

Case Study

DENBY POTTERY

Denby Pottery stays UK based thanks to Lean waste reduction

Pera has become a key partner to Denby Pottery, delivering BIT training to nearly 280 of the company's more than 420 UK operational staff, leading to major waste reductions and efficiency improvements and playing a major part in halting a feasibility study that was considering the possibility of moving manufacturing operations to China.



The Pera effect

“We met with several BIT providers, and immediately developed a rapport with the Pera staff we met. We were particularly impressed because it was clear that their focus was on the benefits to Denby Pottery, not just the NVQ qualifications”

Neal Beardmore

Manufacturing Manager, Denby Pottery

In more than 200 years of high quality tableware manufacture, Denby has built an enviable reputation for style, quality and function across its distinctive range of products. Times change, however, and the last few years have seen increased competition encroaching upon Denby's niche.

Under new management, the company's response was to develop a new business strategy, with heavy investment in marketing and manufacturing. Manufacturing Manager, Neal Beardmore, had the remit to develop the Continuous Improvement strategy to reduce waste across the business. As he says, 'we have an extremely loyal workforce, many of whom have been here throughout their working lives, through years when in-process waste was not the priority it is today'.

In order to develop the Continuous Improvement programme, Neal – with the support of the Denby senior management team – needed the entire workforce to gain an understanding of lean manufacturing principles so that savings made would be thoroughly understood and sustainable. The best way to achieve that aim was to put NVQ BIT training in place for the whole workforce, a major commitment.

Neal explains, 'we met with several BIT providers, and immediately developed a rapport with the Pera staff we met. We were particularly impressed because it was clear that their focus was on the benefits to Denby Pottery, not just the NVQ qualifications'.

With so many people to be trained, it was important to set the scene properly, so Pera ran half-day familiarisation programme for 400 employees. Next was to develop a 'platform of knowledge', working first with the supervisory staff so that they could inform and enthuse shop floor employees through this long programme.

Results have been tangible and significant, with a host of real cost-saving benefits and substantial increases in the number of improvements coming through the employee Idea Generation scheme that is in place across the business.

Denby was considering moving production from the UK to China, but improvements have been so significant that this programme has been halted and Denby Pottery will remain where it has been for over two centuries.

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