



ATAC Helps Business Build Efficiency, Competitiveness

by Mitch Emmons

Since 1976 Auburn Technical Assistance Center, Auburn University's affiliate of the Alabama Technology Network and an Economic Development Administration University Center, has helped business, industry and not-for-profit entities learn how to improve and enhance their competitiveness and efficiency through a variety of educational and outreach services.

ATAC also works with manufacturing industries to provide training and expertise in the areas of Lean manufacturing, a philosophy that emerged from the Toyota production system and the Japanese automotive industry designed to remove waste and non-value-added elements from the manufacturing process.

Sustaining a continuous improvement initiative is arguably the most difficult undertaking in a Lean enterprise. By resurrecting a training method developed to sustain the United States' industrial might during World War II, ATAC is showing companies that going back to the basics is exactly the catalyst needed to maintain continuous improvement and maximize their investment in Lean.

Training Within Industry is a three-component program that is the ideal process for training people within an industry who are responsible for training others in job skills, monitoring and effectively managing continuous improvement initiatives, and doing so with consistent and proven results.

"TWI is an American-developed process that was extremely effective in keeping the United States' industrial base strong and productive during World War II," says ATAC Lean Specialist Hank Czarnecki. "But with the U.S. emerging as a victor in both combat and industrial power, interest in TWI as a component in maintaining America's industrial superiority soon faded. Post-war Japan quickly seized the potential of TWI and used it to launch and sustain its post-war industrial prosperity. TWI essentially is the foundation of what we know today as Lean."

Czarnecki, along with ATAC Instructors David Hicks and Dave Devore currently are the only TWI certified instructors affiliated with the ATN. They are working with a number of companies who are former

and current Lean clients to transfer TWI into those firms' continuous improvement system.

One of those companies is AmTech LLC in Alexander City, Ala.

"Once we tried it, we quickly saw how TWI can help us in not only conducting our training more quickly and efficiently, but we also saw how it tremendously boosts quality, aids in standardizing our manufacturing process and the transfer of job skills knowledge, as well as increases employee morale," said AmTech Lean Facilitator Cohen Vickers.

Manufacturers are finding that basic methodologies that worked so well more than 60 years ago are providing companies already immersed in the implementation of Lean and continuous improvement with a proven way to promote, create and sustain standardized work; define and develop consistent work procedures; and to do so through a system based on identifying and accurately reproducing the key steps in the job process.

Contact ATAC toll free at 1.800.446.0386 or www.auburnworks.org.



TWI course participants listen as ATAC Instructor Dave Devore describes the three TWI components of job instruction, job relations and job methods.



AmTech President Roger Hendrick speaks to participants in a TWI open enrollment class hosted by the Alexander City, Ala., company about how his firm utilizes and benefits from Training Within Industry. Looking on are ATAC Instructors Dave Devore, left, and Hank Czarnecki.