Success Story
Kaizen For Efficiency

Skilcraft Sheetmetal, Inc.

Testimonial:

"AKA and their Kaizen approach allows our employees to be involved in making permanent progressive change that enable us to be more competitive and grow our business. Our partnership with AKA provides significant value to both our hourly team members and staff alike."

Greg Johnson, Industrial Engineer
Skilcraft Sheetmetal, Inc.

Company Profile:

Skilcraft Sheetmetal, Inc. was originally founded in 1965 in Burlington, Kentucky. Today's customer base covers a broad range of industries including commercial, medical and aerospace.
Skilcraft has long been a pioneer in the rapidly changing world of custom metal fabrication, through testing and early adoption of new technologies. The Kentucky-based company employs 100 team members who laser cut, form, weld, assemble and paint both parts and completed products to customer specification.

Situation:

As a KY MEP client Skilcraft, and its employees have embraced Lean Manufacturing through classroom training and subscription Kaizen Days to address continuous improvement needs. One such need surfaced when a wide variation between similar parts surfaced on the labor standard reported by the employees through the company's computer tracking system. With some parts being processed at 80%, others were taking up to 300% of the engineering standard time. This not only meant that the company was losing money when these parts were manufactured, but also that future business would be jeopardized in a very competitive marketplace.

Solution:

Skilcraft's Thom Kuehneman, Vice President of Operations and Greg Johnston, Industrial Engineer, organized a 1 day Kaizen Event to determine the root cause and subsequent countermeasures. They presented Tim Vickers, AKA Project Manager, and 2 Team Members with a Kaizen Objective to find the reason for the extreme variation in reported labor to standard. The Skilcraft Team then did a Job Methods time study of many parts going through the process. They identified all of the activity included in the reported time including time spent walking, data entry, inspection, rework and searching. The team quickly found one type of part was manufactured with 86% value-added activity while parts with a different feature requiring an additional fixture made the process very inefficient with only 37% of the effort adding value.

After the Current State was identified, the team brainstormed for ways to improve the process to eliminate the high degree of non-value added activity. One breakout idea was to replace the ineffective fixture with new device. The team of 2 operators and 2 engineers designed and fabricated a newly engineered, ergonomically correct, electro-pneumatic, floor mounted rotational positioning work aid. Not only was this fixture successful at holding the part but due to the increased work content, quality improved and additional post processes were eliminated.

Direct Results:

$27,000 Reduction in Labor Costs in First Year

Engineering Labor Standard Reduced 3 to 1

Enabled Competitive Pricing Quotes.

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