

Success Story

Lean Solutions

Stafford Media Solutions

With a company legacy dating back to 1854, Stafford Media has a rich history of printing and publishing in West Michigan. For nearly 100 years, the company has produced the Greenville Daily News, one of the Midwest's longest running daily papers. Today, the family-owned company employs 84 full-time and 26 part-time employees publishing over 100 titles on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly cycle. Stafford offers a full suite of printing solutions, from printing and publishing, to binding, mailing and production.



STAFFORD
PRINTING | PUBLISHING

THE CHALLENGE

Stafford Media operates in the highly-competitive printing and publishing industry, where technology advances at lightning speeds and margins are tight. In order to compete, printing companies have to be extremely efficient throughout the production process.

To remain competitive in the market, Rob and Julie Stafford needed to improve team dynamics and build a more efficient workflow process. By streamlining and eliminating waste in production, the company could improve profitability and drive growth.

To tackle the challenge, the Staffords reached out to the lean training and coaching experts at MMTC-West.

THE SOLUTION

To establish a culture of lean thinking and principles that ensured continued lean success for Stafford Media, MMTC-West developed a three-phase implementation project.

Phase 1: Lean Executive Leadership Training

Building a solid understanding of lean thinking and culture starts with executive leadership. The Stafford leadership team was trained on lean leadership and defined company processes for decision-making, prioritizing goals, developing action plans to reduce risks and setting examples for the rest of the organization.

Phase 2: Understanding Lean Principles

Once a core lean culture was established, the Stafford Media Solutions Team was introduced to the core principles of lean manufacturing and continuous improvement. The core principles were taught through hands-on manufacturing simulations where lean improvements could be immediately tested.

Through these simulations, the solutions team were taught how to look for improvement opportunities, how to evaluate the system as a whole, the importance of documentation and outcomes, and comparing actual results to expectations.

Phase 3: Implementing Lean Principles

The MMTC-West team then taught the Stafford Media Solutions Team how to build and analyze value stream mapping, identifying specific opportunities for improvement. Building on the knowledge the team gained in the 2nd phase of the project, MMTC and Stafford worked together to analyze a specific area of the production process using value stream mapping. This direct application of lean principles (learning by doing), set a foundation on which Stafford Media can build its lean strategy.

RESULTS

Qualitative Results

As a result of phase one lean leadership training, a culture of lean thinking was established and endorsed at the leadership level. This established organizational value in lean principles and encouraged employees to adopt lean thinking in their jobs.

Quantitative Results

Using lean principles and tools acquired through MMTC training, Stafford Media was able to make significant improvements in manufacturing errors and customer satisfaction. 5S lean projects, improved communication, increased training, and value stream mapping identified key areas for improvement and overall waste reduction. These efforts resulted in:

	Jan. – Sept. 2014	Jan. – Sept. 2015	Improvement
Press Errors	54	31	43% reduction
Customer Complaints (press-related)	106	90	15% reduction
Customer Complaints (other)	55	32	42% reduction

The streamlining of office procedures resulted in fewer accounting errors, and improved overall efficiency. Days outstanding for receivables decreased 13 days/23% from 2014 to 2015 (Jan thru Sept).

As a result of numerous 5S projects and improved scheduling of press and post press staff, overall production efficiency was improved by approximately 20%.

Even though sales revenue increased from 2014-2015 (Jan through Sept), production payroll decreased by 5%, resulting in approximately \$48k in savings.



Michigan Manufacturing
Technology Center-West

The introduction of lean practices in our workplace via the MMTC has made a positive impact in how we operate. Our team now thinks differently about how projects are handled, plus you can sense a positive vibe in our work force.

– Rob Stafford, Stafford Media