

Kaizen Case Studies

PDG Consultants • PO Box 47361 • Minneapolis, MN 55447 • 866-404-7221

CASE STUDY: Productivity kaizen

CLIENT: Building materials supplier and manufacturer (noted as such below)

Materials scattered throughout the lumber yard led to productivity issues and transportation inefficiencies. Saw operators often ran out of materials while waiting for the pickers to bring materials to them and the fork-lift drivers spent the majority of their day on their fork-lifts driving between all the materials located throughout the yard.

In an effort to more efficiently and effectively arrange the yard, a process and methodology was designed and implemented that led to almost every item being moved. By incorporating the supermarket concept, the highest volume items were located closest to the point of use and the lowest volume items were located further away. Implementation of this concept improved the overall efficiency of the pickers which increased the saw operators' productivity.

The most interesting aspect of the event was the relocation of the fuel tank, something that had been talked about for 20 years but never done. This marked the first time the team realized that they were empowered to make change. Leadership allowed the team to make decisions and supported them in unprecedented ways. The result was an empowered team.

While this case study is currently lacking numbers illustrating measurable gain (due to housing market declines), verbal comments have been centered on pickers saving 20 minutes per job and experiencing better-than-ever productivity. Numbers supporting the gain will be added as they become available.