

Success Story: Rockland Manufacturing Invests in Training to Prepare Workforce for Change in Production Flow

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Rockland Manufacturing Co., located in Bedford, PA with approximately 250 employees, is a medium-sized manufacturer of bulldozer blades, loader buckets, beach cleaning equipment, and land clearing equipment. Rockland primarily serves the crushing, aggregate, and log loading markets.

Rockland was beginning to implement a major change to their long-established production methods. In fact, the current flow had been in place for well over 30 years. The major change was to create a combined production method/department from two formally standalone functions. The change required changes in supervision, ERP tracking, production planning and scheduling, and manufacturing engineering processes.

The change is driven by the need to improve efficiencies, specifically by reducing the amount of handling and transportation of certain products. By combining production functions for several of their product lines, both assembly and finish welding functions will be accomplished at the same workstation. Formally, a product would be assembled at one location in the plant, then transported by overhead crane to be staged at the second location until that department had capacity to work on it.

Rockland had already conducted experiments to prove that the change to the production flow would be successful in improving efficiencies, but since the change

had far reaching affects throughout most departments within the entire company, management felt that specific training of key stakeholders was needed to help build unified momentum for implementation.

Change Management training sessions were conducted to train key personnel in the need for change, and how to manage it in their workplace. The training also focused on how to anticipate the implications of change, how to monitor and adapt to change, how to communicate through it, and how to keep changing and improving. The goal was to prepare the workforce through education and interactive exercises to help them be more comfortable with the new changes to their workflow, break down potential barriers to implementing change by improving communication, and really focus on the importance of positive changes in production.

Management reported that the training was successful in helping their workforce understand the need for changing their production methods. Particularly, they pointed out that communication about the change improved. The interactive exercises in the training helped break down communication barriers and improved teamwork. The momentum for moving forward with the production change was achieved, and since then the new assembly/weld function is established and becoming an accepted part of the company's culture.

