



Autopart International CI Program Drives More Than \$600,000 in Savings

A GBMP Client Case Study

With over 50 years' experience, Autopart International is a leader in automotive aftermarket parts. Headquartered in Norton, Massachusetts, and employing over 1700 people, Autopart provides a full range of superior quality replacement parts to keep both foreign and domestic vehicles in top working order. They distribute products through wholesale distributors across North America and operate company owned wholesale stores in the New England, upstate New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Florida markets. Autopart services all of these stores and distributors from their Norton distribution center, a 360,000 square foot facility that operates two shifts, five days a week, and houses over 40,000 unique part numbers.

Taking advantage of a Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund grant, Autopart began working with Ron Pujalte, GBMP Continuous Improvement Manager, in 2012 to learn and apply lean thinking to its distribution operations. Ron provided introductory lean training followed by value stream mapping, 5S/Workplace Organization, Kanban/Pull Systems, Poka-Yoke (mistake-proofing), and Problem-solving training and practice. In the last few months Ron has been helping Autopart develop internal training capabilities through a Lean Train-the-Trainer effort.

Recently, Autopart took stock of some of the benefits they have received from their continuous improvement efforts. Achievements to date include:

- Shipping productivity increased from 96 lines/labor hour to 135 lines/labor hour, a 40% increase, saving \$120,000
- Travel in the Reclamation Process has been reduced by 85%, for a savings of \$19,525

- Boxes have been replaced by reusable totes, saving \$180,000
- Pallet foundation organization resulted in a 15% productivity improvement and a \$100,000 savings
- Addition of an open top wood dumpster saved \$50,465/year
- In-store inventory availability rate has increased from 95% to 97%
- Establishment of a Dock-to-Stock program with one of their largest suppliers of starters and alternators for core returns resulted in a savings of 3640 labor hours, or \$58,240
- Improved organization of shipping lanes has saved \$120,000
- A paperless process has been established in the Credit Department, resulting in reduced costs and labor savings
- A paperless payroll process has been set up for a savings of up to \$87,000/year
- Hand dryers were installed throughout the facility for a savings of \$17,000.00/year in the reduction of paper towel purchases
- A kanban system was set up for pallets for a cost reduction of \$350
- North American Sales group has made efforts to increase sales

"It is really exciting to see the changes happening at Autopart," said GBMP's Ron Pujalte. Recently, José Martínez, the General Manager, has really accelerated lean efforts in his areas of responsibility and collectively Autopart has saved over \$600,000 from improvement efforts year over year. As a result of their ideas, employees are benefitting from working in better processes and customers are being serviced more efficiently. And the best part is, I think they can accomplish much more given the enthusiasm and support that is now in place for lean."

Rob White, Autopart Shipping Manager, stated, *“Without this training we would never have exceeded our yearly productivity improvement target of 10% per year in the shipping department for the past two years. We could not have done it without involving all of our Team Members.”*

For more information about Autopart International please visit www.Autopartintl.com

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