



What was the challenge or opportunity?

How to grow awareness for, and continuous involvement with, our company's environmental initiatives through enhanced employee involvement. Within most manufacturing concerns, routine regulatory compliance with environmental laws and regulations is commonly overseen by formal environmental or environment, health & safety (EHS) departments. All fine and good, and Worthen Industries also follows this traditional model. But institutionalized approaches are not as suitable for encouraging grass-roots initiatives among our workforce, especially for uncovering and implementing valuable beyond-compliance opportunities.

How do you solve it?

This effort is very much a work-in-progress, but Worthen Industries has developed a two-fold approach to promoting a workforce culture of environmental stewardship and innovation. Both facets of our approach build on our existing Quality Management System, which was initiated in 1999. In the first instance we are implementing a formal Environmental Management System (EMS) and plan to certify to the ISO 14001 standard in 2015. But even more directly to the workforce culture aspect, we are integrating environmental sustainability concepts into our on-going Lean Methods operational training efforts.

What impacts have you seen from your initiative?

We have already seen our Lean project teams integrate sustainability considerations into their work efforts. An early example of this successful integration includes a team redesigning a mixing process to eliminate the use of metal-rimmed fiberboard drums and substitute a plastic vessel with an inexpensive disposable liner. This project saved over \$10,000 annually in fiber drum purchases but also eliminated a hard-to-recycle item from our waste stream.