



Driving Impact for Manufacturers

Success Snapshot:

Gasbarre Products

Operational Excellence with a Tight Methodology

Company

Gasbarre Products, Inc. of DuBois, PA (www.gasbarre.com) was founded in 1973 to design, manufacture, and service a complete line of powder compaction and sizing presses for the powder metallurgy industry. Since then, Gasbarre has expanded both vertically and horizontally and now owns and operates five manufacturing plants. While Gasbarre Products' end users serve several markets, including lawn & garden and medical, they are highly concentrated in the automotive market. Capital equipment sales, including presses and industrial furnaces, represent the majority of Gasbarre's sales revenues.



(L-R) Tom Weible, NWIRC; Heath Jenkins, Gasbarre; Mike Matko, Gasbarre, and Bob Zaruta, NWIRC in front of a 550T Multi-Motion press being rebuilt for a local customer.

Business Issue

One of the company's strategic business goals is a 25-40% sales increase of its Manufacturing Technologies division, including contract manufacturing for welding and machining, to reduce risk of economic cycles associated with capital equipment sales supporting the automotive market. Accomplishing this lofty goal requires Gasbarre to implement organizational excellence initiatives that will improve workplace organization, cleanliness, safety, increase on-time delivery, and increase production capacity. Gasbarre was not practicing routine continuous improvement activity and had not implemented new process improvement initiatives since the early 2000's. As a result, they saw key operational metrics affected such as a decreased on-time-delivery and increased scrap rates. To achieve the greatest success, they needed more resources and the tools and methodologies to effectively and efficiently implement a targeted program. Time was of the essence, because missed opportunities are potentially lost revenues. Heath Jenkins, President of Press & Automation at Gasbarre Products, wanted a solid plan for continuous improvement. "Often the biggest problems with continuous improvement are where to begin and then how to sustain," he said.

Solution

Operational Excellence - Design Sprint

As a result of discovery meetings with NWIRC, a solution was outlined for partnering with a highly experienced practitioner using operational excellence tools, such as Theory of Constraints, Lean, Six Sigma, and others, to assess

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Solution *(continued)*

and document current operations and subsequently defining the future state design for their DuBois facility. The methodology consisted of outlining the current state, developing the future state design, goal tree, and implementation plan. Max Krug, of Future State Engineering, was looped in to conduct an 'Operational Excellence Future State Design Sprint'. Krug has a long-standing and successful track record of success in assisting manufacturers to improve productivity, efficiency, and operational performance.

Success

At completion of the Design Sprint project, Gasbarre was presented with a 1) current state reality tree with injections necessary to transition to the desired future state, 2) a current and future state value stream map, 3) future state reality tree with an associated goal tree, critical success factors and associated key performance indicators (KPI), and most importantly, 4) an implementation plan for attaining the desired future state. An operational excellence workshop was also conducted for leadership, managers, and key supervisors.

Jenkins said, "I knew we needed a roadmap or a scaffolding to help frame everything out – so that is what the design sprint project did for us. We knew it would give us an idea of what to focus on first because we want our team to be as efficient as possible. As a result, we identified 30 key processes to focus on that, when optimized, will have an out-sized and positive ripple effect throughout the organization."

According to Jenkins, a significant factor for success of the project was the tight methodology for the project. "Max was able to get buy-in by interviewing 14 team members in various roles and levels and we built the road map with him. We learned his philosophy of getting the systems stable first, before starting to make any improvements. This changes the typical mindset of 'putting out fires' which is a big waste of time," he said.

The Design Sprint project exceeded expectations and it also qualified for financial support through the ARC PA MAKES Mini-Grant Program helping small & medium sized manufacturers engage in projects leading to company growth. Gasbarre is now set with critical success factors and key performance indicators to move forward with the next phase – implementation. Improving workplace organization, cleanliness, and safety will eventually result in increased production efficiencies, reduced operating costs, and most importantly, improved worker safety and culture. Ultimately, their results could see sales increases exceeding \$1M and a cost savings of over \$500K.

"We appreciate organizations like NWIRC. Western PA can be a challenging environment and it's great having resources to point you in the right direction. We're excited to jump into the next phase of the operational excellence project for implementation," Jenkins said.

