

Success Story

Green Supplier Network (GSN) Assessment

Grand Rapids Controls

Grand Rapids Manufacturer Utilizes GSN Assessment to Gain Efficiencies throughout Shop Floor

With a history of being customer-focused, Grand Rapids Controls, headquartered in Rockford, Michigan, has grown from a small domestic cable manufacturer to a global supplier of motion control systems. With manufacturing facilities in Michigan and China, the company provides competitive solutions and services to their customer base.

As part of Grand Rapids Controls' continuous improvement efforts in both quality and manufacturing processes, the company approached The Right Place, Inc./MMTC-West for assistance in September 2007. Grand Rapids Controls wanted to further improve on both their shop floor and quality processes, with the goal of reducing out-of-specification parts and increasing the overall value-add per employee.

"Grand Rapids Controls had existing processes in place, and we were looking to further improve upon them. Our quality control and Lean practices were satisfactory, but there is always room to improve processes," said Jay Hart, Director of Operations for Grand Rapids Controls.



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Jay Hart, Director of Operations, Grand Rapids Controls

In collaboration with MMTC-West, the company embarked on a full GSN assessment, training, and on-site coaching program for key management employees and team leaders. The complete project, including GSN assessment, planning and implementing corrective actions, coaching, and training was estimated at 10 months.

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During the initial GSN assessment, several shop floor processes were reviewed and evaluated including, scheduling, manufacturing, and environmental systems for Grand Rapids Controls' RT Value Stream. From that assessment it was determined that large opportunities existed to minimize scrap, reduce inventory, energy and water use.

A full value stream map was also developed for the RT product line. Grand Rapids Controls' current performance was benchmarked against those of similar manufacturers with similar processes. The information provided the baseline data for the rest of the value stream mapping.

This map helped the company identify a number of specific opportunities to both increase the overall value-add for each FTE and decrease defective parts, increasing overall quality of the parts produced.

"The results of the assessment were consistent with our thoughts, but the report and process gave us the hard data that allowed us to prioritize and target specific areas for improvement," said Hart.

This data then served as a reference to establish goals for manufacturing process and quality improvements. The results of the assessment added in Grand Rapids Controls' existing value stream mapping process and enabled the company to add an Environmental Impact review. Grand Rapids Controls was also able to discover and focus specifically on several aspects of their quality process and identify further improvements to be made.

"Our customers have come to rely on our ability to provide product solutions, execute launches and produce high quality parts at globally competitive prices. We already employ a comprehensive and prevention-based quality operating system compliant to ISO9001/2000, and TS16949, with an environmental management system compliant to ISO14001.

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Established: 1970

Employs: 280

Products: Motion Control Systems

Industries Served: automotive

