



TEC Concepts Ltd



SC21 ~ Case Study – Aerovac Systems Ltd

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Aerovac Systems Ltd specialises in the sourcing, distribution and development of composite process materials & reusable vacuum bagging systems, and silicon rubber constructions for the advanced composite industry. The company has come a long way since its small beginnings in 1980. Today, as part of leading composites consumable distribution group, UMECO plc to both Aerospace, Defence and Wind industries, Aerovac can confidently look forward to continuing to shape the future of the advanced composites industry worldwide



INITIAL ENGAGEMENT WITH SC21

On the back of a DTi Supplier development programme hosted by GKN Kings Norton, Aerovac continued its company development in January 2008 by embarking on the GKN sponsored SC21 deployment programme facilitated by TEC Concepts Ltd (SBAC approved SC21 Strategic Partner and Training Partner). TEC conducted the SC21 phase 1 'diagnostic' activities in Business Excellence, Manufacturing Excellence, and Performance metrics culminating in a Continuous Sustainable Improvement Plan (CSIP). This was grant-subsidised by MAS Y&H. The company's bespoke CSIP has provided an excellent company road map for continuous improvement.

Individual project case studies are available upon request

CSIP IMPLEMENTATION – MAKING IT HAPPEN

In November 2008, a number of Project Charters were developed from the company's CSIP. Three projects were ideally suited to using the six sigma improvement methodology. Each was unique, encompassing in-depth design of experiments, process optimisation and measurement system analysis, all were central to ongoing business improvement. It was agreed that the 3 projects could qualify 6 six sigma Green Belts. Charters were further developed by the teams for approval by management with each team taking ownership of a specific problem. TEC Concepts' six sigma Black Belts provided the training and hands-on project mentoring, giving the teams enormous enthusiasm, motivation and drive which was transferred throughout the departments where the projects were being conducted.

SIX SIGMA – HOW THE PROGRAMME WAS CONDUCTED

The six sigma programme was conducted using the classic DMAIC process: Define; Measure; Analyse; Improve & Control – with authorised tollgates at the end of each phase to ensure completion prior to progressing onto the next phase. In addition to the project training and mentoring, and to ensure support for each of the projects, champion training was given to senior management including discussions on how to define, evaluate and approve projects. Yellow belt training was also provided at shopfloor level to ensure support for the projects from a data capture and implementation perspective.

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First Floor, 48 Fentham Road, Hampton-in-Arden, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 0AY, United Kingdom

Telephone: 01675 443 300 Facsimile: 01675 442 222

E-mail: mail@tec-concepts.co.uk Website: www.tec-concepts.co.uk



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SIX SIGMA AWARDS

In May 2009 three complete and very comprehensive six sigma projects were submitted to TEC Concepts for assessment, and subsequently, in June 2009, one Six Sigma Black Belt and five Six Sigma Green Belt certificates were awarded to the candidates. The practical mentoring through each of the project phases on actual live problems tied the learning into real application of the six sigma tools and techniques immediately, creating an ongoing improvement methodology widespread and embedded into the company. As a direct result of SC21 phase 2, Aerovac are now better placed to negotiate contracts around VOC (Voice of the Customer) and process capability with both customers and suppliers.



LONG-TERM BENEFITS

The company, at various levels, has been introduced to a rigid process improvement methodology (six sigma) and the concept of speaking with data which is applicable to all areas of the business. As a direct result of the programme, the company and individuals have a better understanding of their process capability and the need to improve. They have gained project management skills, team-working and change management skills, and ultimately the confidence to measure and analyse a process in a proactive manner.



FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Due to customer demand the company's next priority is to embark on phase 3 of their SC21 journey and upgrade their current ISO 9001:2000 system to a modern process driven QMS which will be accredited to AS/EN 9100:2009 Rev C. This will incorporate the best practices identified during the SC21 phase 1 diagnostics & SC21 phase 2 six sigma tools and techniques. AS/EN 9100 is the default Quality Management System standard for all aerospace and defence manufacturing companies.



AEROVAC QUOTES

"The training provided was both comprehensive and excellent. The projects have played a large part in focusing on improvement activity but has also had an impact on cultural change and customer perceptions of Aerovac Systems Ltd. The work will form part of our ongoing improvement programme going forward and is core to maintaining the existing customer base and winning new business" David Wiseman

"Excellent project, really helped to improve our processes through a structured approach. Good course materials very well presented" Andrew Dixon

"Training programme was well structured and easily understandable. Provided a good grounding for the company and myself in six sigma principles and implementation" Craig Nelson



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