

# Success Story

Lean Boot Camp, Lean Training, 5S Training, Value Stream Mapping

Fastco Industries, Inc.

## Grand Rapids Fastener Company Tightens Production Processes Using New Lean Manufacturing Practices

Fastco is no stranger to the concept of surviving to thriving. What began as a cold header refurbish company in the late 1960s, Fastco quickly turned to manufacturing cold headed parts. It is this same determination to succeed that lead Bruce Tap and his management team to form a working relationship with The Right Place, Inc. and the West Michigan Regional Office of the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC-West).

This relationship commenced in February, 2007 with the first of many sessions with Rick Fleming, Continual Improvement Associates. Assistant Plant Manager, Tim Matice attended several lean classes conducted by Rick at GRCC and was impressed with his expertise and hands on approach. "We determined that The Right Place and MMTC-West was the best resource in the region to help us achieve our strategic plan, both short term and long term. The resources and services they are able to offer, allowed Fastco to maximize our investment," said Matice.



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*Tim Matice, Assistant Plant Manager, Fastco Industries*

Three phases over a six month period has helped set a foundation for Fastco on their lean journey and better position them as a thriving West Michigan company, rather than just surviving.

The first phase was dedicated to an on-site assessment of Fastco's current manufacturing processes (value stream), behaviors and roadblocks. This assessment set the course for the rest of the project.

Following the assessment, Rick and Craig Steenburgh began working with the Fastco management team. Lean principles were incorporated with establishing

corporate metrics. "The metrics are the dashboard to see how well we are doing, what adjustments we need to make and are we on target to reach our goal," said Matice.

Once the process and result metrics were understood and implemented, it was time to get the management team thinking and talking the same way. This was partially accomplished with the first of three, off-site, 5 day, Lean Boot Camps, co-facilitated by Rick and Tim. "Participation in the Lean Boot Camps by



several layers of leadership has brought the message where it needs to be and live, on the shop floor,” emphasized Matice.

While this phase of the project is complete, Fastco lean journey has just begun. The immediate impact has seen safety as the top priority with a 600% increase in safety training hours. Process Improvement Recommendations have improved 400%. COPQ has significantly improved and stabilized. On Time Delivery is a concept that is understood by departments and is improving through the implementation of standard work.

Forty years following the first ideals of the company, Fastco is still adapting to the ever-changing market. The Surviving to Thriving program has better positioned Fastco to weather a storm. Fastco will not be alone during these turbulent times, as the relationships with Rick Fleming, The Right Place, Inc. and the West Michigan Regional Office of the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC-West) will continue in pursuit of True North.

**Fastco Industries Inc.**

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**Website:** [www.fastcoind.com](http://www.fastcoind.com)

**Established:** 1970

**Employs:** 90

**Products:** specialized fasteners

**Industries Served:** automotive, furniture, and snowmobile manufacturing

