



CASE
STUDY

Competitive Business Solutions

MINIMIZING THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN THE AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Overview

A manufacturer of wings and supporting aerostructures was experiencing high rates of employee attrition, which impacted delivery deadlines and revenue goals and compromised important customer relationships. An intensive CBS engagement helped the supplier implement a robust workforce training program, significantly reduce product defects and rapidly improve on-time delivery rates.



INDUSTRY

Aerospace and Defense
Company

SOLUTION AREA

Operational Excellence,
Leadership and Change
Management

*In the aerospace industry,
CBS recognized a huge
training gap that had
largely been ignored.*

THE CHALLENGE

In the high-tech world of aerospace manufacturing, capable, knowledgeable and motivated employees are a vital part of competitive success. In this case, the manufacturer was experiencing high rates of turnover, where employees left and took their valuable experience and capabilities with them. The result was a sizable talent gap that slowed production and increased the number of product defects. Moreover, the company had no formalized product-specific training program to offer mechanics and other new employees, so assimilation was slow, and supervisors were forced to spend time solving problems created by a lack of training.

THE APPROACH

Utilizing its rapid site-assessment methodology, CBS quickly realized the importance of establishing a process that onboarded employees without delay and enabled them to “hit the ground running” in their individual manufacturing roles—recognizing that the sooner employees fully integrated into the organization, the sooner they would be able to meet quality and performance expectations. In addition to building the onboarding process, the CBS team mapped out a plan to create standard work in critical processes, improve productivity, reduce defects, eliminate waste and address other operational issues.

“In aerospace industries,” said Bryan Ward of CBS, “we see a huge gap in employee training, which has not been a strategic focus for most companies for many years. High turnover is requiring it to become more important. At CBS, we have made training a part of our toolset from the beginning.”

INCREASING OUTPUT AND REDUCING DEFECTS

CBS deployed a blend of 26 kaizen events and projects focused on driving improvements in output, productivity and product quality while reducing hours. Key components of the improvement initiative included the overhaul of existing but insufficient basic skills training and the first-time implementation of a product-specific mechanics skills training. CBS developed a side-by-side “crew cycling” approach that accelerated learning by pairing experienced workers with more junior employees—enabling faster upskilling and higher productivity. This provided company leadership with the ability to create higher levels of discipline and individual accountability as well as decrease the time required for employees to become productive.



STATISTICAL RESULTS

- Reduced production lead time by 37%
- Reduced unit labor hours by 33% (8,284 hours)
- Decreased product defects by 20%
- Trained 100% of new employees within 30 days of hiring
- Implemented a new 6-month mechanics training program
- Improved on-time delivery by 400% (3.5x)

The skills of a predominately junior workforce were upgraded through training, and new employees were quickly assimilated.

CONCLUSION

For this aerospace manufacturer, the absence of an effective training program coupled with high employee turnover had a negative impact on product quality, on-time delivery and customer relationships. Once workforce skills appropriate to a complex manufacturing process were cultivated, defects were reduced by 20% and on-time delivery improved fourfold. Equally important, employees were onboarded faster; morale and productivity improved. The company has continued to maintain the implemented skills training with plans to expand those programs to other areas of the facility.

Ready to optimize the transformation of your organization? We can help.

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Our operational problem-solvers bring unmatched industry experience, creative thinking and a collaborative approach to every client engagement. Call us at **973-509-0110 x147** for a private consultation to learn how we can help you with your continuous improvement efforts.