

U.S. CONCRETE PRECAST GROUP: Setting a Rock-Solid Foundation for Growth



When driving down the highway, you might be unaware of the different types of concrete products you rely on. But if you've driven over manholes and bridges, or past highway barriers or soundproofing walls, then you've probably encountered products made by U.S. Concrete Precast Group.

U.S. Concrete Precast Group located in San Diego, California is a national organization that produces a wide array of concrete products that are used in the construction industry including free-standing walls for landscaping, signage, utility vaults, catch basins and curb inlets. The 72-employee company provides innovative solutions to address their customers' engineering and architectural challenges while reducing their labor, material costs and environmental impact.

In 2010, U.S. Concrete wanted to do more than overcome economic challenges; they wanted to set a stronger foundation for growth. Todd Ebbert, General Manager for U.S. Concrete, explains that a focus on increasing sales was a priority for the organization. "It was important for us to expand our market share and appeal to new target audiences," says Ebbert.

As the old saying goes, this was easier said than done. Increases in production and labor costs were impacting the company's ability to invest in initiatives that would result in growth.

To counteract these rising costs, the company wanted to reduce production costs by improving efficiencies and increase productivity to accommodate new market demands.

"Above everything else, internal buy-in was the most important factor when considering any change initiatives," says Ebbert. "Teamwork is absolutely integral to the success of U.S. Concrete, so any changes would have to be supported by all levels of the company's staff." U.S. Concrete knew that team support would be essential to obtaining sustainable results.

In April 2010, Ebbert met with CMTC for assistance. After an initial planning meeting, CMTC consultants took a tour of U.S. Concrete's facility. This allowed the consultants to better understand the company's operations. Options were then discussed with plant management for improvement.



As a result of the meeting, it was decided that a Manufacturing Leadership, Team Building and Problem Solving Training Course would be the best approach. This would bring the different departments together to understand and cultivate changes that would foster growth. The course offered soft skills training and simulation exercises for 20 of the key leaders in the facility. Held weekly, this course prepared the right people for efficient operational improvements.

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*Todd Ebbert,
General Manager*

Subsequently, a Lean Manufacturing 101 Training Session with Simulation was offered to U.S. Concrete. The participants of the session were trained on Lean Manufacturing principles and shown how they applied to operations. CMTC and management worked together to identify specific processes for improvement. “We reduced our production and labor costs by \$50,000. The money that we saved allowed us to invest in workforce and skills training,” said Ebbert.

A Kaizen Continuous Improvement Event that was also conducted and involved an analysis of operations. U.S. Concrete’s Weld Shop and 20 ton work areas became a target for the event. As a result, the organization was able to accommodate more demand. “The ability to do this resulted in \$100,000 in increased sales and the creation of a new job.”

By September 2010, Todd Ebbert’s goals had been reached. U.S. Concrete Precast Group increased their productivity and sales while cultivating a stronger team environment. “CMTC’s improvement initiatives were very effective,” Ebbert said. “They worked with our team to identify and improve our processes to make us more efficient and productive. As a result, we have positioned ourselves to increase sales, reduce costs and invest in better workforce practices and employee skills.” These improvements set the foundation for growth by allowing the organization to address new markets and expand its business.



U.S. Concrete was so impressed with the results that they even requested CMTC’s assistance for improvement initiatives at their Arizona facility. While CMTC is cemented in California, the organization’s reach is expanding throughout the nation!

FEATURED CUSTOMER

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