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Lean to Green

One of our targeted growth areas is applying lean thinking to become less abrasive on the environment. We're

Institute for Lean Systems News

Dear David,

I hope this short message finds you well. There has been a lot going on with us and I've included a few updates for you to browse through.

The most important piece is registration for our [Operational Excellence Certification Series](#) kicking off on June 16. There's still time to get one or two people in and engaged. Remember, this series requires participants to complete real projects at work that should generate more than enough savings to pay for their course fees. See the details below.

There is also a short update on our Japan Trip, with an invitation for you to view some pictures at a couple of networking websites, where you can ask questions of the participants and get some first hand accounts about how the trip went from their independent perspectives. That should get you fired up enough to try to get your tickets for the next trip (scheduled for November!)

Finally, we have another [Executive Excellence Course](#) coming up in August. We hope you'll come join us for that if you haven't yet.

We'd love to hear from you too. If for no other reason than to say hello or update your contact information.

Thanks for your help in getting this company going and growing. We're looking forward to serving you well for years to come.

Client of the Month



The Lean Journey: One company's experience

When Ed Furniss first heard about Lean, he didn't see how

learning how to calculate carbon footprints and energy consumption patterns so we can offer solutions to reduce your impact and your total cost.

If this is something you've been wondering about or struggling with, let us help you with an assessment and some goal and action planning!

Send David and email

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it could apply to his company.

"Lean seemed fine for the Toyotas and Motorolas of the world with their mass-production operations," said Furniss, vice president and plant manager at Wabash Plastics, an Evansville, Indiana-based provider of high-quality custom plastic injection-molded parts. "But I didn't see how it would work for a company like ours, where someone's running a single machine, producing a part, putting it in a box and shipping it,"

So, to get a better grasp of the Lean concept, Wabash Plastics sent its production manager to a class taught by the founders of the Institute for Lean Systems.

"He came back with a much, much clearer understanding of how to implement the advantages of a Lean system in our operation," Furniss said.

Convinced that Lean might be helpful after all, Furniss and Wabash President John C. Schroeder signed up for a one-week ILS executive seminar.

"We were sold," Furniss said.

Wabash then invited ILS to the plant "to meet with us and talk to us about the type of company we were and the kinds of things we were doing," Furniss recalled.



Ed Furniss

ILS put together a plan to install and implement Lean systems throughout the company and train all of its employees.

"Our goal all along was not to install little bits and pieces of Lean, but to change the culture of the whole company," Furniss said. "We felt very strongly that employee involvement was the key. So every employee has gone through extensive training."

ILS provided a 17-hour training program for all employees and a 40-hour program for supervisors, team leaders and managers.

"We educated the employees to better understand what Lean is really about and how they can be a part of it, and how it can improve their job and their working conditions," Furniss said.

Furniss admits that some employees were skeptical at first.

"But we made it clear from the very beginning that we would

not lay off anybody as a result of the Lean program," he said. "In operations where there were labor savings, we've been able to utilize the people in other jobs."

Employees have not only accepted the program, they've taken the lead in implementing it.

"Our plant is organized into teams with a team leader for each group of machines," Furniss said. "The team members actually go out and do the time studies and the measurements and come up with the ways to set up the machines and the work stations. They determine the amount of labor needed to run the jobs."

The list of improvements the employees have generated is significant, Furniss said.

"They've come up with less labor than we have historically used on various jobs," he said. "We've reduced the amount of material handling because of lower inventories, and therefore we were able to move the parts closer to the work centers. We have less scrap and less rework."

Although Furniss is extremely pleased with the progress that Wabash Plastics has made, he looks forward to even greater gains.

"Continuous improvement means just that - it's a constant process," he said. "Lean is a journey, not a destination."

Other Highlights

We got some great publicity from the Louisville Courier-Journal with a large article in the business section on February 11th. For a copy, send me an email!



I also had another short article appear in [Business First - Louisville](#).

We've made presentations to the members of the Scanlon Leadership network, and we've signed on to conduct two workshops at the International Boatbuilder's Exhibition (IBEX) in Miami in October. We're keynoting at the North American Manufacturing Technology Summit in February, and we're going to keynote the 2009 TWI Summit in Orlando next May.

For information on having us come speak to your group, send us an email at david.veech@theleanway.com.

Thanks for allowing us to stay in touch. The future holds great promise for us and for you. Let's make the most of it!

Sincerely,

David Veech
Executive Director
Institute for Lean Systems



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