

“The only constant is change”

Heraclitus a 500BC greek philosopher.

It is said that many of us resist change, but in these current times the only thing we can be certain of is change. The ability of a business to survive and hopefully thrive in this climate is dependent on the development and subsequent implementation of a robust strategy, focussing on the ever-changing values of your customers.

In the 11 years since 2001, Ceramic Industry Forum Engineers engaged with over 200 companies delivering significant improvements from Shop floor to Boardroom. In July 2011, the world of Ceramic Industry Forum changed as Colin Copeland and Graham Kennett completed a management buy-out to establish “**CIF Management Consultants Ltd**” delivering high calibre business consultancy to both manufacturing companies and service providers alike.



In our first six months, **CIF Management Consultants** have worked with businesses ranging from individual designer makers through to multi-national organisations.

Our approach to each activity starts with a strategic review of the business planning process. This review ensures that the plan is current, relevant and clearly communicated. Sustainable improvement can only be achieved where all activity is aligned to the objectives of the business and where all personnel are committed to the need to improve.

In 2012 the world will remain a difficult place in which to operate. Reducing costs, maintaining profitable sales, improving quality levels, hitting ever-more demanding customer delivery schedules, up-skilling your workforce, changing a culture..... Whatever your issues are, **CIF Management Consultants Ltd** can help you. Here are some brief case studies of our recent activity.



Avoiding Festive Stress!

Cottage Delight Speciality Foods is a prestigious manufacturing company totally dedicated to the quality of its gourmet foods. During the run into Christmas 2010, such was the demand for their festive products, the company found it necessary to recruit significant temporary labour and establish an additional production site to ensure that their customers were not disappointed.

Whilst the 2010 season was judged a success, the production team knew that the pressures of meeting this demand in a reactive fashion was not sustainable and that, faced with increased demand for 2011, there was the real possibility of letting the customer down. Following a meeting with a MAS-WM adviser, Cottage Delight engaged CIF to work with their production team to analyse the issues and implement changes to increase efficiency.

By focussing on the 8 Wastes, the team prioritised the issues and looked for solutions. The peak in demand far exceeded the physical capacity of the production area. The work areas became congested, as pallets of work jostled for attention. Management time was spent looking for products, re-directing labour and responding to an ever changing set of priorities.



The team began by defining key operating constraints that set an hours profile for the whole year, would keep production on one site, and at the same time increase output. A review of operations to some minor changes in working practices allowing major changes in layout, which in turn, stream-lined the flow of work and reduced throughput times.

One year on and Cottage Delight is able to quantify to benefit of this project, output for the area increased by 3% whilst labour hours were actually reduced by 10%. The ability to plan and control the area enabled the team to achieve this performance without the stress levels encountered in 2010.



S+C Bowers & Jones

Engineered Success - Customer Delivery Performance Dramatically Improved

S+C Bowers & Jones is one of the foremost designers and manufacturers of high precision rolls used in the tube industry world-wide and are also specialists for stretch reducing mills, cold rolled sections and copper rod rolling. In 2010 roll production was consolidated to the UK in a new production facility. Subsequent equipment investment was made but a vital machine installation for large rolls was delayed. Customer delivery performance was affected and special measures were instigated with the support of CIF.

These measures focused on the identification of 'root causes' and key projects were established to improve customer delivery performance. Improvement teams were established to focus on the priority processes and controlled changes were progressed. Improvements were made to the capacity planning process, workshop control and the management structure.

Results have been dramatic. Overdue days have reduced by 65%, delivery performance has improved significantly to over 85% and the business now has a culture of ongoing improvement.



CIF Supports Implementation of Lean in Aqualux.

Aqualux manufactures and distributes an extensive range of shower enclosures and bath screens. Its products can be found in many of the country's leading independent dealers and DIY stores. In 2006, Aqualux engaged with CIF to begin the implementation of lean tools and techniques across the business. The process started with a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the business which generated a number of strategically critical projects.

Maintaining service levels at key accounts was the highest priority. Batch manufacturing and frequently changing customer demands resulted in extended lead-times and significant extra costs being incurred. CIF led a project team to analyse issues and introduce new procedures which resulted in lead-times being reduced from 3 days to 4 hours. During 2008, CIF continued to help develop their production system and established a new factory layout as production was relocated to a new facility in the West Midlands.

In 2009 and 2010, the company worked with CIF to develop their employees by delivering the Business Improvement Techniques NVQ at L2 & L3 to over 20 of its employees.

After helping the business to undertake a strategic review of its business plan in 2011, CIF continues to add value by mentoring senior managers during the implementation of both continuous improvement and step change projects. During this process CIF, will work alongside Aqualux's overseas suppliers to develop greater supply chain collaboration as part of their partnership arrangements.



Our offer to help you reduce costs, improve quality and reduce lead-times.

Our clients have told us that they have gained huge benefits from our clear, focused approach to strategic planning and on-going sustainable improvement programmes.

We are experienced, knowledgeable, credible practitioners with a strong manufacturing and commercial background. We understand the business challenges facing senior managers and tailor our support to individual company requirements.

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