



Advanced Metalworking

Metcam Completes and Implements Nine Kaizen Projects; Reaps Substantial ROI and Process Quality Improvements

November 6, 2014 (Alpharetta, GA)—[Metcam](#), a fabricator of sheet metal components and assemblies for OEMs, today announced it has successfully implemented nine process improvements since it began its Kaizen initiative in early 2014. Kaizen, which is Japanese for “good change,” is a business philosophy of continuous improvement through small, targeted initiatives. Thus far, the projects have netted the company significant improvements in throughput (as much as 30%) and reductions in cycle times to the now-modified processes while further enhancing quality.

“Through these efforts, we have reorganized and restructured production processes, inventory management and materials planning,” said Metcam President Bruce Hagenau. “Among their many benefits, the Kaizens have allowed us to integrate [quality assurance](#) more intentionally and thoroughly into our production processes—and to reduce our dependence on overtime to meet production goals.”

One of the more significant improvements was the restructuring of turret punch tool management. Previously, punch tools were stored on multiple racks located near each of Metcam’s seven turret punches. There was no coordination or oversight with the tooling. As a result, tools became scattered over time, and operators would sometimes spend significant time looking for a tool. During the Kaizen, one of the team members suggested organizing the tools into a dedicated “tool center,” with identification tags in front of each tool and a team member in charge of managing them.

Today, the center stores the tools in orderly rows in a dedicated, secured area. A designated team member pulls them in advance for each work order and ensures they are returned to their proper places after use. Not only has the improvement enhanced the efficiency and workflow of the punch cells, it has facilitated maintenance and inventory improvements, as well.

Metcam Turret Punch Tool Center



According to Metcam Quality Manager Richard Uber, one of the core benefits of the Kaizen initiatives is that workers on the production floor are the ones coming up with project ideas. Of the nine changes Metcam has implemented, only two were overseen by consultants hired in late 2013. The remaining seven were internally led projects spawned from suggestions contributed by shop floor personnel. “Anybody can make a suggestion to anyone on the Kaizen executive team, and these guys have great ideas,” said Uber. “Most of the projects have been a slam dunk.”

Hagenau points out that having personnel suggest the improvements increases buy-in—which was sometimes lacking in the company’s previous quality initiatives. “Workers are really getting excited,” said Hagenau. “We are building momentum and enthusiasm—employees want to be lean on their own, with support but without direction.”

The Kaizen initiative will continue, Hagenau and Uber noted, and Metcam is considering extending it to back-office processes and workflows. Hagenau’s goal is to have everyone at Metcam involved. “We want everyone in the company to participate in at least one Kaizen by the end of Q1 2015,” he said. “Then, the goal becomes supporting them with necessary resources and improving their skills so that they can lead their own lean initiatives in the future.”

The entire Metcam team agrees that the Kaizens are very helpful in accomplishing Metcam’s mission of “Highest Quality Products, Delivered On-Time,” ultimately leading to continually improving customer satisfaction.

About Metcam

Metcam is a fabricator of precision sheet metal components and assemblies for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) representing a wide variety of industries including telecommunications, electronics and HVAC. Metcam's advanced metalworking capabilities include laser cutting, punching, forming, hardware insertion, welding (including robotics), powder painting, silkscreen and parts assembly. Metcam also assists clients with product design and manufacturability to reduce their total cost of production. Metcam's award-winning service, combined with an aggressive focus on quality, environmental management and lean manufacturing, simplifies the outsourcing decision for firms worldwide.

For more information, visit www.metcam.com.

Contact (Press Only):

Jennifer Koon

Michael Mackenzie Communications

770.645.7990

jenniferk@michaelmackenzie.com