

**Client:** Business Services, major high street bank  
**Assignment:** Lean Pilot demonstrating the use of Lean for bottom-up Continuous Improvement

## Lean demonstrates the benefits of bottom-up Continuous Improvement

As part of the wider change programme in our client's organisation, we wanted to show how Lean could work as a vehicle for bottom-up Continuous Improvement in a natural work team. The bank's Document Reception Centre (DRC) was nominated for an initial pilot.

With a team of 26, the DRC handles mortgage and other documents coming into the centre where they are processed and entered onto electronic systems before the hard copies are stored.

Before the pilot, the office environment was cramped, cluttered and physically isolated from the rest of the Business Services team. Not surprisingly, morale was low and performance was suffering as a result.

The challenge to change all this started in January 2007.

### Our approach

The approach consisted of three phases:

#### Phase 1: Manager and team leader engagement

The DRC Manager and local Team Leaders were trained in basic Lean principles and guided on their role within the future Lean DRC Team. This was achieved in a workshop environment as well as individual guidance and coaching.

#### Phase 2: Team member lean training and application

The complete DRC team was broken down into three distinct teams, each a natural work group within the DRC department. Each team undertook a five-day training programme that combined classroom training in Lean Theory with hands-on application of Lean in the workplace. As part of the hands-on activity, the teams were facilitated in solving real local problems and removing waste from their own processes using Lean as a methodology.

### Phase 3: Building Lean into the daily operation of the DRC team

Post training, the team adopted the Lean Daily Management System® as a framework to build Lean thinking into the day-to-day operation of the Team. This included holding Daily Workgroup meetings, using Primary Visual Displays and utilising the 20 Keys of Office Kaizen® as a means of measuring and stimulating the team's lean journey.

As part of the team's training, a number of specific tools and techniques were used, including:

- Lean Training
- Lean Daily Management System®
- Kaizen mini-blitz
- 5S
- Spaghetti Diagrams
- Value Stream Mapping

### Value delivered

Impressive benefits realised by the teams included:

- The floor area need for the operation has been reduced by 25%
- A £30k saving from recycling plastic sleeves with customers
- Removing plastic sleeves has saved 6hrs of processing time per week
- Improving the co-ordination between Mortgage Processing and the DRC has eliminated 6hrs of activity per week
- Absence has reduced from 10% to 3%
- Eliminating the need to pack and unpack boxes has saved 1.5hrs of processing time each week
- The amount of rework and rejected items has reduced by 12%
- Managers spend 3hrs per day more on colleague development and Customer Service
- Time dedicated to colleague training and improvement work has increased by 15hrs per week
- 37 improvements identified during the Lean implementation and 24 delivered. Continuous Improvement is now a way of life.