

ROLLED THREADS UNLIMITED STREAMLINES WITH LEAN KAIZEN



Company Profile:

Founded in 1985, Rolled Threads produces fully threaded bar, custom machined parts, fully threaded and double ended studs, bolts, lead screws and specialty fasteners at its plant in Waukesha. Since 2001, the company has been owned by F. W. Ladky Associates, a family owned business founded in 1919 that specializes in the sale of steel products. Rolled Threads has 30 employees, including five in the shipping area.

Situation:

Inefficiencies and a lack of organization in the company's shipping area had caused delays in the delivery of customers' orders. The shipping area lagged the continuous improvement efforts in other areas of the plant. The packaging process can be very costly and time consuming, as well as labor-intensive and requiring a large amount of materials. Production runs can involve thousands of pieces that must then be packaged and shipped to the customer in 50 to 100 pieces per box, which can take several days to pack.

Solutions:

WMEP Manufacturing Solutions led a kaizen event in Rolled Threads' shipping area, which led to changes that improved efficiency in the shipping process. Rolled Threads updated its packaging process, simplified workflow and switched materials in order to strengthen the packages in which it ships customers' orders. Improvements to streamline the shipping station include a newly dedicated desktop workstation, documented packaging instructions, labeling capabilities, a highly visible shipping board to prioritize orders and the reclamation of overstock shelving. Rolled Threads has also reorganized and streamlined its inspection process.

Results:

- Workflow changes have boosted Rolled Threads' productivity and efficiency in its shipping department
- The kaizen shipping project with the WMEP was part of a \$20,000 investment for Rolled Threads that has improved top-line capacity by 20 percent
- Improved efficiency negated the need to hire another employee in shipping, saving the company at least \$60,000
- Eliminated troublesome bottlenecks in the plant
- Successful changes in the shipping department spread to other areas of Rolled Threads' value stream

"I would say that the \$20,000 investment, for what we've gotten out of it, is peanuts. We achieved direct cost savings of over \$60,000 annually. We eliminated troublesome bottlenecks in our plant. More importantly, we can now handle even more sales growth."

Jim Ladky, President - Rolled Threads Unlimited



Jim Ladky, President and John Radi, Shipping and Receiving Manager

