

LEAN TRANSFORMATION AT MID-MOUNTAIN MATERIALS

ABOUT MID-MOUNTAIN MATERIALS. Mid-Mountain Materials, located in Arlington, Washington, employees 40 people manufacturing thermal insulation barriers, high temperature gaskets, seals, textiles and fabrics used in commercial, industrial and aerospace applications.

THE CHALLENGE. Mid-Mountain Materials was facing increasing costs both internally and with their China-based supplier. Their goal was to increase productivity and return the weaving loom from their Chinese supplier. After Mid-Mountain Material's John Knapp, CEO, and several other employees attended a presentation given by Steve Winters from Impact Washington, part of the MEP National Network™, on Lean and Toyota Kata at a Center for Advanced Manufacturing Puget Sound (CAMPS) meeting, John asked Impact Washington to stop by and discuss Lean Manufacturing.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Impact Washington started with a Value Stream Map to determine the prevalent needs for continuous improvement. From there a list of areas for week-long Lean Transformation (Kaizen) and Toyota Kata events were developed. Impact Washington's resource partners Pat Ryan (Lean 101, VSM and Kaizens) and Mark Rosenthal (Toyota Kata) delivered three Kaizen events and a Toyota Kata workshop, improving the throughput in each of those areas. The resource partners delivered the training on Lean Transformation and continuous improvement. They also lead the effort to implement the changes necessary and coached the participants to hone their Lean and continuous improvement skills.

"Our team met IW when Steve Winters was presenting at a CAMPS meeting. Afterwards, Steve and I discussed Lean Manufacturing and the results it can bring an organization. I believed him and thought my challenge would be to get others to "buy in" and follow-through on doing the work. To my pleasant surprise, my team was already plotting to propose to me that we should hire Impact Washington! Due to these few team leaders buying in and embracing the LEAN principles and tools they were learning, it quickly spread and took root in the company culture. Laggards and early doubters have to follow suit, as there is no place to hide. Soon everyone starting seeing the benefits of practicing the new principles and using the tools learned. VSM, Kaizens, and Toyota Kata are now everyone's friend, and are used daily or regularly, and have made big improvements in our company operations and culture. These positive changes led to lower stress, better organization, and better overall customer service, profit, and opportunities for growth. We are grateful to IW for their support and sincere efforts to assist us to get to the next level. Joining forces and utilizing IW is one of the best decisions Mid-Mountain has ever made, and we have many times over seen a return on our investment, and can now see clearly a path forward to the growth we envision and are planning for.

-John Knapp, CEO

RESULTS



Inventory Control



\$72,000 year savings in overtime costs, \$57,000 in R&M



Improved scheduling



Improved equipment reliability



New processes that involve careful measuring, monitoring and awareness

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