



COMPANY PROFILE

CBS Manufacturing Company specializes in precision machining and assembly for the aerospace industry. Its job-shop services include: engineering, SPC, light assembly, tooling, CNC turning and machining, OD grinding and surface grinding.

With ISO 9001 registration and AS9100 certification, CBS meets exact specifications using state of the art equipment, a strong management team, in-house engineering staff and skilled workforce. Its quality system requirements conform to MIL-I-45208, MIL-STD-45662A and MIL-Q-9858A.

Founded in 1972, CBS Manufacturing is a second generation family owned business. With Cliff as President, Bob as Vice President of Manufacturing, and Steve as Vice President of Quality, the three Lawton brothers are strongly committed to continuous improvement, cost reduction, on-time delivery and customer satisfaction. All three brothers grew up in the company, but all three also left to gain experience at other manufacturing companies before returning to take over the helm of the family business.

After 30 years in a 15,000 square foot building in Windsor, Connecticut, CBS outgrew its space and in July 2008, moved into a 40,000 square foot building in East Granby, Connecticut. The Lawton brothers strategically selected this location to be convenient for all of the 32 employees, but to their surprise, it has also become convenient for prospective customers. Because of its proximity to Bradley International Airport, many prospects are filling flight downtime with a visit to CBS.

SITUATION

CBS was a traditionally run business that went along comfortably with successful projects for a number of years until it lost two big jobs to a competitor. With that wake up call, it was time for the Lawton brothers to make some radical changes in order to win back the business they lost, as well as, gain new business.

Delivery time was running at the industry standard of 26 weeks but the conventional standard was no longer good enough. Part of the inefficiency was the set-up time in the horizontal milling area. It took 2-3 hours just to set up the machines. CBS needed to increase its capacity in this area without increasing costs.

CBS was also running a manual scheduling system. The information flow was not as accurate as it needed to be

between the office and the floor, contributing to slower delivery times.

The Lawton brothers knew they needed to improve lead times, cut costs and run more productively. "Lights Out Manufacturing" was the answer they needed to regain the business they lost. "Lights out manufacturing" allows manufacturers to respond to increased demand and produce overnight, capitalizing on the machine down time and saving on staff and utility costs.

The management team renegotiated with their casting parts supplier and they were ready to invest in new fixtures for the CNC machines, but they needed help improving the processes and with implementing the new production methods.

CBS Manufacturing Company
East Granby, Connecticut
32 employees

CONNSTEP Lean Solutions

- 100% on-time delivery;
- 19 week reduction in lead time;
- 80% increase in productivity
- Decrease in set-up time from 2 hours to 15 minutes.

Cliff Lawton's relationship with CONNSTEP dates back to about eight years ago when they first connected through the Aerospace Components Manufacturers (ACM). At that time, Cliff served on ACM's Board of Directors. When CBS needed help implementing "lights out", he decided to bring in CONNSTEP.

SOLUTION

CONNSTEP's Bill Kirchherr began with a value stream map that established a current state as well as an implementation plan which helped the company focus on process flow. The value stream mapping was very successful and helped CBS regain their lost business more quickly.

Secondly, CONNSTEP helped CBS implement "lights out manufacturing." Bill served as the lead on the Operator Team and helped the operators define what it would take in terms of equipment, materials and time to allow the CNC machines to make parts at night.

Third, CBS automated their scheduling system. As part of this process, a Kaizen event in the office uncovered ways to improve communication and make it more accurate. The new scheduling system shared new data with more people who needed to be included in the information flow.

The foremen are now included in the information flow and are able to use the scheduling system for daily production meetings. By knowing the upcoming schedule, they are able to ensure that all tooling is available and that paperwork is in place for shipping.

RESULTS

- CBS won back the business they had previously lost to a competitor.
- On time delivery is now 100%; their competitor's was around 50%.
- Reduced lead time from 26 weeks to 7 weeks.
- Increased productivity by 80% with "lights out manufacturing."
- Reduced setup time – originally 2-3 hours; now 15-minute changeovers.
- Increased ability to augment sales by greater than \$1 million annually.
- Employee motivation soared following management's engagement of all employees in solution development. The Operation Team worked with CONNSTEP on the solution, presented it to management, and saw the reward of the business returning to the company.

NEXT STEPS

CBS is working to secure more jobs for "lights out manufacturing" as they see this as an avenue for new customers. The company has learned, from this process, to pursue every opportunity to reduce the cost of manufacturing so they can keep more business in the USA.

"I've known CONNSTEP as an organization for about eight years and am impressed with how their expertise has grown over the years. They've worked hard to hire professionals with the right industry capabilities, knowledge and experience. All their effort shows – we are very pleased with the work they did with CBS."

Cliff Lawton
President
CBS Manufacturing Company

