

Lean manufacturing -The practical approach towards productivity

Lean manufacturing initiative focus on cost reduction and increase in turnover by systematically and continuously eliminating non value added activities. In today's competitive market lean manufacturing is turning out to be "The solution" to manufacturing industries across the spectrum for survival and success. Lean manufacturing helps organizations to achieve targeted productivity and more by introduction of easy of apply and maintainable techniques and tools. Its focus on waste reduction and elimination will soon be part of organization culture and turn every process into a profit center. Thousands of companies' worldwide have achieved tremendous productivity and return on investments by implementing lean manufacturing practices and techniques. Indian industry has also witnessed many success stories in automotive, process and other industries.

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In a nutshell, lean manufacturing is all about driving towards achieving profitability and productivity through continuous improvement and resource waste elimination. It is an organizational culture as well as specific practices with clear goals. The roadmap to Lean Manufacturing and its benefits was discussed at a seminar hosted by Bangalore based Manufacturing IT Solutions company Axcend Automation & Software Solutions on May 15, 2007. Senior level delegates from various multinational and national companies pitched in with their perspective on Lean Manufacturing during this half day event held at Axcend's premises. In today's competitive world while large scale companies have taken the first steps to implement lean in their organizations, small & medium establishments (SMEs) also need to follow the lean thinking and implement the same to achieve their set goals.

Mr. Janakiram, Advisor (Lean), HAL set the theme for the event mentioning about how a large public sector enterprise like HAL has embraced 'SAMPOORNA PARIVARTHAN' (complete change) to implement Lean. He reiterated the fact that implementing lean is a collective achievement where every single member's dedication and perseverance makes it a success. Lean is about achievement orientation and execution excellence. There is a need for shift in thinking to 'A zero tolerance for waste'. Persistence for improvement, learning by doing, attitudinal changes, and team work along with emphasis to bring value quickly and remove waste continuously form the essence of lean. Mr. Janakiram concluded beautifully saying that the Mantra for Success has 4P's - Purpose & Process as intellectual issues connected to brain where as Pride & Passion gives the heart dimension.

While Lean is to be definitely achieved, how can it be done? What are the tools required? Providing answers to this was Mr. Gary Flum, GM (Advanced Manufacturing Systems), QAD. Taking into account QAD's long standing relationship with manufacturing industry, Gary gave the enterprise IT perspective of achieving lean. He presented the lean solution available from QAD that could be implemented even in SMEs. Gary started off with the evolution of automotive industry mentioning that the dichotomy of successful manufacturing is cost and innovation. Plotting a curve of value associated with phases of innovation, Gary mentioned that the challenge is to keep the value derived through innovation growing; to keep the stay ahead of cycle of common acceptance by continuous innovation. Going ahead he presented how overhead costs in an enterprise were directly reduced due to implementation of lean. He concluded by mentioning that lean manufacturing focuses on value-stream and by showing the advantages of implementing lean and JIT in manufacturing.

Lean manufacturing is a generic process management philosophy derived mostly from the Toyota

Production System (TPS) hence it was definitely relevant for Toyota to speak on this. Mr. T R Parasuraman, GM, TKAP spoke about best practices of manufacturing and its benefits. Elimination of 3Ms - Muri, Mura, and Muda is important and forms the basis of TPS. Touching upon the 5S methods, Mr. Parasuraman reiterated the need to passionately practice it to achieve global standards. If quality is lost, everything is lost. Emphasis on quality is supreme and any failure needs to be analyzed in depth to get the root cause. 'Rejection is a treasure' said Mr. Parasuraman reiterating the Toyota way of handling quality problems. He concluded by giving the Ten Commandments of Quality.

Overall the delegates were enabled with the seminar's objective for inducing and practicing lean thinking. Today it is relevant that any organization that has set its goal to be a global player or a regional leader has to incorporate changes to be productive and competitive and lean manufacturing shows the way.

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Axcend Automation & Software Solutions is an enterprise Manufacturing IT solution provider focused exclusively on manufacturing and utilities sector, offering end-to-end solutions for adaptive manufacturing environment with sensor-to-boardroom management concept.

Axcend serves the discrete industries including the automotive, auto components, consumer goods, industrial machinery and hi tech industries with complete solutions ranging from Enterprise Resource Planning, (ERP) ,Product life cycle management (PLM) and Manufacturing Execution systems (MES) applications to Manufacturing Dashboard , OEE monitoring and analysis and production management systems with seamless real time integration of production floor . Axcend with its strong domain capabilities also has a niche software development practice covering the entire life cycle of software development services to leading global industrial automation and software product companies focusing on manufacturing IT with offshore global delivery capabilities.

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