

Improving Operations Through Teamwork

Situation

Industry surveys showed that a manufacturing firm ranked as having the best quality product in its industry, but that its lead times were 30% higher than any of its competitors. To gain market share and increase business volume, the firm decided to re-engineer its operations to reduce lead time to match or exceed its competitors. Management retained DHC to implement a structured change management effort to improve the efficiency of its operations.

Solution

A company-wide structured change management program was kicked off with a senior management team to plan the overall effort, develop a vision and strategy and define roles across the change effort.

A cross-functional process improvement team was established and trained in team skills and structured problem solving. Improvement areas were identified using process mapping integrated with an analysis based on the DHC's Organizational Effectiveness model. The team identified and implemented a series of process improvements and re-engineered operations from the order entry process through the shipping. Non-value added steps were eliminated or minimized with the goal of removing time from the process without sacrificing quality.

Results

As of the date of this summary of the case, the team is still in the process of re-engineering operations; thus, quantifiable results are not yet available. However, the following accomplishments are evident:

- Key Performance Indicators and baselines were established and monitored to measure performance and progress toward meeting new turnaround goals.
- Process maps documenting operations were created and shared throughout the organization to raise awareness and understanding of operations, turnaround and quality.
- Morale and teamwork improved significantly through the sharing of common goals and measures.
- Turnaround times are in line with those of competitors