



MANUFACTURING TEAM AWARD

WINNER

Waste Reduction Team,
Deb Ltd

Waste is a dirty word in manufacturing. For Derby-based skincare specialists Deb Ltd, though, it became a challenge. Back in 2010, the company had just moved into a new, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility. As part of this, they dreamt up a bold vision: one where every employee, across all departments, had the ability to visualise the process flow and be able to fix any issues without the need for management intervention.

A key part of this vision was for a cross-functional 'waste reduction' team, who would liaise with the manufacturing teams throughout the company. The job of these waste-busters would be to implement a lean system across the organisation. And their job wasn't a small one: in 2016, they were set a bold target of a reduction of £50,000 in material costs.

The make-up of the team was crucial. Having too many skills in one area but not enough in another would be detrimental to its success. Deb turned to the Belbin system to identify the various personality types and ensure the appropriate team members were recruited to the waste reduction cause.

A successful team is more than the sum of its parts. This was certainly the case with Deb. Hierarchy went out of the window, and everyone bonded together to work to the same goal. After some initial brainstorming sessions, the team ranked the five biggest waste reduction

opportunities – chief amongst which was the need to reduce product overfill. The team realised that the average overfill of product across the factory's 12 lines, was 1.73% – which added up to around £118,000 per year in extra raw material costs.

A major saving had been identified; the challenge now was how to implement it. The waste reduction team worked with the company's IT providers to look at ways of better monitoring the data being produced on the lines. Previously, the figures were being crunched by hand, which had led to mistakes being made and corners being cut by shopfloor operatives. After the IT upgrades, operatives were able to easily determine whether any overfill was taking place.

The results have been massive. Overfill rates plummeted from 1.73% to 0.35%, which added up to a raw materials saving of over £86k per year. By not manufacturing an extra 370,000 litres of product per year because of this reduction in overfill, an extra 2% of manufacturing capacity has opened up at the plant.

The Waste Reduction Team not only hit their target of £50k in savings, they smashed it. Their combined efforts have helped save the company three-quarters of a million pounds – an unimaginable figure that stands them out as our Manufacturing Team of the Year.

FINALISTS

Alpen Manufacturing Team,
Weetabix

Alba Production Team,
The Glenmorangie Company

JUDGES' COMMENTS

“The egalitarian nature of this entry is to be commended - the fact that everyone pulled together, regardless of their position in the company, to make an incredible saving of £750,000, is outstanding”

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Coca-Cola PET Lines, Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company