



Multi-plant Packaging Company Drives Revenue Improvement by Boosting Line Speeds 15-20% Over Name Plate Capacity

Frustration Exposes Opportunity to Harmonize Quality System

The Senior Quality Manager for a multi-plant packaging company was faced with a problem: How to harmonize quality and productivity across all manufacturing plants in the company supply chain. The company was experiencing a significant performance gap between plants. Lower performing facilities lagged best performers by as much as 20% on key indicators such as line speed and quality levels.

For the Senior Quality Manager, this gap made it hard to support the company's drive for a more flexible supply chain. "For our business, the demand ebbs and flows," he said. "We need to be able to move products around from plant to plant to handle urgent orders. It was really frustrating because we had disparate systems and that made it hard to be flexible."

It was very difficult to meet customer delivery dates, and production and profitability were sub-optimized.

A Moment of Truth

When he looked at the underlying causes for the difference in performance between the plants, the manager found that the poorer performing facilities were using different quality software systems and lacked the infrastructure they need to be a truly data driven facility. This was a moment of truth. "It was awful the way they had things set up. I don't think you could set it (their legacy software) up any different than they did to make it any better. But it really wasn't doing anything by collecting data."

The manager had a different vision based on his years of experience using GainSeeker Suite at another division in the same corporation. "Because of my expertise, I was pulled in to help all those (other plants). I think that's really what drove all of the expansion and the changes with the systems because they saw how much it worked for our other division, and what we got out of it. When customers ask questions, I mean, we can quickly pull data and charts and show them."

CIO Seeks Standardization to Minimize Cost of Ownership, Streamline Support

An Unpopular Decision

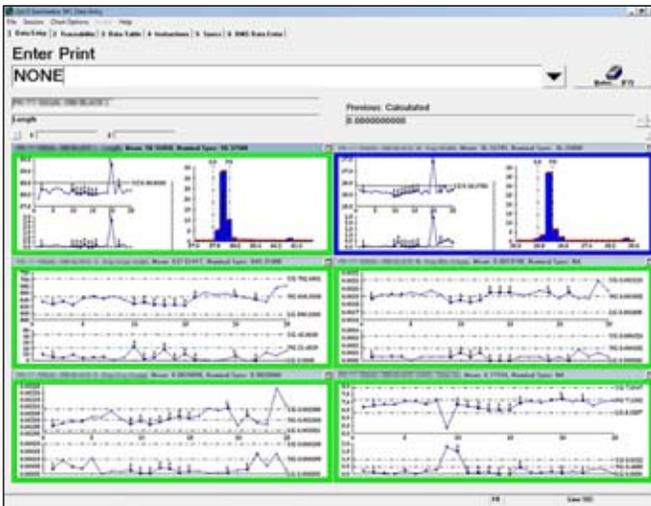
Meanwhile, the Chief Information Officer was in an uncomfortable spot. Bringing six newly acquired plants under the corporate umbrella was going smoothly, but he saw at least one area, quality systems, that needed to change. And he knew it was not going to be a popular decision. The acquired division was using two different quality software systems across the six plants, and they had little in common with the legacy facilities. For the CIO, multiple software systems meant multiple support contracts. Even more impactful, it meant maintaining knowledge to support three systems instead of one.

Leveraging Past Successes

The CIO was also well aware of the successes that his Corporate Senior Quality Manager had achieved at the legacy facilities using GainSeeker Suite. The Quality Manager had a reputation for using the system over many years to consistently improve productivity

Customized Alarms Drive Action

The deployment of GainSeeker collects critical production quality data in real-time. GainSeeker connects directly to digital equipment where possible, saving time and eliminating clerical errors. Operators see customized Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red alerts for various alarm conditions.



Color codes around charts give feedback to operators. Green means everything is fine. Blue, Red or Yellow indicate corrective action is required.

and profitability. The CIO was confident the Quality Manager could easily extend GainSeeker access to the new facilities, and decided to take the plunge, even in the face of pushback. "All in all," he said, "When I add it all up between the profitability, the reduced cost of ownership, the improvements, the new division just needs to change."

"They Were Extremely Happy..."

Initially the plants did resist. As the Quality Manager put it, "They went kicking and screaming."

Not surprisingly, the resistance was founded on lack of experience. Having never experienced GainSeeker Suite, the staff didn't know what they were missing. According to the manager, "Once we got them converted, they're extremely happy with it. They began to say, 'Oh we didn't know you could do those kind of things.' Once they began to see what it could do for them, it took off from there."

Now with all plants running under one quality system, the cost of ownership is reduced significantly. Moreover, with one system in place, the Quality Manager has the ability to harmonize quality across the corporation and more easily flex production to meet demand.

The color coding is designed to help the operators know exactly what to do. A green box around the chart tells them everything is fine, and they should continue to run with no changes. However, if they get a yellow, red or blue box around the chart, they know they have a problem. The three colors tell what action they need to take, and they must record what happened and what they did to fix it. The company believes recording this information is so important that they tie it to the employee's performance sharing bonus.

"We tell them," the manager explained, "It's not a reflection on you to tell us what happened. You need to go look for it. You need to find it, and you need to tell us what you found and what you did to fix it. We tell them, we're not trying to beat you up and say it's your fault. Because it isn't. Ninety-nine percent of the time it's not your fault, the process just does that. They've got to the point where they understand that."

Dashboards Empower Cost and Compliance Management

The company also uses customized dashboards to show weight tracking to compare material use against specifications. If they run over the target specification, they are giving away material and adding to their costs. By monitoring this closely they can ensure they run as close to target as possible without going under and failing compliance.



Customized Dashboard empower cost and compliance management

New Capabilities Drive Increased Responsiveness, Customer Service and Productivity

These capabilities have had a profound impact on the business, enabling increased responsiveness and better customer service. That, in turn has impacted productivity. "We're running 15-20% above name plate capacity from the equipment manufacturers," the manager explained. "This is due to the fact that we can better understand our product and our processes. Without that better understanding there is no way we could have increased our line speeds."

For this business, plant capacity acts as a governor on revenue, so an increase in line speed translates into increased plant capacity, and increased revenue.

The manager concludes, "GainSeeker has enabled me to make decisions much quicker around process capability with new products being developed and to do better analysis of what's going on so that I can inform the business and make recommendations on improvements."

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