

Success in Operations

Digital scale manufacturer focuses on an efficient flow and maximizing space to increase employee and customer satisfaction

Doran Scales Inc.



20 Employees



St. Charles, Illinois



www.doranscales.com

SITUATION

As competition began to grow and internal processes became more cluttered, Doran Scales faced the realization that they could no longer operate as an “80’s” manufacturing company – living off of high profits, consistent customers, and minimal demand for quality products. Mark Podl, CEO, knew the operation needed significant improvement and by starting with the shop floor operations he could begin the transformation to an up-to-date, lean and quality-minded, 21st century organization.

SOLUTION

Mark first engaged IMEC in setting the framework for how they would approach and prioritize the many improvements through education on the fundamentals of lean manufacturing. By then identifying the need for a shop floor “clean-up,” the Doran Scales team alongside IMEC laid out a plan for an improvement to the physical plant layout through several Kaizen events. By streamlining manufacturing processes and organizing tools and people in a more efficient flow, the team was able to kick start the journey to lean – each individual owning their incremental improvements and committing to the new way of working. “Pushing past the initial stigma of needing to be ‘fixed’ was difficult for some,” said Podl, “but having the guidance of individuals [IMEC] with experience has been extremely helpful. They provided us with the support we needed to get from point A to point B.”

Over the next three years, Doran Scales turned to IMEC to facilitate ongoing improvements to their shop floor, facility layout, and quality management system. “I always use IMEC as a way to start off an improvement project because they help frame the project, much faster than we could ever do alone,” said Podl. Through various continuous improvement activities, the Doran Scales team was able to realize immediate efficiencies; from the implementation of electronic order fulfillment they’ve streamlined what material is flowing and where, decreased the overall count of steps required to ship a pallet, and seen the return on investment in a new piece of equipment in only 90 days.

Recently the company made the transition to a new building to add space, and ultimately capacity, to meet their customer’s needs. “Our old facility worked for a time, but with the new focus on efficiency we knew we couldn’t make the old work space work for much longer,” said Podl. The more than \$3 million investment has already improved their sense of productivity and teamwork – with natural light, complete open space and direct sight lines from offices into production and vice versa. “Without IMEC’s help,” added Mark. “I don’t know how I would’ve found time to do it as a small manufacturer.”

RESULTS

- After 15 years, successfully moved sourcing from China back to the U.S.; Today 95% of their industrial line components are sourced domestically.
- Optimized productivity and increased output with fewer individuals
- Improved people and material flow, reducing steps to ship a pallet from 150 to 25
- Shifted the organization culture to individual and team accountability and incorporated cross training to decrease the strain on people resources

“ I have yet to come across an IMEC rep that isn’t outstanding. Everyone on their team knows exactly what their role is and what they need to do to help me improve my business. It’s a great group to rely on – I wouldn’t even know who to turn to for this kind of help if it weren’t for IMEC. ”

- Mark Podl, CEO



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