



Turning Off the Tap on Waste

Moen Makes Lean a Priority in its Manufacturing Operations

A point of pride in a new kitchen or bathroom can be a Moen faucet. Renowned for quality, Moen creates fashion plumbing products for a global market. Many of those products are manufactured in the company's Sanford, NC plant.

In 2011, the plant completed a Lean transformation project under the guidance of continuous improvement and quality manager, Tim Wyman.

"We were tasked with reducing operating costs of the facility," says Wyman. "Having come from an automotive industry background where Lean is assumed, I understood we had to do it in order to stay open and to remain competitive with our overseas competition."

Partnering For Success

To initiate the project, Wyman assembled a team dedicated to the task of Lean transformation. The team sought buy-in from the plant staff and made clear the expectations for success—who would be needed, the scope of work, and the opportunity to level those expectations. What was still needed was a partner to educate Moen's workforce about Lean.

"We chose NC State because they're close, they're culturally aware and there's a level of investment in our success," explains Wyman. "These folks are, in essence, North Carolinians working for North Carolinians. They have skin in the game."

The Lean transformation team turned the concepts and precepts of Lean into an instructional module for the workers on the shop floor, and dubbed it Lean 101.

Moen Challenge

Reduce operating costs at Moen's Sanford facility

IES Solution Lean Manufacturing

Benefits
\$1.5 million in cost savings

Moen's workers were cautious at first.

"They'd experienced change for change's sake before," Wyman says. "What Lean needed to mean to them was, 'How do I get my 40 hours and still see my family? How do I not do stupid things that I know are a waste of time and energy?'"

Wyman had to seek buy-in from management, as well, and invited the senior vice-president of operations to go through a scaled-down version of Lean 101 instruction.

Now, 90 percent of the Moen plant's workers have participated in Lean education. Wyman knows that the training is vital to the plant's survival.

"It's a fight, not a walk through the daisy field," he says. "It's a fight to keep jobs."

One-and-a-Half Million Drops in the Bucket

As of November 2012, Moen has realized nearly \$1.5 million in savings directly attributable to Lean. Wyman illustrated the point with a rain gauge-type graphic that fills as savings increase.

“ This has fundamentally changed our operations. It has changed our material flow, our discussions with our sister plant and discussions with master planning and scheduling... That's an empowered workforce. ”

—Tim Wyman, Quality Manager, Moen

"A year from startup, we saw our first drops in the cylinder," he says. "Going forward, we'll keep the ground we've gained, and I'd like to see another \$50,000 a month [in savings]. It would be fair to start thinking we could get there."

He also sees enormous benefits beyond dollars and cents.

"If I look at my ROI, I win," he says. "We keep work here. We keep families and kids going to college. Bellies full. Houses warm. That's what you get out of this."



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*Produced and Updated in the US; August 2015
Publication Number: CS-0815-0017.00*

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