

LEAN TOOLS PROVIDE LEAD TIME REDUCTION

ABOUT CURRENT APPLICATIONS. Current Applications, based in Watertown, New York, specializes in custom electric motor design and manufacturing. Their engineers work with their clients' engineers to design and prototype motors to meet specific custom needs using durable, high-quality materials. Employing around 60 people, this small, innovative company is proud to be a design/build U.S.-based manufacturer of reliable small and medium-sized motors.

THE CHALLENGE. Current Applications had been reliably meeting clients' needs on a variety of different lines for many years. After several team members went through some basic lean training, they began to wonder if it might be time to re-evaluate some processes to see if they could produce some of their products more efficiently, saving time and improving quality. CITEC, part of the New York MEP and the MEP National Network™, was called in to help.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. The first step was to create a value stream map of the current state and determine cycle times and the overall lead time to get a finished motor tested and ready to ship. Current practices were to make large batches throughout the production process, resulting in long lead times. The team used work balance charts to even out the flow in the cell allowing them to test smaller batch sizes. After several improvements in cell design, standard work, and 5S they were able to test single-piece, and saw great improvements in lead time and overall product cycle time. They also established standard work for operators allowing them to add or remove people from the lines to meet customer needs. They are now much more agile and can respond quicker to customer orders. Part of the lean training included a waste hunt to identify waste in their operations. The teams identified several wastes and decided to work on increasing flow by creating one piece flow cells in two strategic product lines. The same process was used for a second line with a new group of four employees. The team had similar results and, more importantly, Current Applications now has several people trained to help them continue lean conversions in several additional work cells.

"Current Apps continues to use CITEC to assist their business in staying competitive in the electric motor market. By giving our employees the training and time to make changes to their work areas we are empowering our workforce for the future."

-Scott Barker, Operations Manager

RESULTS



Increased production 2.5x from **40** to 105 units/day eliminating a 1000-unit backlog



Lead time reduction of **50%** and WIP inventory from 105 to 5 units, improving internal costs



Internally certified Lean White Belt trains and sustains

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