Continuous Improvement Powered by Commitment and Process

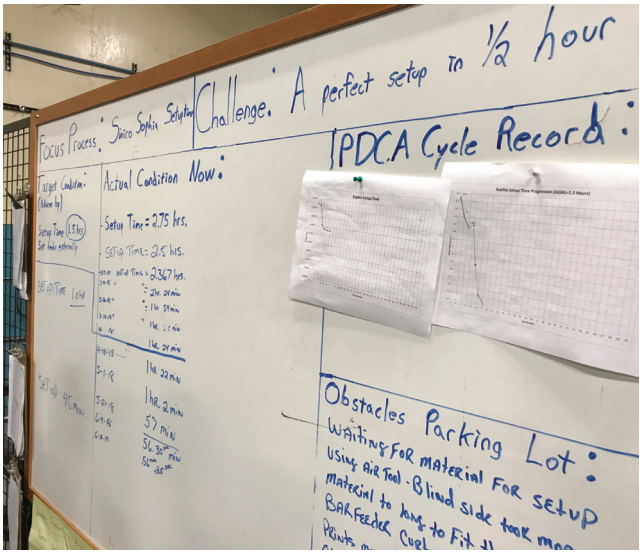
What would you do with a reduction of 64% in non-billable hours? PMPA visited SEPCO-Erie in Erie, Pennsylvania twice and witnessed the results of commitment to continuous improvement.

Continuous improvement is a fundamental for success in manufacturing in today's hyper-competitive, prices-paid-to-suppliers-race-to-the-bottom world. Continuous improvement is more than just a catchphrase — it is a critical technique to help our shops and performers achieve world class results and keeps our companies, and employees, competitive in the market.

SEPCO-Erie is a leading shop that has implemented the philosophy from *2 Second Lean* by Paul Akers to drive its continuous improvement efforts. When PMPA visited SEPCO-Erie last year, the SEPCO-Erie team was focused on reducing the set-up time on one of their cutoff machines. The set-up time at the time of our visit was over 2 hours — already down substantially from the original 2-3/4 hours.

When we observed the team whiteboard for the same cutoff unit on our visit this summer, we were impressed to learn that their efforts have reduced the time needed to under one hour for the setup. That is a 64% reduction in set-up time! That is over 1-3/4 hours of billable operating time returned to the business because they committed to daily improvements and a process for documenting and sustaining the improvements identified.

How would your business improve if you had a 64% reduction of non-billable hours on each of your production units? How many setups, for how many hours, each week does your shop execute?



The whiteboard at SEPCO-Erie shows the focus, improved setup times, the challenge, the target and the obstacles so the entire team is informed.

The team at SEPCO-Erie shows us that significant setup reduction is possible with a commitment to continuous improvement and following a process of documenting and sustaining the improvement ideas that work. PMPA