

Success Story



Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) provides resources and expertise to thriving businesses and organisations throughout the UK who wish to innovate, expand or improve their performance.

Part funded by Government, these Partnerships involve combining the knowledge and expertise of an academic institution, such as the University of Plymouth, with the appointment of a talented graduate who works within the business or organisation on a strategic project.

Visit www.ktponline.org.uk

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY OPENED AT AGS

"AGS is a leaner, fitter company after the KTP programme. New processes have given us a keen competitive edge. Staff performance levels are higher than ever before, equalled only by customer satisfaction."

Mike Adkins, Production Director, AGS



AGS Home Improvements Ltd are based in Newton Abbot, and employ 250 staff, specialising in manufacture and supply of PVC-u and aluminium windows, doors and conservatories. The company supplies trade, retail, wholesale and even commercial

market sectors, including large construction contracts. The aim of the KTP programme was to apply the principles of World-Class Manufacturing techniques to the business. Critical business processes were to be re-engineered with the aim of improving flow and reducing work-in-progress and finished goods stocks. New, efficient World-Class Techniques were to be implemented in order processing to aim for 100% on time delivery. www.agswindows.co.uk

Katrina Williams, a graduate with an honours degree in Business Studies and Manufacturing Systems, was selected by the company and the University as the KTP Associate best placed to realise the programme objectives. Along with the practical support of University academics, the programme was able to achieve measurable results that made a real difference to the company.

Manufacturing processes were streamlined and stock levels reduced, leading to lower waste levels. Performance measures and initiatives were put in place to encourage staff, and order processing greatly improved. Katrina was responsible for forming and facilitating improvement teams, including presentations, seminars and workshops, with the support of University academics. This training was necessary to update company staff in the aspects of systems engineering, business modelling techniques and process re-engineering addressed by the programme.

The company retains links with the University, and further developments included a website, implemented with expert consultation. The programme helped to provide a structure and strategy that gave AGS the focus they needed. At the end of the programme, sales had risen by 20%, quality by 10%, and operations were improved by 70%. On-time delivery stood at 98%.



Katrina Williams, KTP Associate with AGS Home Improvements Ltd

PROJECT OBJECTIVES DEFINED



Improve order fulfilment – improve flow and cut down on work-in progress stocks
Develop a manufacturing strategy and change programme for the production line
Achieve the following targets: 100% on-time delivery, 60% lead time reduction, 40% scrap/re-work reduction, 30% reduction in work-in-progress and finished goods stocks

THE BENEFITS OF THIS KTP PARTNERSHIP

TO THE COMPANY:



Greater cost effectiveness and streamlined operations
Overall Cost savings of £217k (one off) and £133 k (annually)
Target outcomes: 98% on-time delivery
58% lead time reduction
38% scrap/re-work reduction
30% reduction in work-in-progress and finished goods stocks



Performance measures put in place
Improvements to order processing and debtor payment efficiency
Gains in capabilities for process re-design
Increased focus in World-Class Manufacturing development team forums
Improved internal communications by facilitating strategy and manufacturing improvement workshops



Staff instructed in Kanban (just-in-time stock management) and Kaizen (Continuous improvement) projects, with suppliers and internal teams, leading to supplier rationalisation



Knowledge of process mapping tools, such as IDEF



Increased IT awareness and training for management and staff, and greater awareness of Human Resources issues

TO THE GRADUATE:



Institute of Operations Management Diploma in Production and Inventory Management
Key involvement with a strategic project set to dramatically improve operations
Experience of industry and production management at a high level
Development of professional capabilities (to a masters degree level) in specifying control systems, designing rotating electrical machines, and marketing consumer goods

TO THE UNIVERSITY:



Used as a longitudinal study in research to develop a methodology for systems based re-design in manufacturing companies.
Included as a supporting case study on re-engineering strategy for the EPSRC (DIP) research grant
Included as case material in a PhD research paper on performance assessments of change in manufacturing companies



Synergy with other KTP programmes in manufacturing companies, leading to some exchange of knowledge and involvement with other academic staff

For further information on Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and other University services contact:

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January 2005