

# Getting the best out of your organisation's “intelligent assets”

## How a self-assessment tool on Ergonomics & Human Factors can empower people

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### **Abstract**

It is indicated that the ergonomic design approach plays an important role in the struggle of enterprises to deliver world-class performances (Manufacturing Excellence). Ergonomic activities (preventive and curative) on the shop floor are part of this struggle, and one of the possible tools for this is the Self-Assessment Tool Ergonomics/Human Factors (SATEH). The purpose of SATEH is to enable industrial organisations to determine to what extent the (design of a) production system is fitted to the user of the system, the task to be carried out and the environmental factors. SATEH is dealt with and explained on the basis of practical cases. The strength of SATEH is that one starts to think about one's own work situation and possible improvements, thus providing a contribution to the Manufacturing Excellence of one's own enterprise.

### **Introduction**

In a world, which is continuously changing, it is difficult to remain competitive. Companies do everything they can to satisfy changes in customer wishes, in applied technologies and in the strategies, which are used to compete with each other. Some companies react by moving the production activities to low-wage countries as quickly as possible, leaving a core of development and other strategic activities behind in the mother country. Others feel they are forced to think about the production activities that have to lead to best class practices.

Thinking about shop floor activities has attracted an enormous amount of attention at Philips. In his book “Facts on Factories; in search of manufacturing excellence”, Van Breukelen (1996) describes the paths that can lead to Manufacturing Excellence<sup>1</sup>. In “The new shop floor management”, Suzuki (1993) describes an

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cor Boonstra, president of Philips, has taken Manufacturing Excellence one step further to Business Excellence. In July 1999 he launched a company quality program “Business Excellence through Speed and Teamwork (BEST)”, amongst others emphasising the importance of people in the organisation.