

Continuous Improvement - The Corus Way

Implementation - Corus business cases



There are now many excellent examples of CI in action throughout Corus worldwide. The Kalzip team at Haydock began its CI programme by improving material flow. To enable this to happen the team moved big machines, such as a nine metre guillotine with a six metre production foundation, relocated welding bays and re-routed workshops.

External contractors estimated the job would take eight months. It actually took 2 months with in-house help. The changes were implemented after detailed value stream mapping discovered a lot of 'work in progress' (unproductive activity) as well as potentially unsafe ways of working.

It was taking the forklift truck 45 minutes to reach one steel coil as it had to move many others out of the way. Reorganisation of the coils into a new racking system has doubled storage capacity.

The Port Talbot strip products site has also taken on CI with many ensuing benefits.

It was estimated that one man was spending 39 weeks a year looking for spare parts. This related to a pilot project at the central engineering workshop's bond stores. Engineering spare parts, gearboxes and rolls are received here ready to be assembled or used in repairs on the Port Talbot site. Complicated ways of working had developed over the years and no-one had ever changed these.

Within a short period 194 items were sorted out, relocated, tagged or scrapped, to the value of £30,000. CI work at Port Talbot has now yielded benefits to the value of £350,000.

The new system of palletising spare parts, scheduled by a planner and then removed by forklift for storage in colour-coded bays has also provided big benefits. Orders can be cross-referenced to the pallet and fitters can find what they are looking for easily.

Many were sceptical about the CI approach but not anymore. The site is easier and safer to work in following the clean-up which visually changed the environment from being dark and dingy to bright and clean. The hardest part was changing everyone's mind initially.

At Corus Tubes in Hartlepool, CI has led to a significant improvement in employee motivation. The plant underwent a major tidy up, with unused tools and paint being put away and equipment tagged and stored correctly. The problems were due to bad housekeeping in the main. However, the biggest challenge was the residue given off by the processes. It gets everywhere. Steam cleaning and a lot of elbow grease on all the machinery and floors was very hard work, but following painting and whitewashing, it produced positive results for all to see.

Employees were proud of what they had achieved and now enjoy a more pleasant environment to work in.