

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

The Lean Line

IMPROVING METALS HARDWARE

The metals division was plagued with customer complaints regarding missing parts and hardware. Customers would call days or sometimes weeks after delivery complaining that items were missing. To combat the problem head-on, the Metals team analyzed the entire process from ordering materials, receiving and stocking deliveries, to delivering the finished product. Their findings resulted in process changes to realize an improvement in customer satisfaction as well as an estimated annual cost savings of more than \$30,000.

One issue was ordering hardware packages for fabrication projects. At times, projects were begun but hardware wasn't ordered or was misplaced. The Metals team decided to order hardware immediately after the final print was approved, and send a confirmation email to the Metals Shop informing them of incoming material. The change allows the shop ample time to prepare for material delivery and to alleviate issues before the project begins.

Changes were also made in receiving and stock procedures to improve accountability and to allow for quick retrieval of required items. A shelving system was fabricated and labeled to accommodate stocking material by job name and number, thereby reducing the time shop personnel spends searching for needed material. When deliveries are made to the shop, they are placed in a segregated area and remain there until an authorized person opens, identifies, and stocks the material in the proper locations. This reduces the possibility that materials will be misplaced within the building or received at the wrong location. Now when someone looks for received material, they know whether it arrived and exactly where to find it.



The process of delivering finished product to the customer was also improved. When a load is compiled for delivery, the driver knows exactly where the hardware package is located and whether the package is complete. The driver compares the material to the itemized list of materials when (1) the truck is loaded, (2) before the truck leaves the yard, and (3) with the customer at delivery. This process improves communication with the customer and assures that all items listed were delivered.

Lean success was realized through identifying a problem and formulating a solution through improved communication and organization. Metals improved customer satisfaction and reduced waste through team work and ingenuity. If you would like to share a successful project or have a Lean idea, please contact a member of the Grunau Lean Team.