

LEX Products Reaps Lean Manufacturing Gains



We Deliver the Power™

Background

Founded in 1989, Lex Products is a leading manufacturer of power distribution and control systems, serving the entertainment, industrial, and military specialty markets. Lex Products has achieved high recognition in the manufacturing industry, including ranking on the Inc. 5000 list as the 77th fastest growing company in the manufacturing segment.

Situation

Lex Products has always focused on quality and on-time delivery. When the company acquired a sheet metal fabricator and was named sole supplier of portable power distribution units for the US Marines, capacity issues came to the fore. Lex needed to standardize processes, increase efficiency and open floor space for increased production.

“Lex was encouraged, as a company holding a government contract, to participate in and receive funding for efficiency initiatives,” Scala says. Through the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development’s Aerospace and Defense Initiative, the company used funding to support investments Lean training and consulting provided by CONNSTEP, Lex fully integrated Lean methodologies into their strategic approach to business growth. The outcome has been steady growth on an upward trajectory; increasing sales four times over, and tripling profits.

Lex quickly outgrew their existing facility in Stamford, Connecticut. With operations in both Connecticut and California, Lex wanted to remain close to key customers in the entertainment and military markets. After a comprehensive search, they chose Shelton. Scala explains, “... we considered options in several

Results for LEX Products:

- Cost savings – 20%
- 12% sales increase year over year
- 50 jobs retained
- 60 new jobs created
- Reinvest \$2.5M in plant equipment



Our focus is to design and build portable power systems to deliver electrical power when and where it is needed. It could be free, but if my customers don’t get it in time, it is of no value. And quality is simply the price of admission – if we kill our customers, they won’t buy from us again.

Michael Scala
President
LEX Products, Stamford, CT



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different states, but an important factor in our decision to stay in Connecticut was the incentives offered for Lean programming, including accessibility to CONNSTEP.”

Solution

The new facility coupled 30,000 square feet of manufacturing space with 24,000 square feet of office space. An additional 30,000 square feet was available for expansion. Using Plant Layout Optimization services from CONNSTEP, the new facility was designed for optimal flow and a flexible layout to accommodate new product development needs. Lex also invested in new equipment and technologies to aid production processes, reduce costs and improve safety. This enabled manufacturing to go directly from engineered 3D CAD models to automated production, improving quality and shortening production time.

Lex also established a Continuous Improvement Department. Says Jim Lefflbine, “In addition to optimizing our processes, having a collection of continuous improvement champions ... becomes a competitive advantage for us. When I visit other Lean facilities, we always talk about how hard it is to release production workers from their duties so they may fully participate [in lean training]. We had 27

employees participate in events in 2010. Ninety percent our management team has attended CONNSTEP’s Continuous Improvement Champion Certification or some other formal Lean training, so they understand the value the employee will gain when we take them from the production floor for training purposes. It not only adds value to their team, but to the entire organization.”

A new in-house training room ensures that every employee receives at least 40 hours of training per year. “Continuous improvement is company-wide. Everyone is involved, from our CEO to our assemblers. If it weren’t fully integrated and supported by the leadership, it wouldn’t work,” Jim concludes.



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