

P.J. Noyes Company Discovers the Prescription for Improvement: NH MEP's Lean Training

Lancaster Manufacturer Quickly Increases Productivity, Streamlines Jobs, and Makes Processes Easy to Follow with the Help of NH MEP

LANCASTER, NH – P.J. Noyes Company, a manufacturer and packager of high quality over-the-counter pharmaceuticals and personal care products, is an integral part of the community in Lancaster, New Hampshire. In the past few years, the area has seen many businesses close their doors. Yet P.J. Noyes continues to succeed, citing their willingness to learn sustainable practices and continuously improve the way they operate.

Through the years, P.J. Noyes' Chief Operating Officer Dennis Wogaman and other employees would attend the New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership's (NH MEP) public events and workshops. Impressed by what he saw, Wogaman invited NH MEP project manager Jane T. Ely to P.J. Noyes to demonstrate how Lean principles could be used at their plant.

“We wanted everyone to be on the same page with what our company was trying to accomplish. That's why we had every one participate in Basic Lean Training for Job Shops (TWLE102), a workshop which introduces Lean concepts and tools and shows how these concepts are applied through an interactive simulation,” said Wogaman. “Jane and the NH MEP team were instrumental in demonstrating the importance of Value Stream Mapping (VSM) and Kaizen events, so we could reduce waste in various areas of the facility.”

“P.J. Noyes associates realized certain things were being done a certain way *just because that's the way we've always done them*,” added Ely. “For example, in Tablet Manufacturing, people were constantly going up and down the stairs to determine the status of materials. Through the VSM exercise they identified this wasted travel and decided to move processes, people and materials. They also streamlined paperwork, incorporated visual signals and used a simple system of turning lights on or off to give advance notice of when materials needed to be moved. They made their jobs easier.”

P.J. Noyes started seeing immediate results after working with the NH MEP. Since the implementation of Lean techniques in January of 2009, the company has achieved a 25% increase in tablet production per labor hour. The productivity increase resulted in an increase in profit sharing for employees.

In addition to the initial training, a core group of supervisors received “Train the Trainer” instruction so they could spread the knowledge and continue the improvement process. Most recently, a team has been doing a VSM on the quoting process in the Sales Department, showing that Lean works in both an office environment and the shop floor.

“Converts to Lean realize you can sit down and look at the areas and think about what else you can do. You can always find more things to work on, as there is vast opportunity for improvement. Then, as managers are able to show their teams successful results, they get the buy in, which is key to sustaining improvements,” added Wogaman. “Thanks to Jane and the NH MEP team, we are able to seek out those opportunities and make small changes that greatly

affect the way we do business.”

“P.J. Noyes management has proved their commitment to culture change by engaging all employees in the company’s continuous improvement efforts. This training has been made possible by the New Hampshire Job Training Fund,” said Zenagui Brahim, Director of Operations of NH MEP.