POLARIS Manufacturing Forward MEP

RESULTS

RESULTS: LEAN MANUFACTURING

POLARIS MEP WEAVES CUSTOMIZED WEB FOR MURDOCK WEBBING CO.





COMPANY PROFILE

What began as a small company with ten employees and two weaving looms has flourished into a company with two mills and more than 175 employees. For more than seventy years, Murdock Webbing Co. Inc. has been providing its customers with webbing used in various military, recreational, and consumer applications.

SITUATION

The Central Falls, RI-based company has used one philosophy to drive business: strive to improve the process. For several decades, Murdock Webbing has been successful at improving its process, and this decade was no different.

Managers wanted to refine Murdock Webbing's manufacturing process. That is when Lean Manufacturing came to mind. "There was no specific challenge we faced other than the normal competition and our drive to improve our own processes," said Murdock Webbing's Chief Executive Officer, Greg Pilgrim. Lean Manufacturing is a comprehensive set of philosophies, guidelines, tools and techniques used to improve processes in manufacturing. Murdock's managers were not interested in what it considered the stringent steps of Lean Manufacturing. Executives wanted to find something that would fit with their needs and that is when they called on Polaris MEP.

SOLUTION

Through a partnership with and grant funding from the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Polaris MEP was able to provide Murdock Webbing with a customized system to improve its manufacturing processes.

"They said, let's take Lean Manufacturing and Six Sigma and find out how it fits with your model," Pilgrim said of Polaris MEP's project managers.

Six-Sigma is a system of doing business with a focus on eliminating waste, improving quality, and reducing cost. The plan was to use Lean Manufacturing to eliminate various kinds of non-value-added waste. Together, Murdock Webbing and Polaris MEP worked to find the best lean strategies to fit with the company's business model. Together, they recognized Polaris MEP's 5S and Six Sigma systems would be the most natural fit.

In order to get all of the employees involved, a steering committee was created. The committee consisted of a Polaris MEP consultant and employees who met to discuss each process within the company and to develop fresh ideas.

There were very specific areas in which Murdock Webbing wanted to see improvement including:

- a decrease in travel time within the building,
- an increase in product flow
- more efficient automation.

Murdock Webbing has always struggled to find enough space in its mills and the 5S system of Sort, Shine, Set, Standardize and Sustain would eliminate that problem. Already, 20 Murdock employees have completed the 5S training and the company continues to put employees through the training.

IMPACTS

Gained a product flow that best fit the facility and reorganized facility to become

more efficient

30 to 40 percent
reduction in conversion and inspection time

Developing

presentations
on its lean manufacturing philosophy to show its customers

Employee morale has

rocketed throughout the company

Read the full Success Story at

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"(Polaris MEP) has a vested interest not just in manufacturing but manufacturing in Rhode Island. Obviously the ultimate goal is to have their role in the process dwindle over time, but I see utilizing them as a consultant for a long time."

Greg Pilgrim
Chief Operating Officer

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