

Brief

Stamping Ideas into Reality

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It is all about the Customer

There is a tremendous resilience and entrepreneurial spirit among manufacturers as they search for ways to provide better service to their customers. To this end, Die-Tech is committing to Lean manufacturing principles and techniques to eliminate waste, cut costs, and improve productivity.

No one understands that concept better than Ryan Wertz, Production Manager at Die-Tech. When asked how his stamping operation has changed over the last decade, Wertz shakes his head. "What hasn't changed," he responds with good humor. "In the past, when an order came in we would set up every machine in our press lines to produce the part."

Fast forward to 2007 and Lean manufacturing. Three years ago, explains Wertz, his Lean team, which included machine operators, looked at set-up time. Each press could require as many as eight different pieces of auxiliary equipment to run. "We identified each step in the process and determined that we should not keep changing equipment. Setting up a press can take anywhere between six and eight hours. We had already standardized the die process, now we needed to standardize the presses that run those dies."

Lean is about organization and process, says Wertz. "I compare it to a NASCAR pit crew; they have everything ready to go when the car comes in and everyone has an exact job to do. That is what we are trying to accomplish by standardizing the press lines.

To start the transformation, Wertz and his production team updated the presses, made modifications to existing equipment and purchased some new equipment. "It was not always easy," admits Wertz, "but the results are there; the stamping operation runs faster and with fewer presses."



By standardizing the press line, set-up time was reduced by at least 50%, more in some applications. This translates to savings in cycle time and shorter delivery schedules for the customer.

Wertz adds that there are also secondary benefits to standardizing press lines. For example, safety has improved. The Lean team also developed a device which automatically removes slugs. Prior to this improvement the material would drop into pans which, when full, were very heavy. The machine operators ran the risk of injury when removing these pans. "The less lifting you do, the less chance of an accident," relates Wertz.

"We have only just begun," says Wertz. Currently, three of the fifteen presses are standardized. By July of 2008 at least another eleven will be retooled. Wertz sums it up. "To help our customers compete with their competitors we need to pay attention to every aspect of the production process."

At Die-Tech it is all about the customer -- isn't it time to have a stamping vendor that puts your needs first? Give us a call.

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