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CASE STUDY: GOING LEAN

Sealing company turns to development organization to increase performance levels and customer satisfaction.

Founded in 1863, Greene, Tweed (GT) is a leader in sealing solutions. From composites to fiber optic connectors and seals to thermoplastics, the company supplies to markets including aerospace, semiconductor, oil field, fluid handling, and medical to give customers a competitive advantage in their marketplace while decreasing their total system cost.

PROBLEM

In the fall of 2005, GT management initiated a project to introduce Lean and Six Sigma (LSS) concepts and methodologies across the global organization. The Lean and Six Sigma project was designed to provide the structure, training, and leadership needed to install and sustain Lean Six Sigma throughout Greene, Tweed as the organization's Continual Process Improvement methodology while creating a culture of continual improvement and process ownership. The purpose of Lean Six Sigma was to elevate Greene, Tweed to higher performance levels, which would drive financial results and customer satisfaction.

SOLUTION

The company partnered with the Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center (DVIRC) to tailor and execute a personnel awareness and competency development program centered on lean thinking and implementing the Lean Enterprise. At the same time, Tunnell Consulting was used to deliver Six Sigma training and Green Belt/Black Belt certification programs/projects. Initially, a corporate LSS Steering Team was established (with DVIRC and Tunnell as active members) to guide the overall effort (local LSS Steering Teams were later created at each GT manufacturing site) and set objectives and financial goals.

The Steering Team planned and delivered a comprehensive lean education and certification program that provided LSS awareness to all employees (overview), lean simulation exercises, and hands-on, project-based certification programs to select employees.

DVIRC assisted Greene, Tweed in the analysis of critical value streams by way of value stream mapping to expose and document significant opportunities where waste could be eliminated. An organization-wide schedule of certification and other high-impact projects was planned and executed over the first 18 months. This activity included: regular Steering Team reviews; expert consulting and guidance by DVIRC/Tunnell; hands-on involvement and visibility by management and steering team members; global communication; and a financial scorecard to track progress. In addition, several full-time LSS positions were created to support efforts at each site and across the company. Certification projects were selected for high impact and visibility and implemented. Improvement results and best practices were communicated across the organization. The culture change required for successful and sustained Continual Improvement is impacted one employee at a time, through project leadership, project involvement, and the observed realization of financial and customer-satisfaction results.



RESULTS

While Greene, Tweed's cultural transformation is not complete, the company has installed and is leveraging LSS as the backbone for Continual Improvement across the organization. In addition, the following benefits have been realized.

- Cost savings of >3% of sales
- Improved customer and internal quality levels of >40%
- >20% reduction in process waste
- 75 employees certified in Lean
- 30 Lean Champions certified
- 20 Certified Green Belts
- 10 Certified Black Belts
- Steering teams (corporate and local) for sustaining improvement

ABOUT THE DVIRC

The DVIRC is a leading private, non-profit economic development organization established in 1988 to serve the needs of nearly 5,000 small- to mid-sized advanced manufacturing enterprises (SME) in five counties throughout the Philadelphia region. The organization's primary focus is to grow business value for clients through consulting services; talent development; and regional, state and federal resource assistance, helping to establish the region as an internationally recognized leader in manufacturing competitiveness. We believe growing business value improves the standard of living and quality of life for those who live and/or work in the region a diverse board of directors comprised of executives from the manufacturing, banking, legal and economic development communities govern the DVIRC.

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