

LEAN SIX SIGMA PROVES SUCCESSFUL

ABOUT DSM BIOMEDICAL. DSM Biomedical, headquartered in Exton, Pennsylvania, is the world's leading medical device materials development and manufacturing partner. Working with medical device companies for over 25 years, DSM offers coatings, drug delivery platforms, and biomedical solutions that enable the replacement, repair, enhancement, and regeneration of tissue and organ functions in the body. The company has 85 employees.

THE CHALLENGE. In 2009, in preparation for growth and in response to competition, DSM Biomedical set a goal of enhancing process reliability and repeatability, with an initial focus on its key collagen repair product process. The company wanted to take a more disciplined approach to process development and productivity, make data-based decisions, and acquire the tools to identify and solve ongoing issues.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. DSM Biomedical partnered with the Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center (DVIRC), a NIST MEP affiliate, to implement Lean process and organizational tools. The company wanted to be tool smart, organizationally smart, and people smart. DVIRC helped DSM to achieve these goals with significant cost-savings, allowing the company to better connect project work with business objectives. Between 2009 and 2011, a number of DSM employees achieved Lean Green Belt certifications, with DVIRC efforts focused on team-building and leveraging employee knowledge to create a culture of continuous improvement.

By 2011, DSM had optimized the value of Lean and was ready to move on to Six Sigma methodologies. Between 2012 and 2015, the company gained several Lean Six Sigma Green Belts and Black Belts. The Black Belts applied Design of Experiments methods to better understand processes through planned experimentation. Employee teams focused on R&D/commercialization, product quality, manufacturing, machining, molding, materials handling, inspection, documentation processes, and waste elimination. The company reduced process labor by a substantial margin and is continuing to find opportunities to improve its materials processing.

RESULTS



Saved \$1.2 million in one year



Reduced process costs by 85%



Creating ongoing enhancements in materials processing

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