



1913

Ford's Moving Assembly Line

Henry Ford realized he could sell more automobiles by producing them more efficiently. He developed a system of production that involved a moving assembly line on a conveyor belt around the building. On this assembly line, workers did not move to the automobiles; the automobiles came to them. Each worker was given a specific task to complete, which they would repeat every time a new car came to them along the conveyor belt. This increased the number of Model T's Ford could make in a day, thus increasing the number of Model T's that could be sold around the world.



¹ Ford Motor Companies moving assembly line.

Courtesy of the National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library

² Model T chassis on assembly line

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³ Model T assembly line

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1913 Ford's moving assembly line

Credits:

Lacey, Robert. *Ford: The Men and the Machine*. Boston: Little Brown & Co. 1986

Keywords/Topics:

Questions:

1. How did the day-to-day work of plant workers change as a result of the moving assembly line?
2. Did the job of an assembly line worker become more or less dangerous?
3. Did the moving assembly line make it harder for other car companies to compete?
4. Why was efficiency important to Henry Ford?

Links to Internet Websites:

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/ford.htm>

<http://www.hfmgv.org/exhibits/hf/default.asp>

<http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu>

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Courtesy of the National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library

Some parts of the assembly line were outside. The workers pictured above are loading car bodies onto the chassis. This method was safer and easier than lifting the body onto the chassis.

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Unattended Model T's at the Highland Park Plant.

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The moving assembly line cut production time from 12.5 hours per car to 93 minutes per car. By 1925, over 9,000 Model T's were produced every day. 15 million Model T's were manufactured by the time production ceased. The Model T remained the most produced car in the world until 1972, when the Volkswagen Beetle surpassed it.