



Lean in a Traditional Environment

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Lean can mean many things to many people. Within the context of manufacturing it is generally best known for its focus on waste reduction in order to improve overall customer value. Here Lean techniques are introduced as an integral part of a manufacturing process that has been brought in-house in order to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

The Client

A major manufacturer of commercial lighting with a range of premium products with superior design content, wished to improve their customer service by operational agility, automating a highly skilled 'spinning' operation, and reducing third party supplier dependence.

Our Approach

Our clients products were assembled around a spun aluminium disk provided by a wide range of small local sub-contractors. It was decided to bring this part of the manufacturing process in-house. The Consultancy Company was asked to create three manufacturing cells and integrate a range of bespoke machines while applying lean manufacturing techniques to ensure the process introduced was efficient and waste-free.

Our consultants developed and modelled a range of cell options and factory layouts. Once thoroughly tested, a single solution was agreed and an internal project team created. The project was managed and the team facilitated during the planning and implementation of this major project so that a new operational process was achieved without any breakdown in supply.

We were able to provide manufacturing and project management expertise and to create cells that were scheduled using Kanban pull from final assembly; they were operated using single piece flow and were made flexible by the application of SMED set up techniques.

This complex project was delivered on time, within the original budget and provided a range of outstanding benefits.

Benefits/Outcomes

- Set up reduced from hours to minutes
- Supply lead times reduced by 75%
- Batch sizes reduced by 80%
- Exposure to key sub-contractors removed
- Process absorbed from sub-contract without additional cost.

The Kidlington Centre
High Street
Kidlington
Oxford OX5 2DL
T 01865 841177
F 01865 841155

The Genesis Centre
Science Park South
Birchwood
Warrington
WA3 7BH
T +44 (0) 1925 661715
F +44 (0) 1925 661800

info@the-consultancy.co.uk
www.the-consultancy.co.uk

REGISTERED ADDRESS
15-19 CAVENDISH PLACE, LONDON W1M 0DD
REGISTERED NUMBER 2861227



“We felt we had regained control of the company, and were able to schedule and supply with far greater accuracy and efficiency.”

Client Managing Director