

## **“BATCHING” IMPROVES WORK FLOW, REDUCES DELIVERY TIME AND CREATES COST SAVING**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Men’s shirt manufacturer, **L Gambert LLC**, has been making bespoke shirts in Newark, New Jersey for over 45 years. The company utilizes the local community labor pool for its staffing needs. **Mel Gambert’s Bespoke Shirts** is still run by its founder Joseph J. Gambert’s family, Mel his son, his wife Lorraine and their son Mitch. A pioneer in the industry, Mel expanded sizing criteria in order to improve the quality of fit and has been instrumental in educating hundreds of dealers in using this system in sizing shirts.

### **ACTION:**

Bespoke, or made-to-measure custom shirts are very complicated because in addition to providing measurements, customers choose their fabric(s), front style-five of those alone, collar, cuff, and pocket styles along with buttons, how the buttons are sewn to the shirt and even the color thread to be used.

These shirts cannot be over-nighted when you need one tomorrow and they will never be. The Gamberts, however, wanted to streamline their multi-phased production process in order to reduce delivery time. Turning to New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, Inc. (NJMEP) for assistance enabled them to do just that.

### **SOLUTION:**

NJMEP introduced the Gamberts, its key management and operators to Lean manufacturing. Training in various Lean techniques was provided and resulted in simple but key changes to the company’s processes.

- Value stream mapping helped the company identify process bottlenecks and find solutions
- Applying Visual Controls helped organize tools, equipment, workbenches, etc.
- 5S concepts (Sort, Set in Place, Shine Standardize and Sustain) were applied to specific areas.
  - » Improving existing Pull/Kanban systems helped reduce inventory and better utilize floor space
  - » Lean Principles and Concepts were applied to Gambert’s Business Processes

As a result of the training, i.e., applying the various Lean tools and techniques, a very simple solution that would impact three areas was identified. These areas were order processing, pattern making and cutting.

Orders were processed in a single large batch daily. Once all the orders were entered into the system they would go, in one large batch, to the pattern maker. Patterns would be generated via a computer and then printed out. From there they go, in one large batch, to the cutting floor and again, in one large batch, to the sewing room.

By introducing the lean concept of smaller batches, orders would be processed frequently throughout the day. Orders would now flow through these initial stages of shirt production, keeping the orders moving and simplifying the manufacturing process.

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## RESULTS:

Using multiple batches reduces the amount of work in process (WIP) in each department which keeps an area organized, making it easier for workers to do their jobs more efficiently and with less error. For example: in the cutting room, less fabric is required to be on the floor as fewer orders are in the department, thus reducing the likelihood of selecting and cutting incorrect materials.

The lead time from when an order is received until it is ready to be sewn has been greatly reduced. Eliminated 5 production days from each order which reduced order delivery time from 4 weeks to 3 weeks.

- Work areas are less cluttered reducing the opportunity for errors and accidents
- Hired one new employee
- Significant cost savings of \$70,000 were achieved
- Invested \$250,000 in new processes and /or products

**“Working with NJMEP enabled us to identify areas that needed improvement and implement new processes that resulted in reducing our delivery time. We reduced the time from fax machine to cutting room from 48-54 hours to 36 hrs. and we’ve also looked at the number of options we offer our retailers. We implemented a number of changes and now work, on a daily basis, to keep the good habits we developed as a result of the training,” Mitch Gambert, Operations Manager, L Gambert, LLC.**

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