

Success Story: IMC Helps CCS Improve Safety, Increase Staff, Double Sales, and Prepare to Launch New Product

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Located in Central Pennsylvania, Custom Container Solutions manufactures custom, roll-off steel containers in a variety of sizes and configurations for use in the waste, construction, demolition, scrap, recycling, and oil and gas industries. The company's customers include municipalities as well as individual businesses. The current owners purchased the small business, formally known as Stoltzfus Steel Manufacturing, in 2011. CCS ships containers to any location in the Eastern and Midwestern United States.

SITUATION

CCS initially came to IMC in 2012 in search of help with implementing a continuous improvement initiative that would reduce costs, improve efficiency, increase the company's productivity and profitability, and improve workplace safety. At the time, the company, which had been in existence for 26 years and had experienced a growth cycle for the previous two years, was operating at capacity, producing four units a day and having to turn away business. Most processes were performed manually with little automation. The company had dedicated hardworking staff and was operating 11 hours a day with a single shift.

IMC worked with CCS to understand their needs and objectives and connected the company with a LEAN/Continuous Improvement resource who worked closely with CCS personnel to achieve multiple operational improvements, including:

- A process redesign that included an improved facility layout for efficient product flow
- Purchase and installation of an overhead crane system

- Achievement of standardized work
- Improved workplace safety
- An increase in production from four to roughly eight units per day

According to CCS Managing Member, Todd Vonderheid, these dramatic outcomes positioned the company to seek to expand its product offerings to include more customized items tailored to specific industry segments, and the company is now considering adding a second shift to significantly increase ROI.

CCS wanted to begin work on an entirely new product: an intermodal container designed for marine, truck and rail transportation. The new venture required the company to become an approved manufacturer and receive third-party certification from the International Convention for Safe Containers (the Safe Container Certificate and Plate).

CCS again approached IMC for assistance. Although the company had many processes and procedures in place, these measures lacked definition and documentation. To achieve its goals, CCS needed to develop a Quality Management System that would a) allow the company to enter previously inaccessible markets, and b) provide the company with a management system for its core product that would bring the comprehensive structure, discipline, and documentation necessary to position CCS for increased efficiency, process repeat-ability, responsiveness, and growth.

SOLUTION

Based on its discussions with CCS owners and management, IMC arranged a meeting for CCS with a resource to perform a one-day, onsite assessment/gap analysis. From that analysis, a report was drafted that detailed the gap between CCS's existing management system and the company's desired state as well as what it would take for CCS to make the transition. We then worked closely with CCS personnel over several months to provide the services needed for the company to meet all applicable QMS system requirements. The company is now prepared to begin the CSC certification process.

RESULTS

“We had a lot of procedures that we did every day, but they weren’t formalized. When we tried to revise and change what we were doing, we did so not based on objective trends but subjective feelings. Today, because of the QMS system, we make decisions based on accurate data and consider those changes with our larger processes and company objectives” said Todd Vonderheid, Managing Member, CCS.

“IMC connected us to a consultant that helped us to design a Quality Management System specifically around our process for our core product. The end result of that is that we are about to go through a review process with the certifying agency [for the intermodal container], and we have built a prototype product that we’re taking to the customer next week. We believe that this customer is going to move forward with orders, and we believe that could be another doubling of gross sales and new doubling of the workforce, and we have every expectation that this is going to happen,” said Vonderheid.

“We couldn’t have been happier with the consultant that IMC paired us with,” he added. “We’re actually on the third project now.”

Other results:

- 70% Reduction in the number of mistakes made in core products
- Significantly improved workplace safety (very low number of workplace injuries and very low number of Workers’ Compensation claims)
- \$500,000 investment in new equipment (cranes and paint booths)
- Increase in staffing from 12 to 21 line employees
- Increase in gross sales from \$3 million to \$6 million annually
- 20% increase in average wage for employees