

CHARLES SIGNS, INC. ACHIEVES SUCCESS WITH LEAN

ABOUT CHARLES SIGNS. Charles Signs, Inc. designs and manufactures banners, signs, LED message centers, and graphics in Liverpool, New York, for a wide range of markets, applications, and industries. It was founded in 1968.

THE CHALLENGE. As Charles Signs, Inc. experienced heightened competition around the region, their overall production efficiency became an issue. Also, they recognized that their account executive had never received any formal sales training, nor was he equipped with effective sales tools and techniques. In order to become more efficient and grow their business within an increasingly competitive sign market, they recognized the need for foundational training and skills for their entire staff. As a result, a plan was implemented to initiate a Lean Transformation. The plan included training on Effective Meetings, Sandler Sales, Lean Manufacturing, 5S and Visual Controls, Value Stream Mapping, KPI Development, and onsite Lean Manufacturing Coaching. The plan was supported by Central New York Technology Development Organization (CNYTDO), a division of the New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and a NIST MEP affiliate.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. CNYTDO assisted Charles Signs, Inc. with a complete Lean Transformation, including training on Effective Meetings, Sandler Sales, Lean Manufacturing, 5S and Visual Controls, Value Stream Mapping, KPI Development, and Lean Manufacturing Coaching. The entire staff, including ownership, office, and shop floor personnel, were trained during this Lean Transformation.

By developing a lean manufacturing foundation for the entire staff as well as a sales team equipped with proper tools and techniques, Charles Signs, Inc. has incorporated the saving in efficiencies and cost reductions that Lean promises, as well as the top line growth that Sandler Sales delivers.

"Over the last two years, Charles Signs, Inc., through a partnership with CNYTDO has successfully completed a lean manufacturing transformation which included foundational training and skills throughout the facility for employees and management. There have been many benefits from this project. Employees have embraced the lean methodologies and tools that CNYTDO implemented, and production efficiencies have increased. In addition, the Sandler Sales training has led to additional top line growth and new client development. Lastly, the facility is much more organized as a result of CNYTDO's 5S training and subsequent implementation. Whereas we are extremely pleased with our initial progress and efforts, we have identified additional areas of improvement through the training for which we will look to CNYTDO once again for assistance. We are very appreciative of CNYTDO's support during this critical transformational project."

-James Hickey, President

RESULTS



30% increase in sales



Effective Meetings - Better planning, time management, and utilization of resources



5S and Visual Controls, Value Stream Mapping, KPI Development, and Lean



Better utilization of people & inventory control, lead-time reduction

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