

## LEADERSHIP TRAINING LAUNCHES BIG IMPACTS

**ABOUT HI-LITE AIRFIELD SERVICES LLC.** Hi-Lite began more than 30 years ago as a family company marking roads in New York State. Hi-Lite's first airport was at the local air base at Fort Drum in Watertown, New York, which led to other airport projects. When Hi-Lite invested in airport-specific equipment they became the first markings contractor specializing in airfield markings. In 2005 they acquired an asphalt rejuvenator, becoming the first full service airfield maintenance contractor in the U.S. They now offer services throughout the Western Hemisphere. Their main objective is to enhance airfield safety for everyone. The company employs 110 people in the U.S. and 60 at their home office in Watertown, NY.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Hi-Lite has relied on the MEP National Network™ for many years. With rapid growth and multiple locations it is challenging to ensure that a company is always offering consistent quality and service to clients. A 2019 leadership workshop identified the need for a consistent method to develop, establish, and maintain process improvement around various aspects of the business. CITEC, part of the New York MEP and the MEP National Network™, was there to help.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Several kaizen events were scheduled to understand the company's current state and test ideas and solutions while training staff and documenting new processes. One kaizen event focused on developing best practice for surface-painted holding signs on an airfield. After three days of trial and error, the team eliminated a 24-hour wait (for paint to dry) from the process, reducing the project time from two days to one hour. Previously the process needed four people, which was reduced to two, and application time was cut from three hours to one, saving Hi-Lite more than 2,500 work hours in a typical year. Paint application was reduced from 27 ml thick to 15 ml, improving maintenance and saving 1,480 gallons of paint per year.

The success of this project led Hi-Lite to pursue additional kaizen training and projects using Lean Six Sigma methods to understand the variation of different paint vendors and colors due to viscosity differences as well as to understand the impacts of nozzle wear on machine and process performance. CITEC has also assisted Hi-Lite in improving training procedures using the TWI JI program to create standard practices and training programs reducing the time it takes for new employees to become proficient, and creating a skills to verify that all competencies on the job are met.

"Hi-Lite regularly engages with CITEC on projects to train our employees and build our leadership team as we continue to grow. Together we identified several key areas we needed to improve upon to meet our strategic goals. The continuous improvement projects have helped us stay competitive and improve our processes, the kaizen approach has allowed us to utilize our most valuable assets, our people. Our most recent project, a Lean Six Sigma training with active projects promises additional impacts for our company. We have established a strong relationship with CITEC and will continue to use their assistance in the future."

-Tanya Rarick, Director of Training and Development

## RESULTS



**\$24,000** in savings on paint annually



**\$62,500** in labor savings from improved process annually



**2500** hours saved to focus on other projects that can increase their overall sales.

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