

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

# The Lean Line



## Material Handling Success

Material handling on job sites has always been a major issue with wasted time searching for parts. The endless hours playing hide and seek for needed materials are only compounded by some of the larger projects Grunau is involved with. To help alleviate wasted time, our team at a large hospital project decided to be proactive and find a better way.

Foremen and purchasing held pre-planning meetings with individual supplier representatives to develop systems that decreased the amount of time spent looking for parts. Communication led to a better understanding of the capabilities of the supplier, how those capabilities might meet the foremen's needs, and resulted in remarkable improvement.

To meet job site requirements, a couple suppliers took on the responsibility to stock material and hardware on site. The vendors inventoried and restocked material at levels dictated by the foremen, creating a simple hardware store where the tradesmen could quickly find needed items. Deliveries of these items were also streamlined by using easily identifiable and in some cases, reusable containers.



When parts and fittings were ordered for the job, the foreman would break the order down by trade, area of the building, and system. The vendor would place the items in designated containers segregated by trade, area of the building, and system; the same way they were ordered. Labeling the product allowed for quick identification of material, saving time distributing the materials throughout the project and reducing the amount of time spent searching for items.



Finding a better way may just be a single question away. A number of these improvements were implemented because the question was asked, "What can you do as our supplier to make our job easier?" The improvements do not make the process perfect, but they go a long way in our continuous search for improvement and eliminating all waste.