

SUCCESS STORY

INDUSTRY:	332912
COMPANY NAME:	TIPCO Technologies, Inc.
COMPANY ID:	CRCP78135
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:	45
COMPANY CITY:	Owings Mills
COMPANY STATE:	Maryland
COMPANY ZIP:	21117
PROJECT/ACTIVITY YEAR:	2009
ACTIVITY SUBSTANCE:	Lean Product Suite
PROJECT ID:	CRER76860
ACTIVITY TYPE:	Technical Assistance

TITLE: Flow Improvement Project

COMPANY PROFILE

TIPCO Technologies, Inc. is a progressive company providing hose assemblies and components to a variety of industries, and is the largest stocking distributor in the Mid-Atlantic. They provide a number of value added services including complete hose fabrication and hose pressure testing & certification. Industries served include Biotech, Pharmaceutical, OEM, Agriculture, Construction, Government, and Plant Maintenance (MRO). TIPCO is a privately owned company which was established in 1888 and has 45 employees working in 6 locations. Their headquarters is located in Owings Mills, Maryland in a 25,000 square foot facility. This UMMAP engagement was with the Owings Mills location.

SITUATION

Due to accelerated company growth and the competitive business environment, TIPCO President, Rob Lyons, recognized the need to always look for ways to enhance TIPCO's continuous improvement strategy. Through a discussion with a previous UMMAP client, Rob learned about the benefits of utilizing UMMAP's Lean Services. Rob then contacted Dave Rizzardo, UMMAP's Lean Services Manager, to discuss how Lean can be applied to their unique processing conditions which include warehousing, distribution, and fabrication.

SOLUTION

The initial step on TIPCO's Lean journey was UMMAP's ½ day Lean workshop to introduce Lean concepts and benefits, and discuss the applicability of Lean at TIPCO. A team consisting of TIPCO personnel was then formed to identify, analyze, and implement improvements for eliminating waste to improve the material, people, and information flows. UMMAP facilitated the team in addressing multiple issues such as evaluating the storage locations and identification methods for hoses and components to reduce pick time and material/personnel travel; utilizing visual methods to reduce search time and improve standardization; investigating causes of inventory accuracy errors; and, evaluating cellular design methods for the fabrication of a new product line.

RESULTS

Following are some of the benefits gained through the team's waste reduction/flow improvement efforts:

1. Productivity: Due to the relocation of hoses & components and the application of visual identification methods and controls, estimated labor productivity has improved 10%.
2. Productivity – New Product: For fabricating a new hose assembly, what initially required 3 - 4 personnel currently requires only 1 person, due to the application of Lean/Cellular methods.
3. Mistake-Proofing: Visual methods have reduced the chance of errors.
4. Safety: As a result of the improved workplace organization and the reduction of personnel travel distances, safety is improved.
5. Sales/Growth: The application of Lean methods has enabled TIPCO to more effectively handle their accelerated company growth. In addition, their Lean practices enhance TIPCO's position with potential customers, thus potentially leading to additional sales opportunities.
6. Lean Culture: As a result of the developed Lean/Continuous Improvement culture, ongoing efforts of the TIPCO team included standardization of packaging, additional bar coding, lighting, and equipment enhancements; all resulting in reduced costs, reduced lead times, and enhanced customer satisfaction.
7. Lean Culture: To help assure that the gains are sustained and continued improvement efforts are facilitated, 1 new person was hired to accelerate the implementation of improvements and foster the Lean culture.

TESTIMONIAL

Today's customers depend on their supplier base to be much more than just a supplier of product. Today's customers expect innovation, the ability to channel cost reductions and speed to the market. To that end, TIPCO Technologies realized that we needed to change the way we purchase, receive, fabricate and deliver our hoses and related products to our OEM customer base in order to remain the best choice for our customers. We found that our company is fortunate to have an employee base that has tremendous work ethic so our biggest challenge was to channel that work ethic into much more customer-centric activities utilizing the "Lean" way of thinking, as coached by Dave Rizzardo of the University of Maryland Manufacturing Assistance Program. The UMMAP program looked at every step in our supply chain to provide us with a roadmap to more Lean ways of thinking. The program fostered a teamwork approach that naturally cultured organizational buy-in for the Lean program within our company. Our employees were energetic about the process, which resulted in faster, better and more Lean ways to get our products to our valued customers.

With the completion and ongoing continuous improvements that UMMAP taught us, we are certain that TIPCO Technologies will continue to remain in a position to be the right choice for our customers. It is refreshing to see that these tools are readily available to help our business continue to allow our regional customers to compete both nationally and globally. Now when our customers tour our manufacturing facility they leave with confidence that they are dealing with a company that is progressive and for that we are grateful.

Regards,

Robert A Lyons Jr.
President