

Client: Specialist pipeline manufacturer
Assignment: Lean improvement activity and skills transfer across the entire organisation

Global Continuous Improvement Programme

This global supplier of pipeline technology wanted to realign old processes and develop workforces in the UK, USA and Brazil to embrace Continuous Improvement.

Our brief was to develop and deliver a programme that would introduce and foster a culture of Continuous Improvement at all levels across the whole organisation, in manufacturing, planning, engineering, supply chain, project management, sales, marketing, finance, HSEQ and HR.

Working with the senior management team, we endorsed Lean as the most effective approach to increase quality, capacity, flexibility and customer service. This is now established in the organisation, providing a common language for improvement for over one thousand people operating in English and Portuguese.

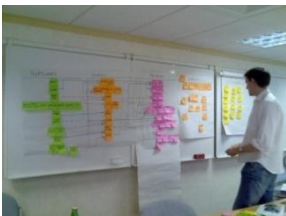
Our approach

Considering the numbers of people, the different social cultures, language, and regulated technology – we needed an approach that would:

- Get everyone thinking how to eliminate waste in their everyday activities
- Work across a wide variety of functions, locations and languages
- Achieve immediate benefits to demonstrate the potential of performance improvement
- Promote CI as a vital component for future business success
- Integrate seamlessly with other established business systems

Getting started

To begin, we worked with the senior team to define the programme structure, identify senior sponsors and facilitate a direction setting workshop for senior managers. Together we scoped the programme and developed the implementation approach. Then we launched it to managers in the UK, USA and Brazil. This ensured everyone understood what CI and Lean meant to their business and held a shared view of the direction the programme would take.



Process Mapping

Detailed roll-out and skills transfer plans, training modules, training materials and Lean toolkits were then developed.

Managing for success

It was clear the programme would have to be managed around fast changing production and commercial demands, complex shift patterns, and resource logistics.



Rapid Improvement Event

With this in mind, we established measures to track operational improvement, levels of participation and the programme schedule. We set up a joint Steering Group chaired by the Chief Operating Officer to review progress, identify and eliminate obstacles and quantify benefits. We also helped the internal CI team to manage the plan, control learning materials, and lead the communications.

Building capability for Continuous Improvement

The core objective of the programme was to transfer knowledge and skills to 16 leadership teams and 75 operational teams – 1000 people in total – for the company to achieve full self-sufficiency in CI.

Our proven Diffusion Strategy was the mechanism to do this. First we trained and mentored teams of internal facilitators on each site in the philosophy and tools of Lean, plus a range of presentation and change management skills. We delivered Lean training to managers across the organisation, and worked with this group on customer shadowing activity to gain better insight into their needs, and to establish KPIs reflecting the core purpose of their teams.

Our consultants then worked in partnership with the facilitators and managers to roll the programme out to functionally based 'Learning Families' across the rest of the organisation. This was delivered through a series of events and workshops:

- Lean awareness training
- Rapid Improvement Events to show teams how to tackle improvements for themselves
- Training in the Lean Daily Management System® as the chosen approach for work team CI

Teams are now putting their learning into practice across the organisation. They know how to identify and eliminate wasteful processes and many teams have tailored the LDMS® to their own needs. They have a better understanding of their customers' needs and priorities and have been able to make numerous local performance improvements. In addition, the programme highlighted opportunities to streamline cross-functional and multi-site processes.

Value delivered

- Twelve month bespoke training programme involving 1000 employees (75 operational teams and 16 leadership teams) in the UK, USA and Brazil
- Lean Toolkit for managers and teams
- Senior team committed to adopting Lean thinking and leading the changes
- Internal facilitators given the confidence and competence to lead workshop activities with teams and support improvement projects
- Line managers equipped to support teams and improvement projects
- The Lean Daily Management System® adopted by teams across the organization – both in offices and in manufacturing
- Over 50 Rapid Improvement Events completed as part of the initial implementation releasing significant capacity for value-adding activities and enhancing customer service, in production and in non-manufacturing areas. Further improvement potential identified.

Examples of team led performance improvements

Manufacturing

- Setting up of line side stores releasing over 400 man hours pa
- Reconfiguration of pre-production checks generating an additional 2.5% capacity pa
- Changeover time reduction creating an additional 1.5% capacity pa
- 2,000km motion waste saved a year by repositioning tooling and consumables
- Establishment of dedicated workstation expediting delivery of sub-assemblies and components to bottleneck finishing area and reducing lost time

Support Areas

- Creation of 100 new stock locations in warehouse facilitating safe and rapid location and retrieval of materials and parts to minimise downtime
- Consolidation of filing systems reducing retrieval time and increasing available floor space by 40%
- Compression of documentation pack production lead time releasing over £11m revenue

“Employees across the organisation are starting to realise it is acceptable to challenge the norm and teams are being empowered to improve things for themselves.

Global CI Manager