



**YORKSHIRE  
PRODUCTIVITY**

“...driving manufacturing excellence...”



## Case Study

### Surgical Innovations — cutting edge challenge for lean

# Surgical Innovations

Formed in 1992 by Peter Moran and Professor Michael McMahon, based at the Leeds General Hospital, Surgical Innovations has developed into a major manufacturer of leading-edge surgical equipment for Minimally Invasive Surgery and Autologous Blood Transfusion.

It now has a truly international presence with representation in all major markets through specialised distribution.



Surgical Innovations became an AIM registered Company in 1998 and has since grown year on year.



The company currently employs around fifty people at its 32,000 sq ft facility in North Leeds.



#### Production flexibility

Surgical Innovations produces over 50 different versions of its products.



To meet demand, it runs a two shift system in manufacturing and assembly.

Production runs range from small batch quantities to large scale production— one offs to over 150,000 units off per year.

#### Market drivers

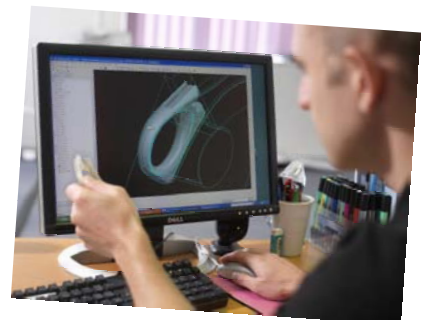
Most of the competition for Surgical Innovations comes from overseas.

The big players in its markets are large American-owned multinationals so it is important that Surgical Innovations is as competitive as possible.

**Paul Birtles, Surgical Innovations' Manufacturing Director, explained the drive for lean implementation:**

**“ Lean was something I used with considerable success at a previous company and I wanted to use these techniques to enhance the performance at Surgical Innovations.**

**“In these challenging times, it is particularly important that we drive down manufacturing costs to remain as competitive as we can be.”**



#### Lean training

A culture change programme initiated by Surgical Innovations, gave all of the employees the





opportunity to comment on how the company was being run and what could be done to make improvements.

From there, the company introduced a Business Improvement Techniques (BIT) NVQ programme for the assembly area with training and support from Yorkshire Productivity.

### Lean Implementation

Driven by Surgical Innovation's Production Team Leader, Barry Jackson, the management team is already seeing the benefits of what Barry and his team are doing in the assembly area.

**Barry explained:**  
"We now have site assessments within the area and have used the 5S' to rid the area of waste and scrap which ensures a cleaner working environment."



As a medical device manufacturer, this is crucial moving forward and, with the company's investment in new clean room technology, it is vital that the team understands how to maintain a clean and tidy work area.

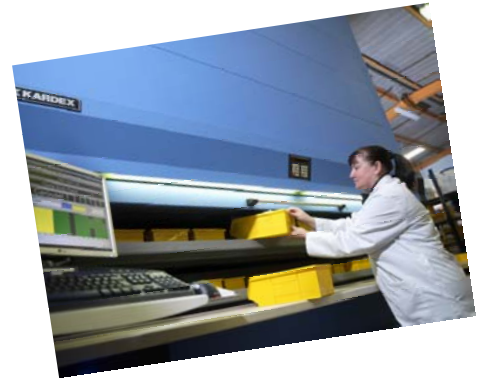


**Paul Birtles observed:**  
"The other big improvement is in the attitude of the team. They are all committed to this and the atmosphere has improved dramatically within the area."

"As a management team we are taking on board the comments being fed in, through the structure in place, looking at all comments and, if possible, trying to act on them."



The team will have a big say in how, Surgical Innovations lay out their



new clean room which is due for completion in July.

**Paul commented:** "They will use the skills learned on the course to help define how we set up the area."

"We want the clean room to be the first real team effort in which all areas have had an input. This will encourage even greater improvements into the future."

"Looking forward, we are going to put our middle management onto the BIT level two course followed by BIT level three."

"Once this is completed we will then run them through the team leaders course and put our manufacturing cell through the BIT level 2 course."

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