

ARROW FASTENER REINFORCING A LEAN CULTURE WITH NJMEP LEAN TRAINING

BACKGROUND

Arrow Fastener Company LLC. has a reputation for providing high-quality manual, electric, and cordless fastening tools for both DIYers and professionals. The company makes a full line of pneumatic, electric, and manual staplers, brad nailers, rivet tools, glue guns, and hammer tackers. Arrow Fastener supplies the consumables for each of its products as well.

The company was founded by Morris Abrams in New York City in 1929. Since that time, they have been committed to Morris' family values. Focusing on compassion, generosity, and growth allowed them to lead the industry in innovation, style, and functionally for over 80 years. Arrow Fastener LLC was acquired by Hangzhou GreatStar Industrial Co; LTD in 2017 which is an ideal partner to assist in expanding the Arrow brand.

CHALLENGE

Arrow Fastener has been a practitioner of continuous improvement with NJMEP's assistance for years. The company recently brought on a new engineering manager and hired new employees that have never undergone lean training with the company. To create a truly lean manufacturing facility, the entire staff must understand lean principles and the reason behind the effort.

"We got to the point where we needed another push. It's not that we weren't doing it, we just had a lot of new people," said Don Nelson, Director of Manufacturing, Engineering & Warehouse at Arrow Fastener Co.

"The biggest improvement we saw came from using the same tools on some of our office processes. We have never done that before. We did a Kaizen event on order fulfillment and took a look at the whole process. It was very eye-opening to our office people. We then went through and saw the processes that were 'value add' and eliminated wasteful 'non-value add' processes."

— Don Nelson, Director of Manufacturing, Engineering & Warehouse at Arrow Fastener Co

SOLUTION

Manufacturers that want to continuously improve must take their company culture seriously. Lean manufacturing is dependent on the entire workforce. Arrow Fastener wanted to be able to provide the best service while maintaining a highly efficient production line, and at the same time reduce waste and 'non-value add' processes. To overcome their challenge and accomplish this goal they took part in an NJMEP Lean implementation project.

When asked why Arrow Fastener wanted to undergo a Lean implementation project, Nelson explained, "We thought it was a good time to get more training in and get the entire workforce back on board again."

"The training was to get everyone refocused again. We had some new people coming in on our engineering side and we wanted to get them up to speed on training for lean. It gave them the opportunity to do some Kaizen events so they can see how to improve the process on our production lines."

RESULTS

Arrow Fasteners saw expected benefits as well as some surprising, unexpected benefits from this Lean implementation project.

- Arrow Fastener saw a 7-10% productivity improvement on two major tool lines.
- After COVID-19's social distancing measures were implemented, Arrow Fasteners was able to remain agile. Because of the recent lean training, Nelson said, "Each person can run two stations, separated 6 feet apart. Once this thing [COVID-19] started hitting, we just walked out to the line and said only half the people will be working on the lines."
- Administrative lean training provided benefits for customers. Customer orders are being processed more quickly and they can receive order statuses, faster.
- By increasing production line efficiency, Arrow Fasteners was able to eliminate some overtime pay.

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