

Process Improvements Lead to Productivity Gains



Background

Zendex Tool is a family-owned and operated manufacturer in Danbury, Connecticut launched in 1984 by its founder and president Al Coccaro. Needing a way to quickly and efficiently move disabled cars into his auto body shop and paint booth, Mr. Coccaro created his original invention, the GoJak® Self-Loading Wheel Dolly.

Five additional product lines were subsequently developed for the company. Zendex Tools prides itself on designing and manufacturing the most durable and functional products on the market using as many materials and components sourced domestically as possible.

Situation

Zendex carefully sustains the quality and extremely tight tolerances of each and every product built by their highly skilled workforce. However, they were faced with increasing disruption to workflow productivity and inventory inconsistencies impacting operational and financial performance.

The company was looking to improve their processes and material flow on the shop floor to address their production and inventory issues. The leadership of Zendex Tool decided to engage the services of CONNSTEP, Connecticut's MEP center, who would introduce the benefits of adopting Lean manufacturing principles and processes.

Solution

Leveraging Lean manufacturing tools and techniques, CONNSTEP assisted Zendex in identifying areas of opportunity, and then recommending and implementing process improvements in its business. Using Value Stream Mapping, their present state was documented mapping out the entire production process. This resulted in restructuring the shop floor into production cells, having material right where it's needed.

In addition to the cell design addressing disrupted flow, Kanban cards provide a visual benefit to the process, with quantity and date made

Results for Industrial Heater Corp:

- Cost Savings: \$200K
- Product/Process Investments: \$30K
- Plant/Equipment Investments: \$125K
- Retained Jobs: 2



Working with CONNSTEP and becoming more knowledgeable about Lean manufacturing and continuous improvement was transformative for our company. We needed to make changes and with their guidance we are in a much better competitive position for the future.

– Dean Coccaro
Vice President of Operations
Zendex Tool, Danbury, CT



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helping to determine an optimal batch size. Understanding standard batch size enables employees to know what to make and in what order to get the most orders out in the quickest amount of time. Vendor Managed Inventory at point of use became instrumental for high turnover items.

Results

The Lean manufacturing introduction and Kaizen event that CONNSTEP conducted with Zendex Tool resulted in numerous process improvements and subsequent productivity gains. Addressing their inventory discrepancies has eliminated inaccuracies that were taking valuable time away from shipping product.

Implementing 5S in their shipping and receiving department improved the visual status of the workflow realizing an increase in shipping productivity of 50%. Zendex has also decreased the time managing inventory from 8 hours per week to 3.5 hours per week for an improvement of 56%.

Metrics:

- Cost savings: \$200,000
- Retained jobs: 2
- Product/Process investments: \$30,000
- Plant/Equipment investments: \$125,000



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CONNSTEP, Inc. is a consulting firm strategically helping companies in Connecticut to grow their businesses and improve operational methodologies, leading to increased profitability, improved efficiencies, and creating sustainable competitive advantages in the marketplace.

