

Ritchie & Associates

The Performance Improvement Consultants, Since 1967

Quality & Productivity Improvement Nets Big Gains

Client Profile:

This company is a joint venture between a U.S based company and a German based company. The Joint Venture Company was established to provide auto manufacturer BMW a convertible top for the new Z4 roadster produced in South Carolina. The 50,000 square foot plant is located adjacent to the BMW plant.

The Need & Approach:

Following the launch of the BMW Z4 convertible, the company was having difficulty meeting operational targets in several areas such as Productivity, Internal Quality, Supplier Quality and Engineering Management. The internal management group, having thoroughly reviewed the issues, decided that external help was needed to accelerate the pace of change. The management team retained Ritchie & Associates to evaluate their situation and to provide an approach to eliminate waste, drive down costs and improve quality. The German based company had recently completed two successful projects with Ritchie in their auto parts facilities in Canada and Michigan. Ritchie & Associates conducted an initial review and Analysis of the operations and presented their Findings, Improvement Approach and Proposal.

The Work & Results:

Working in conjunction with the client's team, Ritchie & Associates developed "on site" and installed the systems and procedures that allowed the leadership team to better manage the operations. The Quality, Productivity and Line Efficiency performance indices were reviewed and updated. "White Boards" were developed and installed throughout the operations to monitor the key success factors and to identify and document operating problems on a "short interval basis" The Supervisory and Lead Person routines were enhanced to be more proactive.

A more robust "corrective action process" was implemented at the morning meetings. These meetings became more effective through the timely, accurate and meaningful reporting of performance to true standard and review of the operating problems as rolled up on Pareto Charts. Root Cause Analysis and the 5 Whys became the normal method of addressing impediments to improved performance. Results included:

- A 17% reduction in Direct Labor Hours
- A 30% Increase in first pass quality
- Line Efficiency improved by 30% in the Sewing Department and 19% in Assembly
- Overtime was reduced by 1,000 hours per week
- Labor Hours per Top went from 7.4 hours to 5.5 hours (26% productivity improvement)

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“We are very pleased with the performance of the Ritchie & Associates organization. Through their work with us, we see improvements that will result in annual savings that will dwarf the cost of their fees.”

General Manager

“I would recommend them to help any organization. We plan to use their services in the future as the need arises.”

Plant Manager