

CUSTOMER Focus

STOLO CABINETS Opens the Door to New Growth



From high schools and educational facilities to offices and emergency centers, Stolo Cabinets creates quality cabinets, countertops, casework and millwork for a wide range of locations. For more than 40 years, the Brea, California-based manufacturer has used state of the art machinery and high-tech software to produce top quality layouts for its diverse group of clients.

In 2012, Stolo Cabinets wanted to focus on growing its business. "We were looking to introduce new products into the market and increase our sales," says Marty Rivers, Production Manager for Stolo Cabinets. "However, it was difficult to invest resources into projects related to growth because of our high production costs. We needed to save on costs before doing anything else."



The company cited inefficiencies on the shop floor as a top reason for expenses. Management reported that materials were being wasted during their production process and numerous bottlenecks were keeping the company from moving forward. "We were also having mistakes occur in the beginning stages of the production

process, but wouldn't notice them until later in the assembly process," says Rivers.

Stolo Cabinets needed to improve their processes and save costs so that it could invest in initiatives that would help them grow. In May 2012, the company received a grant from the Orange County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to receive assistance from California Manufacturing Technology Consulting® (CMTC).



"Their consultants trained our employees through a Lean simulation. This helped us become more efficient on the shop floor," says Rivers. The Lean training helped staff members identify specific areas where they were being wasteful. Employees were also coached on the 5S methodology which helps companies improve effectiveness by rearranging their workshop space. "We were able to move around our equipment in a more practical way which saved us time during production," says Rivers.

Throughout the workshops and discussions, CMTC's consultants promoted teamwork and helped employees communicate more effectively with one another. The tag phrase "Do it Right the First Time" was established among the team to emphasize the importance of

catching any errors early on. "This saved the team time and money by creating a production process with fewer mistakes," says Rivers.

By the end of project in August 2012, Stolo Cabinets developed a strong understanding of Lean principles and was able to apply their improvements immediately. Stolo Cabinets created a more efficient production process that lead to \$300,000 in costs saved. This allowed the company to better accommodate demand and retain 12 employees. The organization was able to use these savings to invest in new products and better equipment which lead to \$800,000 in new sales. Stolo Cabinets hired 5 new employees to manage the new orders. By eliminating excess costs and investing into new products, Stolo Cabinets set a stronger foundation for growth.



"We have really come together as a team to achieve our goals of sustained company growth. Working with CMTC has really empowered our workers to 'Do it Right the First Time' and become more involved in the development of our manufacturing processes."

*-Marty Rivers
Production Manager*

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