

IMPROVED THROUGHPUT RESULTS IN COSTS SAVINGS AND
IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

ABOUT CHAMP INDUSTRIES. Located in Jamestown, North Dakota, Champ Industries, a family-owned company founded in 1992, is structured for partnerships with OEMs and Tier One Suppliers in medium-to-high volume fabrication and assembly of common and stainless steel, aluminum, carbon steel sheet/tube metal, including laser cutting, forming, welding, assembly and painting. Another niche capability of the company is enabling first article/prototyping for its customers, working with their designs and/or engineers to prove out their concepts prior to production. The company is continuously working on deploying operational best practices specifically targeted towards continual improvement.

THE CHALLENGE. Champ Industries was looking for ways to improve product throughput which required analysis of different processes throughout the value stream. The initial visit by Impact Dakota, a NIST MEP affiliate and member of the MEP National Network, and conversation with stakeholders highlighted the excessive inventory levels and material handling. Further discussion led to identifying and confirming that the company's CNC press brake is a bottleneck operation, impacting the throughput. A combination of scheduling practices and the shop floor mentality to make as much as possible were partially contributing to less than optimal flow of materials through the CNC press brake therefore negatively impacting the throughput.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Based on client's needs, Impact Dakota developed a proposal for design and delivery of training materials and coaching in conducting a kaizen event in support of improving throughput. The training included a basic overview of theory of constraints and basics of Lean including Pull/Kanban system. The projects focused on improving the performance of the press brake operation, which was identified as the facility's constraint. Measures were put in place to make the best use of the press brake which also included evaluating upstream and downstream operations and supporting information flow. Prior to the start of training Impact Dakota and Champ Industries identified critical metrics necessary to determine the degree of improvements and means for on-going monitoring of those improvements. Such metrics included improving throughput, space saved, WIP reduction, and reduction of material handling. During the course of this project improvement in such matrices were discussed employees input was solicited as to how to further improve such matrices.

"It was truly a pleasure working with Impact Dakota and Reza on this project. He was able to sort through the current 'paradigms' with our brake operation to help the team visualize how minor steps can have large results. Many thanks to Reza and his team!"

-Fred Kainz, Plant Manager/Department Head

RESULTS



+50% reduction in work-in process inventory levels



60% reduction admin rescheduling and customer complaints due to fewer late deliveries and expedites



50% reduction delivery lead time

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