



Onset Employees and Managers Team Up to Make Lean Gains

A GBMP Client Case Study

Onset Computer Corporation, located in Bourne, Massachusetts is a privately held manufacturer of data loggers and weather station products. More than 2.5 million Onset products are in use today, serving a broad range of monitoring applications, from verifying the performance of green buildings and renewable energy systems to agricultural and coastal research. From its birth in a barn on Cape Cod in 1981, Onset has enjoyed steady growth and today the company employs 130 people in engineering, operations, and administrative roles.

With the help of a Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund grant GBMP helped them secure, Onset began learning and applying lean thinking and methods in 2013 under the guidance of Ron Pujalte, GBMP Continuous Improvement Manager/Master Black Belt. Several employee teams have worked together on everything from 5S to Value Stream Mapping to Standardized Work and Kanban. Changes touched both production and administrative processes and in October of 2014 Onset employees proudly showed off their many improvements during a GBMP members only plant tour.

Some examples of the changes Onset employees made include:

- ✓ Set up a kanban program and pull system which included set replenishment levels and standard run rules to ensure parts availability and increase inventory turnover
- ✓ Established a standardized process for finished good receiving and identified an on the spot improvement that saved over 130 receiving hours per year
- ✓ Improved the SIM card payment process

- ✓ Established 5S zones and workplace organization standards, as well as an audit system to sustain the program over time
- ✓ Mapped out and improved the Engineering Change Order (ECO) process
- ✓ Levelized production and improved productivity by 20% year over year
- ✓ Cut product returns by 70%

Onset's Director of Operations, Mike Washkevich, had this to say about his team's improvement efforts; "the days our people spent learning from and working with Ron were great. After the two-day Kanban system event, for example, there were a lot of smiling faces as the team looked around at their new layout and the simple, visual kanban system they had created. We also benefitted from cross-functional teams mapping and improving some of our key administrative processes. And I couldn't have been prouder on the day our employees got to show off their improvements during the GBMP tour. We know there is always more to do with lean but we definitely see the positive impact it is having on our business, our customers and our employees."

Ron Pujalte, Onset's lean trainer and coach, pointed to another key contributor to the company's early successes; "Mike, Justin (Onset's President), and others on the management team were actively involved from the beginning and quickly saw the importance of providing support for and following up on the action plans and new systems that were developed by the lean teams. They embraced the idea of "Management Kaizen", or the changes managers need to make in their own work in order to effectively lead and support continuous improvement. This is so important if you want to win the trust of employees and sustain forward momentum over time. The most successful lean companies recognize that it takes more than applying a few technical tools to develop a solid improvement culture, and I thank the folks at Onset for letting me coach them in the management aspects of lean as well as the technical tools."

For more information about Onset please visit <http://www.onsetcomp.com>

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