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Plunge into Lean Manufacturing Helps Pelican Wire Increase Sales, Add Staff
Incorporating Lean Techniques Results in Six Figure Savings and Sales for Naples Company

Naples, FL - Recently, Pelican Wire Company, Inc. (Pelican Wire) a small manufacturer in Naples moved all of its operations from four locations, into one centralized building. When planning for the move, management at the company that manufactures custom insulated wire for a number of applications including use in military helicopters realized that consolidating everything under one roof would be sort of like moving four different people and all of their belongings into one apartment.

Where others may see a problem, Pelican Wire officials saw an opportunity to reassess how they conducted their manufacturing processes and look at ways to streamline operations while improving sales and saving money.

To help identify areas to make changes and provide the necessary training to produce positive results, Pelican Wire called on the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP) to help implement Lean Manufacturing techniques.

Lean Manufacturing is an implementation technique that utilizes simple but effective methods to identify and reduce waste, and inventories, clear shop floors and streamline production processes all with a goal of decreasing costs and increasing productivity.

Working with staff and management, David Ferguson and Jerry Nelligan, project managers for the Florida MEP, started with a Value Stream Map which literally mapped the flow of work through beginning to end of production line of a product for one of Pelican's main customers.

"We chose this particular area because the product had to go through most of the manufacturing steps that their products typically take," said Ferguson. "Using several Lean techniques like the

Value Stream Map, we identified about a half dozen areas where we could make changes, eliminate steps and improve productivity and quality.”

Other Lean techniques used in the training conducted by the Florida MEP included Kaizen Blitzes, short bursts of activity to make a small improvement over two or three days with a goal of making large gains in efficiency and productivity.

As a result of the changes made with the help of management and employees, Pelican Wire has experienced dramatic gains.

“Implementing Lean techniques has contributed to sales retention, a \$500,000 sales increase, cost savings of more than \$200,000, and an addition of 14 new employees,” said Bob Ferris, Pelican Wire manager of operations. “The work we did with the Florida MEP also helped us adapt to these changes. Sometimes when you add staff and increase the workload you have an issue meeting demand. Thanks to the Lean implementation and hard work of our employees we haven’t had those issues.”

The Florida MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP is a network of manufacturing extension centers that provide business and technical assistance to smaller manufacturers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Through MEP, manufacturers have access to more than 2000 manufacturing and business “coaches” whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits, and enhanced global competitiveness. For more information on the Florida MEP program call 321-939-4000.

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