

HELENA INDUSTRIES LAB SAMPLE TURNAROUND CUT BY A THIRD USING TOYOTA KATA

ABOUT HELENA INDUSTRIES, LLC. Helena Industries LLC (HI), with plant locations in AR, IA, GA, and CA, is a service company that specializes in creating and delivering value for our manufacturing customers. HI is currently one of the largest chemical toll manufacturers in the United States. With over sixty years of experience and proven integrity, Helena Industries LLC sets the industry standard. Helena Industries works with over 50 corporations to provide more than 1000 products for commercial applications, wholesale distribution, and retail sales worldwide.

Helena Industries provides formulation and packaging solutions to corporations across four industry segments - agriculture, commercial, home & garden, and industrial chemicals. More than 1000 products are formulated and packaged at HI's plants. Categories include suspended concentrates, oil dispersions, liquid flowables, dry flowables, dispersible granules, powders, extrusion, emulsifiable concentrates, liquid blending, dry blending, and grinding. HI packages products in containers ranging from a few ounces to bulk shipments.

THE CHALLENGE. Helena Industries' West Helena, AR, plant sought to establish a culture of continuous improvement, empowering employees to apply scientific thinking as the basis for all continuous improvement. At the heart of their difficulties was the timely compilation of product batch tickets. Once batch tickets are sent to production, samples must be tested, and Quality approvals must be returned to the production line to run.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Helena requested a Kata Dojo workshop for 1st & 2nd Coaches over 2 days, following an initial launch of 3 Kata Challenges and Storyboards in 2023 from a 1-day Toyota Kata Experience. The Challenge for the Lab team was to ensure that, within 15 months, the Quality Department would test samples more efficiently.

Quality Technicians are trained so that individual competency on all testing methods can be determined and improved. Our processes are standardized and updated for all instruments and equipment. Materials, documents, and instruments are organized and replenished in a timely manner.

Outcome Metrics:

50% Reduction in Turnaround Time

<6 minutes to create a Batch Ticket

100% trained on all testing and calibration methods

100% of Existing Work Instructions Updated

By using the Improvement Kata and Coaching Kata to reduce sample turnaround time, the lab personnel were able to address obstacles and conduct daily coaching kata routines. For one product, they significantly decreased the Turnaround Time, allowing them to process more samples and keeping production from waiting on the Lab to give approval to run production.

RESULTS



\$200,000 increased/retained sales



\$14,250 in new investment



\$15,400 in cost savings



Reduced batch ticket time from 6.5 minutes to 3.5 minutes, reduced paperwork from 6 pages to 3



Lab personnel 100% trained on all testing and calibration methods

CONTACT US



1 Commerce Way
Suite 601
Little Rock, AR 72202-2088



(870)680-8278



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"Toyota Kata training and the coaching that came with it allowed us to think scientifically about our Challenge of reducing sample Turn Around Time. We found ways of working that shortened our lead time back to the production departments.

Helena Industries Quality Lab was able to identify and eliminate obstacles such as using 2 computer monitors to switch between 4 application to produce a batch ticket much faster than 1 monitor. Also, the Lab found that Oracle was prepopulating the weights of chemicals imprecisely. By meeting at the Storyboard on a regular basis we conducted several PDCAs to determine this step was unnecessary. The result was a reduction in Batch ticket time from 6.5 minutes to 3.5 minutes, and reduced the paperwork from 6 pages to 3 pages, thereby getting production lines up and running much faster.

The Lab also had an opportunity to gain a new customer for that same product. This product previously had a Turn Around Time of 1 hour and 15 minutes, and was reduced to 50 minutes. Through PDCAs the Lab experimented with different sample weights, incorporated new heated stirring plates to get the samples to boiling faster, and tried different ways to cool the sample from boiling to room temperature for testing. This product saw a reduction of 25 minutes per batch tested (a reduction of 1/3), and thereby securing a new customer."

-Johnny (Jay) Jones, Lab Supervisor