

LEADING TEA MANUFACTURER TAKES ITS LEAN JOURNEY WITH MTEC

ABOUT CARAWAY TEA COMPANY LLC. The Caraway Tea Company is a leading U.S. tea manufacturer providing B2B contract manufacturing and fulfillment. Their professionals work closely with customers to formulate their desired blends of tea and herbs. Caraway Tea Company prides itself on being able to help customers of all sizes from any phase in their process. Their capabilities include custom blending, loose leaf tea, iced teas, tea sachets, and custom projects. With a number of certifications, Caraway's products have a consistently high quality, aiding many customers in the growth of their businesses.

THE CHALLENGE. Caraway Tea Company sought out MTEC Engineer, Phil vanOss's expertise, for their first lean initiative in the summer of 2017. They wanted to provide their team of employees from all levels with a solid skill base of Lean Manufacturing concepts and Value Stream Mapping techniques.

As Caraway's business continued to grow rapidly, they planned a move into a larger facility. Following the completion of their Value Stream Map and application of Lean techniques, they narrowed their focus on specific improvement opportunities. These objectives included a new warehouse configuration and setup, a Lean manufacturing approach to improve their fulfillment process, and Lean methodology to improve inventory control.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Applied Value Stream Mapping techniques worked to help Caraway identify areas for improvement and waste in their process. By assessing their current process, they were then able to define and improve future processes. Using Lean process improvement principles, Caraway's team was able to pinpoint what these opportunities are and what they need to do to get there. Employees were guided and trained by Phil in the techniques that were necessary for them to achieve their future state process.

Building upon Caraway's Lean training and enlightened understanding of their process, they worked with Phil to update their flow of production, inventory, and fulfillment. They also developed a facility layout for their new space which included a proposed building addition to facilitate their continued growth. In addition to a new flow, they looked at the information systems used to manage production and inventory.

Caraway has been making smaller adjustments such as lining up different conveyors for a smoother transition from one process to the other, not having work in progress tubs, taking products all the way through to completion, and fully staffing product lines to maximize output.

Caraway is continually working with Phil to make improvements in their different product lines in order to keep up the production pace and fine-tune their processes while maintaining their standards for a high-quality product.

"Working with MTEC has been fantastic. They have helped us streamline our process efficiencies and improve our bottom line. I would recommend them and look forward to working with them on future projects."

-Michael Caraway, Owner

RESULTS



\$500,000 in increased sales



\$3.5 million in retained sales



1 job created



20 retained jobs



cost savings through reduced inventory

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