

NURSERY SUPPLIES Packages Change for New Sales and Growth



For more than five decades, Nursery Supplies Inc. has been a manufacturer of plastic containers for the wholesale nursery industry. Today, the organization is seen as a global leader in the field and is the only manufacturer fully dedicated to the industry. Its Orange, CA location opened in 1976 and currently employs 30 workers who execute blow molding, injection molding and large-scale thermoforming manufacturing processes.

In 2011, Nursery Supplies wanted to increase sales and support company growth. Unfortunately, the organization was having difficulty increasing production levels and accommodating demand because of inefficient processes.

“Issues such as downtime were really hurting us. Operating training problems were particularly causing long pauses during the thermoforming product manufacturing process,” says Roger Balz, Plant Manager of Nursery Supplies. “It was taking us over three hours to complete the setup and changeover processing of our injection molding equipment, which was definitely time consuming.”

Several years earlier, the company had experimented with Lean improvement training to resolve the issues. “While there were short-term

improvements, the implemented changes weren’t sustained,” says Balz. One of the main reasons for this was the lack of a wide-spread commitment for improvement changes. Many of Nursery Supplies’ employees speak Spanish as their primary language, making communication for sustained improvement more difficult. “We recognized the importance of improving our operations, but we needed to find a way for all levels of our corporate structure to understand the importance of sustained change,” says Balz.



In May 2011, Nursery Supplies was referred to California Manufacturing Technology Consulting® (CMTCC). CMTCC’s consultants met with company leaders and recommended several different projects; including Lean and Six Sigma.

Consultants worked with employees to target specific areas for change and opportunities for Lean improvements. "Training helped our staff find ways to make Lean improvements in different production areas," says Balz. Consultants also provided tips on how the staff could maintain an ongoing change strategy.



The Six Sigma project was geared toward achieving specific company goals such as reducing thermoforming scrap, shortening downtime and improving efficiencies.

Consultants worked with the team to outline a plan for improvement and created a system to ensure changes were sustained. "The projects were successful because employees were trained in both English and Spanish.

Illustrations were also included which helped us overcome the language barrier," says Balz.

"CMTC has given Nursery Supplies the tools for growth. They helped us improve and increase our machine uptime, reduce scrap and waste and assisted us in developing program resolution methods."

*-Roger Balz
Plant Manager*

The implemented projects allowed Nursery Supplies to increase machine uptime, reduce scrap and foster a culture of continuous improvement. As a result, the organization was able to increase production and better accommodate demand. This helped the organization obtain \$55,000 in new sales, \$100,000 in retained sales and retain 12 jobs. Operational improvements also allowed the company to obtain \$100,000 in cost savings which was then invested in key areas such as new equipment and workforce development initiatives.

"CMTC helped us improve our operations and develop the program resolution methods we needed," says Balz.

FEATURED CUSTOMER

Nursery Supplies Inc.

534 W. Struck Avenue

Orange, CA 92867

Tel: (800) 367-7687

www.nurserysupplies.com

