KAIZEN KORNER

INFORMATION FLOW

As reported at our All-Company meeting on Wednesday, there were 56 implemented ideas during the last six months of 2008. The ideas came from all areas of the company. The last few Kaizen Korner interviews focused on ideas that were implemented on the shop floor. The following idea made a positive change to the exchange of information between supervision of the Fab and Machine Shops.

Q. What was the problem?
A. Scott: We could not schedule Machining work far enough out or measure the capacity in our Machine Shop.

Q. How did you become aware of the problem?
A. Dave: I was talking over my Personal Objectives for 2009 with Scott and Brian. One of the objectives had to do with anticipating capacity and overtime and I explained that it was hard for me to do that without specific estimates of hours on each machine. Scott said that he had access to that information and we started to work on a way to get it to me on a regular basis.
A. Scott: Jobs were coming into the Fab and Machine divisions but Dave Ritter was not aware of the machine break out; how many hours were estimated on which machines. For example he might have known that job 68709 would take 200 machining hours but he didn't know that 140 of those hours were on the King and 60 were scheduled for the Ingersoll. This lack of information was causing a bottleneck with scheduling and forecasting capacity in the shop.

Q. Scott, Dave Ritter, Bob Skorupsky and you made up the Kaizen Team. What did it take to implement the idea?
A. *Scott:* It was pretty easy, actually. We just added a new block to our Shop Order form that itemizes the number of estimated hours on each Machine for each job. The hours were already broken down by the Project Manager so the information was there. It was just a matter of getting the information available to who those who need it.

Q. And how does that happen now?
A. Scott: In the Fab Shop, we have Open Jobs on a clip board for several areas of the division; Fab, Dresser and Durr. This way each supervisor knows exactly what jobs are going on and where they are in the process. They also know the estimated time in which the job needs to be complete if it is to be profitable. We added a Machine Shop board and we keep it in Dave's office.

Q. What is the goal/value of the Kaizen?
A. Scott: It definitely makes it easier for Dave and me to communicate scheduling needs between the Fab and Machine Shops now. Over all, the changes have improved data accuracy, scheduling accuracy and we are able to predict capacity of hours and manpower in the shop with better accuracy.

Q. When was it implemented?
A. Scott: We started using the new form and Machine Shop clip board at the end of November and have been "sustaining it" since then. Dave has also been joining our Weekly Cell Meetings. I thought it was enough that he was involved in the morning Production Meetings – that's where we go over what's happening in production that day, what manpower is available, what is being shipped, what is being moved … that kind of thing. But the Weekly Cell meetings are all about what is happening within production for the next week or two. Having Dave's input into that part of our scheduling has been very useful.

A. Dave: I had become accustomed to not having the estimated hours for each job and worked with this for a long time. This new system makes scheduling into the next few weeks so much more predictable.
So, this Kaizen started out as a single way to help Dave determine capacity in the Machine Shop. But before it was over, it actually helped in several other ways as well. Not only can Dave now meet the original goal of determining capacity, he also participated in Weekly Cell meetings which helps in the overall flow of production, systems on both sides of the street are becoming more standardized because of the use of the Clip boards and with the information on this clip board, Dave can better help Project Managers estimate ship dates for quotes based on the information constantly updated on the board. It's a win, win, win!

Thanks to all who participated on this team for working through one more bottleneck.

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