



Success Story: Handishop Industries Keeps Tools Handy

Profile

Location: Tomah, Wisconsin
Years in Business: 36 (since Oct. 1972)
No. of Employees: 85 Staff and 80 Clients
Products: Enriching the Lives of People with Disabilities through Vocational Rehabilitation
NWMOC Projects: Lean Manufacturing, 5S, Value Stream Mapping



It is the mission of Handishop Industries, Inc. to provide and promote opportunities for work and personal development so that persons with disabilities can achieve greater independence and dignity.

Situation

President Joe Greene heard a speaker from the NWMOC at a Rehabilitation for Wisconsin Conference in the summer of 2006. Two years later, when Handishop Industries reached capacity, Joe called the NWMOC for help in streamlining their processes.

Project

In addition to recycling cardboard boxes, the disabled clients at Handishop Industries bag parts for numerous manufacturers and they are paid according to their piecework. Following the Lean with Legos workshops, the staff began designating "homes" for their tools, parts, and equipment. After several 5S events, they regained considerable production floor space while increasing production. Value Stream Mapping events assisted in balancing their production with social services needs, which can be a challenge, according to President Joe Greene.

Using lean principles, the staff modified workstations by cutting openings in the table tops to allow for easier access to package labels and box-sealing tape dispensers. Work tables were rearranged in a square instead of a line to facilitate dispensing of inventory and to discourage too much "visiting" by the client workers. Measuring sticks previously used to mark the stack levels of cardboard boxes were replaced with sheets of plywood that not only designate the levels but also help keep the stacks neat and orderly. Now more work is done by the clients and less by the staff.

Lean team member Ryan Tichenor said "The cost of implementation was low with a great increase in production." "Lean opened our eyes to thinking outside the box and made us more efficient," commented Business Manager Patty Clark. "We were just making things too complicated," added Ryan. "What we mostly needed to do was to label things and designate a home for them." Their client material handlers are now able to do three jobs instead of only one. One person cleans work areas now instead of eight people. The production floor is cleaner and they have a more efficient flow. "During our lean training, the mix of PowerPoint visuals and hands-on activities on the floor helped us grasp the concept of Lean," added Joe Greene.

*"NWMOC helped us remove all obstacles for the clients we serve."
Joe Greene, President/CEO, Handishop Industries.*



Ryan Tichenor and Jesse Thomas with redesigned worktable



Calibrated plywood sheets help maintain order

Results

- Increased client productivity by 20%
- Increased throughput 30 to 50%
- Cost savings of \$4,000 in labor and materials
- Increased production floor space by 25%
- Improved employee and client morale
- Cost savings of \$15,000 in energy, overhead, and other areas