



Kaizen Events Help Iowa Company Implement Value Stream Map Ideas.

Value Stream Mapping identifies needed improvements (what to do)

In Tolerance was already on their lean journey when a large OEM, a major customer, offered them the chance to participate in a Value Stream Mapping (VSM) event with the purpose of reducing supplier lead times. In Tolerance management wasn't sure they wanted to do VSM, which is typically associated with high volume manufacturing, since they are more of a job shop. However, they utilized CIRAS to facilitate the VSM event. Key results included reduction of production lead time by 63%. At the conclusion of the event, Jack Hardin, General Manager stated "Clearly, the results we've achieved show that this method is not just for high-volume manufacturing." [Click here](#) to review a case study prepared for the project and its impact.

Kaizen events utilize team approach to implement the VSM improvements (how to get it done)

In Tolerance asked CIRAS to facilitate a team to address two key areas identified during the VSM for improvement – first piece and final inspection. The team focused on objectives set by management during the 2.5 day event. Hardin liked getting employees involved in identifying root causes of delays and brainstorming ideas to fix them. He has seen 100% buy-in from team members and their ownership of implementing their ideas. Through process mapping and brainstorming, the Kaizen team identified 29 improvements to reduce lead time delays caused by these two processes.

Kaizen train the trainer prepares internal resources to conduct events

Some companies seek the flexibility of conducting Kaizen events as needed by developing internal resources to facilitate the events. Kaizen Train the Trainer is a three-phase training: 1) selected facilitators participate in the first Kaizen event as a team member; 2) selected facilitators co-lead the second Kaizen event and share responsibility for documenting the team report; and 3) selected facilitators rotate responsibilities in co-leading and documenting the third Kaizen event. Graham Manufacturing in Mason City, Iowa asked CIRAS to qualify three of their employees to facilitate Kaizen events ([Click here](#) for the *CIRAS News* article describing this process and outcomes).

Impacts of Kaizen include reduced lead time, improved inspection, and trained employees

According to Hardin, "The Kaizen team implemented a visual management system to prioritize jobs arriving at first piece and final inspection. In addition to improving communication between machinists and inspectors, visual management has reduced inspection delays by 75 to 90%, especially at the coordinate measuring machine. In Tolerance has embraced Kaizen teams as the preferred approach to implementing change and employees want to participate on teams. Hardin added "I recommend Kaizen for companies large and small – I would like to see every employee involved on a Kaizen team at In Tolerance".

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