

Results: LEAN MANUFACTURING

PERSONALIZED LEAN INSTRUCTION HELPS NEW HARVEST COFFEE ROASTERS IMPROVE PROCESSES FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL MOVE

COMPANY PROFILE

After two decades in business, New Harvest Coffee Roasters has established itself as a successful roastery with blends for sale throughout New England at Whole Foods Markets and wholesale partners. The company had also gained a loyal following of fans who enjoyed the coffee at an onsite café/retail location in Pawtucket, RI.

SITUATION

Kleinfeldt was looking to expand capacity, pursue new markets and modernize the business on all fronts. In 2021, the team began preparing for a move from a chopped-up location in Pawtucket to a new dedicated space within the Farm Fresh Food Hub in Providence.

“We needed a custom-designed space,” said Kleinfeldt, one which would allow them to increase efficiency and capacity. Transforming their facility also meant transforming roasting systems, adding new automated equipment and reimagining processes.

Even if the company wasn’t moving and expanding, the leadership still wanted to improve production as the team was struggling to keep up with customer demand. “The way we brewed [in Pawtucket] was very organic, which is a nice way of saying disorganized.”

SOLUTION

New Harvest learning about Polaris MEP from another local food manufacturer, Pat McNiff of Pat’s Pastured. McNiff recommended Kleinfeldt work with the MEP Center to eliminate wasteful workflows before the move.

Project Manager Nathan Bonds quickly saw that proven Lean Manufacturing techniques would be effective. However, just like a good cup of coffee, training should be personalized to each of the team members’ “tastes.”

Bonds said Justin Dunk, Director of Operations, was key to buy-in and ultimately success. “Together we kept changing the flow, bringing people and product closer together. These experiments helped us gain rhythm and flexibility. Quickly we saw small changes were boosting capacity.”

Kleinfeldt told industry publication Daily Coffee News that “It was an amazing experience for me and the whole staff.” He said the impact on quality and productivity was significant.

New Harvest enjoyed an increase in capacity of more than 50%. The advance work on processes helped the team get up to speed more quickly after the move. The team also felt more positive about the move, having played a more active role in the transformation.

One unexpected outcome of the Lean training was that two employees who were coming in simply to bag/box orders for one wholesale client could be shifted to other jobs. This reduced the number of team members on the floor at any one time, a welcome change during COVID social-distancing.

“This was an extremely effective transformation program that enabled us to completely overhaul our processes,” said Kleinfeldt.



IMPACTS



\$150,000 in direct
cost savings



\$350,000 invested in
equipment, plant and systems



4 Jobs retained

To learn more, read the full Success Story at

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“

[Lean training] was an amazing experience for me and the whole staff ... This was an extremely effective transformation program that enabled us to completely overhaul our processes.

”

Rik Kleinfeldt

Owner



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