



AIME Success Story:

E.D. Products Limited, St. Catharines

Company Profile

Manufacturer and distributor of electrical interconnection and control systems

- **Country of Ownership:** Canada
- **Year Established:** 1984
- **Exporting:** Yes
- **Quality Certification:** ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001:2004
- **Primary Business Activity:** Manufacturer, Distributor, Service, Exporter
- **Products and Services:** Electrical Wire Harnesses, Cable Assemblies, Control Systems, Electronic components and accessories, Electronic Connectors
- **Industries Served:** Specialty automotive, mining equipment, fuel handling, switch control, vending, HVAC, robotics, medical, telecommunications, computer and industrial products, custom products.
- **Total Sales (\$CDN):** Sales: \$20 - \$30 Million
- **Number of Employees:** approx 100
- **Export Experience:** Europe, South America, United States

Background

E.D. Products Limited is a Canadian manufacturer and distributor of electrical interconnection and control systems that has a combined global work area of over 50,000 square feet, with facilities in Canada, the U.S.A. and Mexico. The company serves clients throughout North America, Central America, Europe and Africa. Their staff is made up of experienced assemblers, technicians, engineers and business professionals who produce quality electrical products and deliver a high level of customer service.

E.D. Products is currently facing significant challenges in managing the lengthy production time for its core products. The problem is causing high costs and unacceptable levels of waste. The company needs to make a dramatic reduction in its time to market while at the same time reducing the amount of waste being generated by the manufacturing process.

Major customers such as Toyota expect their suppliers to provide components to them within very strict timelines. E.D. Products' current production time of five weeks for delivery of wire and cable assemblies is not an acceptable turn-around in today's competitive environment.

Targets for Improvement

E.D. Products recognized that it could address this significant challenge through the implementation of a training program that introduced the LEAN process to the organization. Management felt that by introducing LEAN, the company could bring their standards up to the levels demanded by customers like Toyota. As part of this initiative the company is planning to focus on improvements to manufacturing techniques that can be applied plant-wide through reducing waste, increasing quality and improving product lead-times.

E.D. Products knows that it must reduce its production time by as much as 60 percent if it expects to retain Toyota's business. The company has set specific cost and waste reduction targets and, with ongoing training is hoping to see initial results of 30 percent reduction in production time over the next few months, with the balance of the improvements coming in the following year. However the global economic downturn is threatening to change those plans.

Yves Landry Foundation Introduces AIME

Auto parts manufacturing has been one of the hardest hit manufacturing sectors in this recession. The Yves Landry Foundation (YLF) recognized that unless something was done to allow companies like E.D. Products to maintain their levels of training, they would lose the growth momentum they had built up over many years of hard work, and potentially never be able to compete for business with international players such as Toyota. In response to the dramatically deteriorating situation for Ontario manufacturers, YLF launched the AIME initiative (Achieving Innovation and Manufacturing Excellence) in the fall of 2008. AIME was developed by YLF and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development & Trade to support all manufacturers in the province who were dealing with the kinds of challenges for employee training that E.D. Products was facing.

In tough economic times, when the decision comes down to funding training or making other budget cuts, training is the one component that companies find hard to justify, regardless of the significance. E.D. Products became aware of the AIME program at a time when the \$50,000 in funding was exactly what they needed to continue their focus on developing a LEAN capability.

Laying the Groundwork

E.D. Products credits the AIME initiative with helping the company lay the groundwork for the future through continuous training and retraining of its employees. Kevin Hooiveld, Business Development manager for the company, says "Training is a continuous journey for us. The work we are doing on LEAN will create measurable improvements in our performance. Our customers will see those improvements as we move away from our traditional approach to producing wire harnesses. This is a very competitive business. This commitment to training will definitely position us well for the future."

Like many of the companies that have benefited from the AIME initiative, E.D. Products expects to see some short-term gains through implementing training programs with their employees. However the significant benefits will come in the months and years ahead, as the training investment continues to bear fruit and a culture of innovation takes hold within the organization.

YLF will be checking back with E.D. Products later in the year to get an update on specifically how its commitment to LEAN has paid off and the impact it is having on the company's success.

For more information about the YLF or AIME, contact:

Karyn Brearley
Executive Director
Yves Landry Foundation
Phone: 416 620 5464 X240
Fax: 416 620 9730
email: karyn.brearley@ylf-fyl.ca