

## **WORKFORCE TRAINING EMPOWERS EMPLOYEES AND SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES THE BOTTOM LINE**

### **BACKGROUND:**

**Zytron Control Products**, which is located in Trenton, New Jersey, was founded by two engineers in 1985. Between them there was almost a century of combined experience in the temperature control business. This combination of experience made Zytron uniquely suited to service a broad array of special applications. The company and its 20 employees provide Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) temperature and process control products for a variety of domestic markets and to multi-national corporations, earning itself the reputation as an industry leader in engineering innovation. In addition to earning a stellar reputation, Zytron received a New Jersey Manufacturing Award for Bold New Strategy for the internal process improvements it implemented through its work with NJMEP.

### **CHALLENGE:**

Though the company was doing well, off shore competition always loomed on the horizon. To head off what could be a disastrous fate, Zytron's President John Wilkinson once again turned to New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, Inc. (NJMEP) as he wanted to improve on-time delivery and quality to customers while increasing productivity. With the help of a no fee assessment NJMEP was able to determine how best to achieve Mr. Wilkinson's objectives.

### **SOLUTION:**

The assessment indicated Zytron was an ideal company to introduce Lean Manufacturing into its operations and Mr. Wilkinson, who had already learned of the benefits of Lean, thought it was a good time to apply the concepts. NJMEP also realized the company was an excellent candidate for a Skills4Jersey, customized training grant. As a small company a grant would be a major cost savings. A plan was developed; fifteen employees would be trained in: Value Stream Mapping w/Implementation, implementing 5S for Workplace Organization, Using Standard Work Methods in Cells, Cellular Flow w/Implementation and Pull Kanban Systems w/Implementation. Together NJMEP and Zytron completed the grant application.

While awaiting the grant approval, the company invested in a Lean introduction class that demonstrated how Lean tools are applied and what the benefits would be to the organization. Everyone participated in the workshop, which created excitement and helped to build camaraderie throughout the organization as well.

### **RESULTS:**

The grant was approved and over the course of one year, Lean tools and techniques were integrated into Zytron's processes improving some and completely changing others.

The results included:

- Production doubled in some areas, and quality improved significantly reducing any required rework
- One year after the Lean Standards were integrated, Zytron achieved a perfect on-time delivery record
- Lead times have decreased dramatically

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- Zytron achieved a threefold improvement in efficiency by incorporating Lean tools into their processes, visual factory cues to show when jobs are ready to start, and key performance indicators to track their daily results and cumulative monthly results

When surveyed Zytron attributed the following to the work that was done:

- \$700,000 in new sales
- 6 new employees were hired
- \$665,000 in cost savings was achieved. \$24,000 of which was in training costs as a result of Skills4Jersey investment in the company
- \$60,000 invested in workforce development part of which was required as a match to the grant
- \$150,000 invested / saved in new products /processes

**John Wilkinson explained, “We have transitioned to a cell manufacturing model. Each cell requires multiple assemblers. We have added several people to staff the initial cell and as we increase our manufacturing capacity to meet anticipated product demand additional cells will be required which must be staffed.”**

**Mr. Wilkinson went on to elaborate, “This training has had a huge impact on our organization. It was a first for most of our employees—they loved it and the business has benefited from it as well. The project helped us learn how to empower our employees and utilize them more fully. Our employees have also embraced the knowledge gained, are more self-sufficient and have accepted new responsibilities and morale is great all around! The Lean methods have improved our processes helping our employees work more efficiently and removing waste from our current operation.”**

## **NJMEP'S MAIN SERVICE AREAS:**

- Business Development Services
- Contingency and Emergency Planning
- Destination Innovation
- Energy Alliance Program
- ExporTech™
- Human Resources Solutions
- Lean Business Solutions
- Quality Management Systems & ISO
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- Six Sigma
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