

CELL DEVELOPMENT LEADS TO DRAMATIC INCREASE IN PRODUCTION

ABOUT ACCU-TIME SYSTEMS INC. Accu-Time Systems (ATS) offers secure and reliable hardware products, software tools and value added services that deliver employee time and attendance data to customer's back-end systems. Their solutions cover a wide range of employee time and attendance applications.

Their state-of-the-art, rugged and reliable time and attendance terminals are fully integrated and customized to the customers' environment. ATS is different from the competition in that they give their customers everything they need to achieve their business goals from hardware to software to technical support in configurable and affordable terminals.

THE CHALLENGE. When ATS's PeoplePoint product line of terminals was in its infancy, costs for parts and labor were higher than expected. The flow and build process was not efficient, taking up to an hour to build one unit. Some of this inefficiency was due to its design which would ultimately be adjusted to make it simpler to build.

ATS wanted to ensure processes and workflow were at optimal, peak performance in order to meet the changing needs of customers, with exceptional quality standards. The company leadership recognized improving flow was key to success and supported the introduction of Lean to key team members to make process improvement possible.

In addition to looking for ways to increase capacity, their specific goals were to: improve on-time delivery; increase quality and customer satisfaction; reduce overall lead time; and lower production costs.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. ATS chose the expertise of CONNSTEP, who created a cell development plan for process improvement, and helped implement that plan. They started with kaizen training, which consisted of reviewing existing practices, documenting current work activities, and breaking down operator tasks and work sequences. A select team of ATS's employees were trained on lean tools and techniques. CONNSTEP worked with this team to verify current state of activities and to identify areas of improvement.

By implementing 5S Visual Workplace operator work stations were organized in terms of what they were responsible for doing during the manufacture of the terminals, with standardized tools at the benches which minimized material handling. Visual signals were created as part of the cell development training to aid the flow and production process.

Improving flow was instrumental in ATS's ability to provide a quality product on any order in any variation and meet customer delivery requirements. As a result of the project, ATS initially realized a tenfold increase in production of PeoplePoint terminals, improving on customer order to delivery from 15 days to an average of 12 days.

"This process helped us realize the potential of building more terminals, which enables us to deliver the right level of technology and the right level of variations that our customers are looking for."

-Phillip Sis, Vice President, Engineering and Operations

RESULTS



\$5,000 in equipment investments



\$10,000 in workforce training



2 jobs created; 2 jobs retained

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