



# THE TIMES 100

## Corus summary

### Introduction

Corus is a steel manufacturing company, a subsidiary of Tata Steel, part of the giant Tata Group. The Group acquired Corus in 2007 as part of its policy of expansion. Corus Construction & Industrial (CCI) has steel manufacturing facilities all around the UK and in France. The key markets for CCI include construction, engineering, mining, shipbuilding and rail and production includes machinery, equipment and fastenings. Modern steel production takes place on a large scale in high volumes. Producing large volumes helps to keep the costs and thus the price of steel down. CCI's key challenge is to meet customers' demands for more steel at increasing levels of quality. It uses continuous improvement at its Scunthorpe plant to achieve this.

### Continuous improvement (CI)

This is often referred to using the Japanese term *kaizen*. Kaizen covers all processes in an organisation and involves making many small improvements wherever possible. Everyone in the organisation is responsible for improvement and should try to improve all the time. This means that the organisation improves smoothly and consistently, rather than in irregular jumps. Part of the process is to remove waste. Processes that minimise waste are called *lean production*. Here the aim is to use less of all inputs, including space and time. CCI Scunthorpe has brought in a *flow* process for its plate steel, which is smoother and more efficient.

### A culture of improvement

Continuous Improvement needs teamwork and a culture of wanting to improve. CCI has devised a *toolbox* of techniques to use to encourage this. It has set out the vision of where it is going, and uses the tools to ensure managers and operators share the vision. Workers have drawn *maps* of their processes and the flows within and between them. These maps show where the Scunthorpe Mill is now and the *future state map* shows where the owners want it to be. Using these maps, the business can make improvements to the efficiency of process flows and the working environment.

### Target setting

The key to success is to persuade all employees to accept that improvement is their responsibility. Teams and workers are empowered to make changes themselves. A vital part of the plan was to set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that focus on meeting customer deadlines, rather than output measures. Corus also uses benchmarking, measuring itself against other steel makers make sure that the business always follows best practice.

### Benefits

Some of the gains made from CI include reduced waste, better quality and lower costs. The plant is more competitive and better at both gaining and retaining customers. The Scunthorpe plant is successful at achieving its targets.

### Conclusion

Corus is using CI to improve steel production in Scunthorpe. All employees are encouraged to be team members and seek improvement. CI supports the aim of satisfied customers and repeat sales and helps to secure the business.