

SouthWest Electronics Energy Group

Southwest Electronics Energy Group is a small manufacturing company in Stafford, Texas that produces custom lithium and lithium ion battery packs, battery assemblies, cable/wire harnesses and custom chargers. Founded in 1964, the 65 employees have developed a strong quality culture geared to customer satisfaction and product excellence. It is ISO9001:2000 certified.

SITUATION

Southwest Electronics serve primarily high-mix, high-reliability industry sectors, oil field services, medical and military industries. It is facing increased customer demand both in quantity and variable needs in time of delivery, as well as new business and product development challenges. The company needs to improve its process flexibility to reduce lead-time and satisfy its customers' demands without compromising its rigorous quality assurance standards.



SOLUTION

The company was invited to participate in an Executive Lean EDA Overview luncheon during which time it learned of the services provided by the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center. Following the orientation, TMAC manufacturing specialists provided lean training that included development of Current Value Stream Map (VSM) and Future VSM.

The three-day training included Lego Lean simulation training; plant visits; full understanding of the work cycle and development of possible solutions. Some of the solutions that were undertaken were: implementing cellular layout; using modular tooling cards for

fixtures and floor stock (no more unused tools lying around); using bins for POUS for floor stock; reviewing requirements for double inspections; reducing batch sizes to improve flow; and working on the far reaching-soldering station.

RESULTS

Since the training, the company is enthusiastically using the Lean tools with the objective of continually improving its processes. Process changes that were implemented included floor layout, cell design, balanced workload and 5S program. Improvements in lead-time have reduced assembly time by 10 to 15 percent, resulting in increased profits that have improved the company's bottom line. Additionally, the company has improved its ability to meet customer demands. A company representative states, "TMAC taught us how to use tools that can be implemented quickly and that produce immediate results with definite impact on the bottom line."

County: Fort Bend

NAICS: 33999

Industry: Battery packs and custom chargers

Services Provided: Lean Executive Overview, Assessment, Lean 101, Value Stream Mapping, three-day Kaizen event

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