

An Injection of Lean Ideas: Simpler Training's e-SENSEISM Course Ensures Improved Profitability for CK Technologies

Jan Kline is CES Director for CK Technologies, a leader in providing Innovative Truck solutions to the commercial bus and truck industry through engineered plastic systems. As part of a growth strategy, CK Technologies made the decision to go down a Lean path and Jan was given the opportunity to undertake Simpler Training's Lean e-SENSEISM course.

Jan says: "I really liked the two-way interaction; we asked a lot of questions. The tutor worked personally with us and that worked really well for us. I would definitely recommend the course to others – I don't think we could have found a better one."

'I Got a Lot of Good Takeaways'

From the very start, Jan was encouraged to identify and define the real-life project she was going to work on during the course. Jan says: "I got the tools, but I also got the soft, less-tangible things that really help you when you're back in the working environment and you try and apply what you've learnt for yourself. Things like: the human response to change; how people feel at an event; how do you deal with the things that might happen at an event. I just don't think you get that in a normal classroom environment."

Jan was really impressed by her instructor's experience and knowledge: "It wasn't sterile or cold – I really got to think about where people are coming from and how to get them on-board. It was really valuable and I got a lot of good takeaways."

Fantastic Legacy from Rapid Improvement Events

The Simpler e-SENSEISM course is built around supporting learners to run a Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) in their own working environment and Jan says: "the Simpler process was a real enabler for us to start fast."

This, in turn, has led to considerable business improvements:

- A saving of \$30k pcm on packaging, thanks to a project looking at how to reduce corrugated foam packaging around CK Technologies own products,
- A 20% reduction in lead times. This is highly significant for CK Technologies, which produces low volumes and has a high variety of moulds – there are a lot of changeovers during normal production operations.

The improvements in production changeovers has freed up capacity for CK Technologies to increase capacity without investing in additional moulding equipment, as Jan explains: “The huge 135,000lb moulds we use cost between \$2.5 - \$3.5m, so increasing capacity without additional capital investment being required is really great for us – and it is even better for our people if we can do that without them having to work a 7 day week.”

Lean Improvement Methodologies are now firmly embedded in CK Technologies’ Montpellier, Ohio, plant and corporate head office. The focus for 2013 is the Brownsville plant and Jan and her team have already started leading the Lean initiatives there. She concludes: “The Simpler e-SENSEISM course is a really nice package – it has worked out really well for us.”