

OUTPACING THE COMPETITION, IMPROVING THE BOTTOM LINE, ATTRACTING AND RETAILING KEY TALENT. ITS'S COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PAYS OFF.

Company Profile:

West Milwaukee-based International Thermal Systems is essentially a conglomeration of four companies – LTG Technologies, which manufactures industrial ovens, washers and dryers used in manufacturing processes; Continental Equipment Corp., a unit that produces an industrial parts washer line; Industrial Heat Enterprises Inc., a provider of thermal and cleaning solutions; and Oven Systems Inc., a worldwide supplier in the battery and metal packaging industries. International Thermal Systems' roots date to 1926 with the founding of LTG Technologies. It took on its present structure, with its current ownership group, in 2010. International Thermal Systems' workforce stands at about 105 employees, including 85 at the company's 77,500-square-foot facility in West Milwaukee, with 15 to 20 at a facility in Shanghai, China. A sales office in Stuttgart, Germany, broadens the company's presence in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Situation:

The executive leadership at International Thermal Systems recognized the need to continually look for ways to improve their processes. The company has committed to continuous improvement as a means of outpacing its competition, improving its bottom line, and attracting and retaining key talent.

Solutions:

International Thermal Systems selected WMEP Manufacturing Solutions over other service providers for its continuous improvement programs. The company sees many opportunities for continuous improvement within International Thermal Systems in an effort to be a market leader in every business sector in which it operates. Projects with WMEP have included value-stream mapping exercises to improve throughput yield and a 5S workplace organization campaign involving various work cells on the shop floor. International Thermal Systems has also conducted kaizen events – short duration improvement projects – to address specific issues.

Results:

- Kaizen event led to a reduction in warranty issues.
- Reduction in the cost of quality.
- 5S event led to efficiencies in time on the shop floor by reducing the multiple handling of some products.
- Employees have embraced continuous improvement and take responsibility for their own areas in the shop.
- Positive effect on the company's overall bottom line.
- Improved lead times.

"We liked the WMEP's focus on Wisconsin manufacturing and the fact that the organization is Wisconsin based. And the pricing was reasonable, so we decided to work with the WMEP."

Tom Stricker, President - International Thermal Systems

