

# NEWS RELEASE



## **Lean Learning Center**

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***For immediate release***

## **LEAN LEARNING CENTER HELPS CEILING MANUFACTURER INCREASE CAPACITY, REDUCE FLOOR SPACE WITH TOP TO BOTTOM LEAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**Novi, Mich., July 16, 2003** -- Chicago-based Chicago Metallic Division (CMD), an industry leader in roll forming suspension systems for acoustical ceilings and decorative metal ceiling products, has a long and successful financial history. Yet one of the first things that Chuck Bub, CMD vice president and general manager, wanted to accomplish when he joined the company, was to introduce the concepts of lean.

Bub convinced a management team to attend a seminar focused on the lean thought process. Speakers included Andy Carlino, president of consulting firm Achievement Dynamics, Inc. (ADI) and founding partner of the Lean Learning Center in Novi, Mich., and Jamie Flinchbaugh, managing partner of the Lean Learning Center. After attending, everyone reacted with enthusiasm, inspiring the company to invite Andy Carlino to Chicago for a presentation to upper management.

“Andy’s presentation conveyed the ideas and concepts of lean rules and principles,” says Bub. “Then, he divided us into teams for a walk through the plants to identify what we considered waste, based on his presentation. We all recognized the potential for improvement and cost savings.”

CMD committed to pursuing lean through ADI and the Lean Learning Center, starting by sending key personnel to the Center for a five-day Lean Experience course. Attended by

Bub and directors of operations, marketing and sales, the workshop is based upon the premise that lean tools are largely ineffective unless they are supported by the proper foundation of lean guiding principles and rules that help an organization understand how things work together and why. Students learn through discovery, simulation, case studies, personal planning and journaling.

Upon completion of the course, the group then had to figure out how to take all this information back to the plant and continue on the path to lean. It was decided to hold an After Action Review meeting with Carlino in order to develop an action plan for implementation.

One of the first results from this meeting was the development of a formal lean presentation that would “cascade” through the entire CMD organization. Starting with upper management’s staff and continuing downward through the organization, the one-hour presentation included a video from the CEO endorsing lean along with a presentation of the principles and rules of lean. In less than two months, all CMD employees had attended the presentation and received their first exposure to lean.

Chicago Metallic has since sent employees to the Lean Learning Center on nine different occasions and is using a parallel training process where ADI is helping at the plant level with kaizens and Value Stream Mapping events while lean specialists are trained through curriculum at the Center.

The first kaizen was performed in the door frame fabrication area. By re-laying out the manufacturing cell and applying the lean rules and principles, CMD was able to double the capacity of the cell with very little increased labor cost.

Another major kaizen event involved the metal ceilings cell. Originally housed in 85,000 square feet of facility space, the cell was moved into another plant and reconfigured into 30,000 square feet of space. The 85,000 square feet facility will now be used by another part of the corporation.

Importantly, incorporating lean has not resulted in employee cutbacks, according to Bub. Instead, there have been reassignments and focus on building the “lean” team. Four lean specialists have been identified and provided training for future advancement.

Says Bub, “Lean is a constant, never-ending process of trying to achieve the ideal state. You are never a lean company – you’re always striving to be lean, but you never totally get there. The best way to describe it is by saying ‘we’re in the process of applying the rules and principles of lean to our activities’.

“One of the things I’ve learned is to be very careful about transitioning to lean too quickly, because you can really open yourself up to a lot of frustration, busy work, pressure and tension. We’ve had to be very sensitive to our organization and employees and the experts at ADI and the Lean Learning Center have been tremendously helpful on our path to lean.”

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