

CASE STUDY

Safetylyne

Safetylyne is a family-run business based in Kunda Park, on the Sunshine Coast. The company manufactures fall prevention and access system equipment across the construction sector, installing access systems to a significant number of projects in Southeast Queensland. They also provide access solutions to existing buildings, such as schools, aged care centres and warehouses.

“A NEW STANDARD HAD BEEN SET, NOW WE CAN'T GO BACK TO THE STANDARD WE WERE WORKING AT BEFORE”

Safetylyne pride itself in offering a “whole package” approach, from design to asset maintenance. The team has expert knowledge based on over 15 years’ industry experience. Their company promise of, “on time, every time, exactly as agreed” is achieved through strong planning processes, management systems and dedicated staff. Safetylyne places great importance on these areas of their business and firmly believes that planning, processes and systems are the key to success.

The motivation to set up and improve their processes and systems began in 2009, when a Safetylyne employee attended a one-day “Lean Manufacturing” workshop run by QMI Solutions. QMI Solutions referred Safetylyne to one of its partners, Incremental Improvements Australia Pty Ltd (II-AU). Since then Safetylyne has strived to implement Lean Manufacturing principles and processes within its business.

A spokesperson from Safetylyne said that working II-AU had formalised Safetylyne’s existing approach from day one and employees now better understand the importance of existing processes.

Safetylyne undertook a five-day “5S program” with II-AU and even at this stage Safetylyne’s management style and business ethics were ahead of many Australian businesses. 5S is a Lean Manufacturing system that provides a foundation for building capabilities. It helps create an organised workplace by Sorting, Setting in order, Shining, Standardising and Sustaining processes, tools and equipment.

When completing the initial 5S activity at Safetylyne, II-AU left no stone unturned. Work areas were sorted and tidied, and the entire administration and sales and marketing systems improved. “Our operational efficiency increased by at least 15 - 20% at this time,” the Safetylyne spokesperson said.

Safetylyne’s management wanted to convert existing systems, already naturally occurring in its administrative and stores areas, into systems that were supported with procedures and knowledge. “When you put a name to it, it makes more sense,” the spokesperson said. Participating in Lean Manufacturing workshops had given Safetylyne a framework, however now they wanted II-AU to help transition 5S principles across the entire business. “Using II-AU worked really well to mesh more with people than if one person internally tried to introduce it,” Safetylyne said.

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II-AU worked with Safetylyne to introduce 5S. Employees did initial 5S training and focused on the first two S's, Sorting and Setting in order. II-AU then returned to Safetylyne a month or so later to focus on the final three - Shining, Standardising and Sustaining.

Rob Tomlinson at II-AU mentored staff throughout the program, as they questioned the business's existing processes. "All employees were eager to learn", Rob said.

Several projects were completed including:

- Setting the sales process in order.
- Improving interaction between the sales and quoting processes by developing daily programs focused on reaching targets.
- Removing unwanted clutter from the reception area.
- Re-organising and creating a new layout for the stores area.
- Improving office, kitchen and communal area workflows.
- Standardising the stationery cupboard layout and re-organising the stationery order process.
- Organising the purchasing manager's desk to improve motion economy using kanban.
- Creating a thorough audit process to sustain 5S.

Safetylyne ensured 5S concepts were not just applied to the "physical" office, but also across its systems. "We wanted to track the whole process, from what happens when a customer makes an enquiry, to how to manufacture it faster, and get invoices paid sooner" the spokesperson said.

Some of the team physically relocated desks and/or their equipment to the sales area, reducing movement, transport, and wait-time wastage in the quoting process. Safetylyne introduced visual management and 5S techniques to schedule quoting workloads, assign work priorities, and illustrate the order to action quotes. The company's existing audit tool was improved, so it can now review specific work areas. Management can directly compare areas and teams, demonstrating their 5S performance and progress. The business audits the 5S process quarterly and takes corrective action if required.

II-AU gave Safetylyne 5S template documents, presentation documents, notes and videos to train new staff in 5S during the induction process, or as a refresher if required.

The company estimates operational efficiency has increased by at least 15% to 20%. Safetylyne believes the changes were successful because all staff endorsed 5S concepts. "When we first started doing it, everyone was a bit concerned we couldn't possibly throw everything out, but then you look back and you can see what a change it all made."

The spokesperson said 5S was a new way of thinking. "A new standard had been set, now we can't go back to the standard we were working at before."

After working with their supplier II-AU, QMI Solutions visited Safetylyne in May 2012 to assess the changes. "QMI was very impressed. They said funding we'd received had been used well," Safetylyne Management reported. Safetylyne is a 'model' of how Lean Manufacturing and Lean Business can work.

The implementation of LEAN manufacturing systems has given us:

15-20% increased operational efficiency

Improved sales process

Creation of supported procedures and audits

▀▀ OUR OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY INCREASED BY AT LEAST 15% TO 20% AT THIS TIME ▀▀

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