



**YORKSHIRE
PRODUCTIVITY**

“...driving manufacturing excellence...”



Case Study

Harvard Engineering — focus on continuous improvement



Continual Market Leading Innovation

Harvard Engineering was established in 1993 and is now a world leader in the design and manufacture of the smallest and most feature rich electronic control products for the lighting industry.



Harvard supplies virtually all of the leading commercial, retail and emergency lighting manufacturers in the UK and Europe, and also supplies into the US and Far Eastern markets.



Based in a purpose designed manufacturing plant in Leeds,

its in-house facilities incorporate one of the best equipped research and development labs in the lighting industry.

Harvard's flexible manufacturing lines can be used to produce its own ranges or custom built products to specific customer requirements.



Demanding Environment

With limited visibility of sales demand and high variability in the types of product required, Harvard Engineering has to be able to operate with a high level of flexibility — producing a large number of small production batches every month.

Add to this, market pressure on margins and it can be seen that Harvard operates in a very demanding manufacturing environment.



Meeting the challenges

In order to meet these significant challenges, Harvard continues to scrutinise its production capabilities for improvement opportunities.

Harvard's Commercial Director, Michael McDonnell, explained: "Capacity has been increased to achieve a stabilised production output and we are investing in

up-skilling our workforce."

"We are implementing structured processes to enable us to deliver high levels of customer service regardless of external influences."

Harvard is working with Yorkshire Productivity to create a continuous improvement mentality which incorporates lean principles.

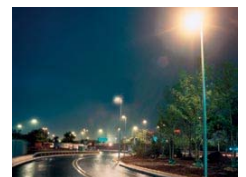


Steering the right course

The company chose the Business Improvement Techniques (BIT) NVQ as a vehicle, as it supports the theory and practical implementation of lean concepts and continuous improvement.

"BIT facilitates a structured approach at three levels of the organisation to ensure alignment in understanding throughout the whole company," said Michael.

"Yorkshire Productivity's ability to support all NVQ levels and take a project management role for all



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of our lean training is a key enabler."

To date, team leaders and candidates nominated for progression have undertaken training. A second wave of operators and inspectors have just been released for training.



Together with a third wave of supervisors and managers, 25% coverage will be delivered within the next six months.

Pulling in the same direction

Harvard has increased manning as required to facilitate this activity whilst ensuring service levels are not compromised.

"This helps ensure commitment from the team so we can progress the learning into results-driven improvement activity," said Michael.



Currently the activity is being concentrated on the Harvard factory which populates electronic boards with surface mount components.

A 5s audit system has been introduced. This has always been quite a clean and tidy operation so the 5s activity has been concentrated on ensuring everyone 'buys in' to the concept to ensure standards are maintained.

Lean progress And objectives

"The momentum generated by the training is already apparent," Michael explained.

"Enthusiasm and interest levels have increased, awareness of lean concepts is improving and the results of 5S activities are obvious."



"Of course, I am expecting the typical production performance areas to improve, including set up reduction, quality improvement, elimination of maintenance issues, manpower and line balancing etc."

"More significantly, I am expecting to see an embedded continuous improvement culture where individuals and teams are empowered and supported to improve all elements of the business to eliminate waste."

"We have as many business process issues as those related to manufacturing capability or productivity, so awareness of why and how lean can support our improvement goals must be

our number one objective."

Harvard Engineering is committed to the BIT and NVQ structure to implement and embed lean and continuous improvement.

The company is also undertaking management development training, Continuous Professional Development, IT and Electronic awareness programmes to further ensure its people are in the best position to support the growth and development needs of the business.



"Quantifiable benefits will come in time, once the teams eliminate the influencing factors," said Michael.

"I am confident that the continued coaching from Yorkshire Productivity will support our teams in delivering the results we expect from this investment as we prepare for a successful future as a growing UK manufacturing resource."

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