

BONNELL INDUSTRIES

Trucking equipment parts manufacturer undergoes a lean transformation to streamline processes and eliminate waste, resulting in improved quality, productivity, and cost savings.

Dixon, IL 92 employees | www.bonnell.com

Situation

Bonnell Industries has been a family-owned industry leader in the truck equipment industry in Northern Illinois for decades but struggled to embrace the concept of Lean Manufacturing. The team mostly operated under “we do it this way because it’s what we know.” It wasn’t until William Hintzsche joined the team in November 2021 as the new COO that things began to change. Noticing excess inventory and multiple non-value steps in processes, he realized it was time to attack the waste. Hintzsche knew it was in the company’s best interest to reinforce lean principles and integrate it as part of the culture.

He has worked with IMEC on many lean projects with former employers and knows the breadth of Lean expertise at IMEC, which led to a conversation about Bonnell undergoing a lean transformation. Hintzsche wanted the Bonnell team to understand how Lean principles can improve processes, drive efficiency, and eliminate waste, which will help them deliver quality products and services and save money.

Solution

The process began with a full day learn and do workshop that combines classroom-style instruction with a hands-on simulation of production facility. In preparation for the simulations, both Bonnell and IMEC collaborated to incorporate safety protocols to ensure the health and safety for those in attendance. IMEC technical experts introduced the basic concepts of Lean Manufacturing to the team, demonstrating tools and techniques and how to effectively implement them in their operations and processes. The simulation portion involved participants applying the principles learned to their individual workspace and across the product line at the mock manufacturing plant created for this training. This technique utilized three shifts, which illustrated the cause-and-effect relationships for the key lean principles discussed, all while offering opportunities to make real-world decisions when making changes with workforce, budgets, etc.

As with most change, resistance is natural. The team at Bonnell initially gave push back on the idea of training to undergo a Lean transformation. As they learned the basic concepts and participated in the simulation, they were able to see first-hand the benefits of embracing Lean and how they could transfer what they were learning to their roles at Bonnell, including streamlining their processes and improving productivity and efficiency.

Results

- Anticipated New and Retained Sales: \$3,000, 000
- Anticipated Cost Savings: \$2,200,000
- Anticipated New Investment: \$60,000
- Jobs Created or Retained: 8

“Bonnell Industries is making great strides on our Lean Journey by blending an influx of outside expertise from the IMEC team, and integrating it with our experienced employees, creating a hybrid built for success.” William Hintzsche - COO, Bonnell Industries