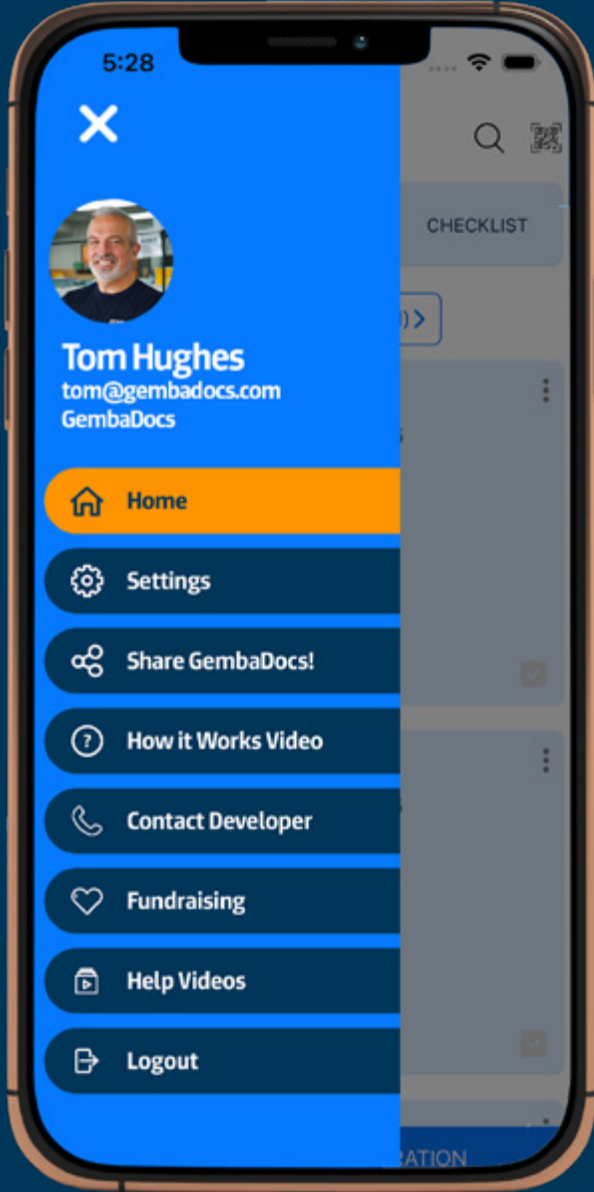
Ignoring employee input: Involve the people who will be using the SOPs in the creation process. Their insights can help make the instructions more practical and user-friendly. You’ll also be able to identify new methods or time-saving opportunities viewing a process from another angle.
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Don’t go solo: A SOP should be written by the person mainly in charge of the task, but then reviewed by another to check it actually works!

Ready to start?

Get started with SOPs with **GembaDocs**.
Access templates, tools, and resources that will help you create SOPs quickly and effectively.

GET STARTED



Bonus content