

To continually examine our processes to provide greater value to our customers without waste.

The Lean Line



The WOW Revolution

Our “War on Waste” (WOW) is being fought valiantly by all of our employees. To quote our IT specialist, Grunau is going through a “quiet revolution of newfound productivity”.

This quote speaks to more people being made aware of what “waste” is and their thinking of ways to reduce or eliminate that waste. We all are learning we are empowered to question how we are doing our day to day tasks and can make changes that result in more productive processes.

For example, our Contract Management department contacted our insurance agent to request they develop an electronic form of the insurance certificates we need to mail to our customers. This will eliminate using the paper form that currently requires either hand-typing on a typewriter or ghost-imaging on the computer and then trying to line up perfectly in the printer so it prints in the correct spot. The current process then requires photocopies to be made and mailed to both our customer and the insurance agent. Another step reduction with the electronic form is that the file can be emailed directly to the insurance agent.

Another example of eliminating waste was a closer examination of the Sheet Metal Shop’s Fab Sheets and “Received From” forms. They realized if they slightly changed the electronic Fab Sheet to include a check-box for when a delivery signature is required, then the printed version would include a customer receiving line for their signature and thereby totally eliminate the additional “Received From” form that is otherwise written, processed, and filed.

You’ve heard it before, but it bears repeating: the sustaining portion of Lean is critical. As process changes are being made for the best of the whole process, some people may end up doing things differently or having to do slightly more work than they did before but overall, it cuts out total process time down the stream.

For example, Grunau’s Green Sheet (which is the form containing the necessary data to get a job set up in our accounting/computer system), has been redesigned and made electronic. The revised process has reduced overall steps as well as added an error-proofing process which in itself reduces problems encountered later due to errors or missing information. The Project Managers and others who use these forms have all been trained in how to use the new form so the whole process is more productive and effective. Everyone now must make the effort to use these new forms as instructed.

Follow through on all Lean changes is important, so that the revised process eventually becomes habit and allows for newfound productivity. Do your part to keep our WOW revolution going!