

Accellent Creates a Culture of Continuous Improvement | Case Study

Client

› **Accellent:** provider of integrated outsourced manufacturing and engineering services to the medical device industry. Provides design and engineering services, precision component fabrication, finished-device assembly and supply chain management.

› **Net sales:** \$525.5 million in fiscal year 2008.

Challenge

› **Accellent benefited from the Six Sigma blackbelt training** it started in 2006, but company leaders suspected that the potential for greater performance lay dormant in its hardworking teams at 17 facilities. So they began to search for a more holistic approach to training, one that would create a lasting culture of continuous improvement throughout the enterprise.

Solution

› **Partner with TBM's LeanSigma Institute,** planning a series of eight-week onsite training modules to help build a culture of continuous improvement. The Institute's team works on:

- leadership development
- value stream mapping
- kaizen training and implementation
- certification training
- visual systems creation
- daily metrics monitoring plans

Results

Accellent achieved over \$1.7 million in cost savings during the first five months of continuous improvement training. "We were able to show the customer the difference on the plant floor right away. After they saw how we were doing lean, they became a big believer, and we started getting new product proposals coming our way." Joe Panebianco Director of the TBM Lean Sigma Institute.

Medical device manufacturer turns to the TBM LeanSigma® Institute for a system-wide approach to lean education and action.

In 2008, Accellent leaders chose TBM Consulting Group's LeanSigma Institute to help pave the way towards a more holistic approach to continuous improvement that would include teams at all of its 17 facilities. "Six Sigma was more narrowly focused on projects, but it did help us to see the opportunity in an all-around approach," said Jayaprakash "J.P." Gnanam, Accellent's Director of Continuous Improvement. "For instance, we didn't make much progress in terms of improving customer experience with Six Sigma, but if you are doing lean the right way, your customer feels it right away."

Continuous Improvement Gameplan Created By: Accellent and LeanSigma Institute

1. Determine length, scope and content for the training plan.
2. Create measures that provide immediate feedback and visibility to operators — and support top-level goals.
3. Maintain an ongoing relationship to provide periodic training at the client's request for existing employees.



What's Happening Next?

Each of the eight kaizen sites has a dedicated kaizen leader, and the other sites are getting them as well. At least half of the company's plants are at some level of lean improvement. They have created scorecards based on process improvement, not metrics. Each year the goals will be higher. Both Gnanam and Panebianco said the Institute's emphasis on sustaining improvements will be crucial to continued success as the training spreads to other sites, functions and product families.

"Just like a patient in critical care after an operation, you can't just walk away. You have to nurture and help the patient through to make sure they come out on the other side healthy and vibrant."

— J.P. Gnanam

Accellent's Director of Continuous Improvement

Each of the 11 Kaizen events held during the 8-week training had an immediate impact:

- 7 events yielded productivity gains of **22–75%**
- 7 events produced lead-time reductions of **55–95%**
- 9 events reduced WIP by **66%–96%**
- Other events reduced the number of operators, resolved safety issues and implemented 5S and TPM checklists or scorecards.

About the LeanSigma Institute

The TBM LeanSigma Institute provides the knowledge transfer needed for a company to independently drive sustainable performance resulting from its lean transformation. The Institute offers a wide range of customized training solutions, experiential workshops, online training and user conferences to provide organizations with the necessary tools to launch and manage their own LeanSigma initiative. Our faculty is drawn from TBM's most experienced consultants, providing essential, experience-based LeanSigma training and development. Our action-oriented curriculum is rooted in the Toyota Production System and distilled from hands-on experience. Learn more when you click on the "training services" tab at www.tbmcg.com



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