

CUSTOMIZED LEAN TRAINING AND APPLICATION - AN  
EXCELLENT STEP TOWARD REACHING GOALS

**ABOUT AGT FOODS MINOT.** AGT Foods and Ingredients is one of the largest suppliers of value-added pulses, staple foods and food ingredients in the world. The family-owned company buys lentils, peas, beans, and chickpeas from farmers around its 40+ facilities and ships its products to over 120 countries around the globe where pulses account for the major source of protein consumed. The Minot facility is AGT's first large-scale pulse ingredient and fractionation facility producing and selling products made from varieties of lentils, garbanzo beans, and peas. In 2020 the Minot facility started producing Veggipasta, a pasta made from 100 percent dry peas. The pasta has the taste and texture of traditional pasta and offers the benefits of being non-GMO, vegan and gluten-free.

**THE CHALLENGE.** The vast majority of the company's maintenance parts are stored in 18 shipping containers. Due to lack of organization and standards maintenance and special project personnel were spending excessive time searching for parts in inventory. The lack of organization led to excessive cost due to wasted staff time searching for parts as well as unnecessary purchases of parts that were in inventory. As an initial step to address the spare parts inventory organizational issues the company asked Impact Dakota, part of the MEP National Network™, to develop and deliver training materials to select employees.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Using the input provided by the company's management, Impact Dakota developed and delivered customized training using the materials from the Lean Enterprise Certification Program. Heavy emphasis was put on workplace organization (5S), total productive maintenance and standardized work. As part of the training the participants were asked to identify improvement projects using C4 cards, a lean methodology problem-solving tool. At the completion of the training the participants shared with each other the projects they had identified in their C4 cards and provided constructive feedback. During a period of three months the training participants were involved in various activities improving different processes. Impact Dakota staff maintained contact with training and projects' participants and made a number of on-site visits to discuss the progress made. At the end of the three months the participants made a presentation to company management including the problem statements, root causes, countermeasures, recommendations, and economic analysis. One improvement project focused on spare parts inventory organization and documentation.

"We have done lean training for all of our management team. It was well received and understood. Many principles are applied on a daily basis. We have a long ways to go but this was an excellent step toward our goals."

-Les Knudson, U.S. Operations Manager

## RESULTS



\$145,000 in increased or retained sales



\$72,000 in cost savings



1,300 hours



2% improvement in productivity

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