



Bemis Worldwide: Supporting World Class Athletes through World Class Operations

Bemis Worldwide, a family-owned business located in Shirley, Massachusetts is a major manufacturer of thermoplastic adhesives, coatings, tapes and specialty film products that serve various markets throughout the world. From textile to industrial, and apparel to building panels, Bemis products provide solutions that solve complex technical challenges for other manufacturers. One example is the bonded technology used by Speedo in the "LZR Racer" swimsuit, a high-tech suit that was worn by 23 of the 25 world record-breaking swimmers in the Beijing Olympics. Bemis' "Sewfree" adhesive film and reinforcement tape contributed to the LZR suit's lightweight design and helped to limit drag and abrasion, allowing the athletes to dramatically improve their race times in order to set new world records.

Bemis began their lean journey in May, 2007. The company was able to take advantage of a Massachusetts Workforce Training Grant to support these efforts, and worked closely with Jim Carter of GBMP, then Bruce McGill, also of GBMP, upon Jim's retirement. Jim and Bruce served as trainers, coaches and guides for Bemis employees as they learned and applied continuous improvement principles, systems and tools.

The first year of improvement efforts was largely focused on introducing all employees to lean and applying tools aimed at helping to create process stability, such as 5S (workplace organization) and TPM (total preventative maintenance). In the second year, Bemis focused on spreading lean and systemizing the application of lean systems and tools across the business. Improvement activities focused on creating continuous flow, capitalizing on set-up reduction opportunities, piloting pull systems and establishing an employee idea system.

Since May 2009 Bemis has been working to build lean principles into its management systems and has also begun to extend lean outside its four walls, to its customer and supplier base. For example, Bemis recently established a global "pull" system with a key customer that is located in Asia.

Jim Dodos, a continuous improvement champion at Bemis, recently summarized some of the quantifiable improvements from Bemis' continuous improvement efforts:

- ◆ Material savings of > \$450,000
- ◆ Inventory reductions in excess of \$3 million
- ◆ Lead-time reduced from 5 weeks to 3 weeks
- ◆ 2200 hours of time recovered from set-up reduction efforts
- ◆ 50% reduction in returned goods
- ◆ 1.6% improvement in product yields

Much has changed at Bemis since 2007. Employees and managers are now invested in the process and the company has made an ongoing commitment to improvement as a business strategy, allowing time on a regular basis for training and to conduct improvement activities and events. Machines have been moved, methods have changed, managers have taken ownership for driving continuous improvement, and employee ideas are regularly being put into action.

Jim Carter, who provided much of the on-site training and consulting support on behalf of GBMP had this to say about Bemis' journey:

"The employees have been very successful in using lean techniques to improve their operating performance. The key to these accomplishments has been the engagement of the workforce. The leadership team set the environment, allowing the employees to learn and apply lean methodologies from 5S to pull systems, and everyone has worked hard to ensure that the accomplishments have been sustained. I feel certain Bemis understands that lean is more than just a set of tools, and will continue to leverage the knowledge and creativity of their workforce to improve performance and increase customer satisfaction."

For more information about Bemis Worldwide please visit www.Bemisworldwide.com.
For more information about GBMP please visit www.gbmp.org.

