

WINNING THE WAR ON WASTE

HOW TO CUT COSTS AND IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE WITH LEAN TECHNIQUES

Print and packaging businesses are beset by commercial, financial and environmental pressures. Despite these, and the worst trading conditions in several generations, many are still prospering. Nevertheless, help is always welcome – particularly in such testing conditions. The ViP Conference will offer practical assistance that should prove invaluable.

The keynote speaker will be Lord Heseltine, well-known as an active supporter of the industry. He will be talking about the future role of UK Print, drawing on his long experience of the sector and involvement with the governing coalition to offer penetrating insights.

The Conference will demonstrate best practice in three related topics: 'smart' use

of technology, material waste reduction and environmental management. Its thesis is that effectively applying all three using 'lean' processes will raise competitiveness and productivity – providing that staff engagement can be maintained.

Delegates will leave with practical ideas on how to tackle such issues, yielding benefits both in terms of improved cashflow/profits and a more motivated workforce. The key themes will be:

1. The application of 'smart' technology

The latest technology can offer great productivity improvements but these can only be fully exploited by a thorough review of related systems and data. We will hear from three printers who have benefited

from determined application of the latest technology in the areas of software, standards and data.

2. Reducing material waste

It's long been realised that cutting back on waste not only helps the environment but can quickly deliver significant savings and boost profitability. Often, though, printers are let down by poor processes and habits. Two presentations give practical tips to apply immediately, and look at the potential savings to be made.

3. The benefits of environmental management

An environmental standard has become necessary for most printers; however, few can demonstrate to themselves any clear gains. We will also hear from a printer who has used his EMS to drive major savings. For smaller printers, ISO 14001 can be a daunting challenge: but is there anything else available? A small London printer details a new standard that offers a real and engaging alternative.

4. Engaging the team

Everyone knows they need to motivate and engage their whole workforce to maximise performance in difficult circumstances. Often, though, this is easier said than done. Two companies that have succeeded in this area will offer a series of useful tips to win staff commitment.

→ **Winning the War on Waste** will take place on 22 November at The Lancaster Hotel, London. For further details or to book, log on to www.britishprint.com or www.visioninprint.co.uk or ring 0207 915 8328. *Details correct at time of going to press.

Michael Heseltine is Chairman of Haymarket, a global media company with strong historic links to our sector. His political career is well known and he was Deputy Prime Minister under John Major. He is active within the Coalition and holds a key role in future regional funding.





ENGAGING THE TEAM AT HOWITT

Lessons learned from Lean implementation

Howitt is part of the Lateral Group. Two years into a Lean implementation strategy, the company understands the importance of keeping its whole staff motivated and engaged. This is vital if maximum performance is to be achieved and a culture of continuous improvement developed.

As Steve Kiddell, Lateral Group's Technical Manager puts it, "One of our challenges is in maintaining drive and enthusiasm across our staff to continue improvement initiatives beyond the duration of specific improvement projects."

With over two years' experience of lean transformation, the business has identified a number of key issues to sustaining performance improvement which in turn depends on staff engagement and motivation.

Communication

Clarifying organisational objectives and the role each employee plays in achieving them is vital. It wasn't easy to foster regular communication with 300 staff all working different shift patterns – but making it happen has paid huge dividends in generating buy-in to such fundamental principles and techniques as 5C Workplace organisation.

The business recognises that communication needs to be two-way. Kiddell

recommends having a clear structure and focus around this. He comments, "We spent a lot of time agreeing cascaded departmental measures linked in to individual departmental objectives which we now have on visual departmental KPI boards. This is now a focal point for our departmental communication briefings."

Capability

From the outset of their Lean implementation, the Howitt directors recognised that many of their staff did not have the awareness of the tools, techniques and approaches to structured improvement to deliver the benefits expected. To achieve this, the company embarked on awareness training as well as conducting a number of pilot projects to communicate techniques and increase empowerment.

Middle management buy-in

Kiddell: "We've already learned a lot in terms of the Lean implementation process. In hindsight, I feel we didn't engage enough of our middle management team directly in our initial process improvement programmes. While we expected them to support and mentor the shop floor teams, we perhaps took this skill-set too much for granted.

"As a solution to this we developed a structured review process, facilitated by

the middle managers with their respective teams. We now have regular weekly and monthly reviews of departmental performance and improvement initiatives. The managers identify and implement actions for continuous improvement with the coordinated involvement of their teams."

Challenges

Steve Kiddell acknowledges that this is part of an ongoing strategy for Howitt. "We are moving from a culture where management make all the decisions to a more collaborative approach. This still has its challenges. We need to continue involving operational staff in implementing improvements, while providing our management with the skill-sets to be comfortable with this approach as they engage and manage their own departmental improvement projects."

Vinnie Gidley, the Managing Director of Howitt, will be presenting his company's experience on this challenging topic at the VIP conference on 22nd November.

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