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NEWNAN MANUFACTURER IMPROVES ON-TIME PERFORMANCE, CUTTING SET UP TIME

Leaders of Groov-Pin, a manufacturer of engineered fasteners, went all the way to China to determine how Groov-Pin could remain competitive against similar Chinese manufacturers.

"It's tough to be profitable today when you're up against

to see how they were doing business and the kind of equipment they were using. We came back and decided the way for us to be more competitive was to deliver faster."

After returning from Asia, Groov-Pin President Scot Jones

asked Bunn to attend a "lean manufacturing" seminar. Bunn discovered Georgia Tech's lean boot camp, a four-day class led by the Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI²)

By the end of the course,

the rising cost of metals and the availability of labor. When Asian manufacturers came onto the scene, they were able to make inserts like ours for less money," said Scott Bunn, Groov-Pin's operations manager. "Four of us took a trip to China, Taiwan and Hong Kong

Bunn knew that he and others within the organization could map current and future value streams, identify appropriate techniques for improvement, develop a lean strategy and plan the application of specific lean techniques, a set of tools widely used in manu-

facturing to help identify and steadily eliminate waste from an organization's operations.

"I really liked the hands-on aspect of the Georgia Tech training," Bunn recalled. "It demonstrated how, if you made some simple changes, you could become more efficient at doing things."

The Georgia Tech class generated enthusiasm among the Groov-Pin leaders, and at corporate headquarters in Smithfield, RI, they decided to initiate the company's lean journey. Groov-Pin worked with Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Services (RIMES), a nonprofit organization funded by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) that works with small- and medium-sized manufacturers to improve operations, increase efficiency and raise profits. When it came time to implement lean solutions in the Newnan facility, Bunn contacted EI², which operates the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership, similar to RIMES.

Sam Darwin and Bill Ritsch, EI² lean specialists, visited Groov-Pin in March 2010 to assess

the company's needs, and they proposed a series of kaizen events. Kaizen, or rapid improvement, is a focused activity on a particular process or activity that identifies and quickly removes waste.

In addition to the scheduling kaizen event, Groov-Pin conducted additional events in setup reduction, outside services and parts flow – all with impressive results.

The team also applied 5S (*sorting, straightening, shining, standardizing, and sustaining*), a method for organizing the workplace. After the company's last business meeting, managers and sales staff from across Groov-Pin's two locations toured the Newnan facility and were impressed with what they saw.

Groov-Pin Corporation was founded in 1926 to address a growing market for patented press fit fasteners used in a wide variety of industries, including food processing, irrigation, automotive, aerospace and military, among others. Over the years, the company has played a leading role in establishing commercial and military standards for engineered fasteners.



Scott Bunn, Groov-Pin's operations manager, discusses opportunities for implementing lean principles with Sam Darwin of the Enterprise Innovation Institute.