
What Iter did for Johnson Matthey

● Introduction

Johnson Matthey is a British multinational speciality chemicals and sustainable technologies company with over 30 locations worldwide and 14,500 employees. They have been leaders in their field for more than 200 years, applying unrivalled scientific expertise to enable cleaner air, improved health and the more efficient use of our planet's natural resources.

Iter worked with the largest divisional sector - Clean Air - who manufacture catalytic converters for a range of industry sectors, but most significantly to the global automotive industry.

● The Challenge

The Division has made several attempts at implementing Lean as a manufacturing approach. However, the approach was always seen by the sites as simply a box of techniques and with differing approaches, cultures, levels of knowledge and capability across the sites it has never sustained, and no global standard was achieved.

Johnson Matthey is delivering its EPIC strategy (Efficiency, Product, Innovation, Customer) with the prime driver of efficiency through globally consistent Lean approaches encompassed within an overall Production System. Over the past three years the core philosophy of the Production System had been developed, but was complex, not easy to understand or capable of delivering sustained improvement. As a result, the Clean Air Production System (CAPS) never came to fruition. The small internal team had a set of good ideas, but conflicting standards and agendas and lacked the experience and skill to translate this into a sustainable, value adding Production System at the core of delivering cultural change and sustainable improvements in efficiency. In short, they were overwhelmed by the scale of the task, especially as this was being conducted within the restrictions of Covid through 2020 and 2021.

“ When Iter started working with us, we had a lot of good ideas and parts of a process but not a deliverable Production System. Their experience, guidance and support has been invaluable in creating the clarity, focus and structure for a highly successful launch and we are confident of sustaining and building on this early success.

Zac Taormina - Manufacturing Excellence Manager

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● **The Solution**

Iter were initially asked to review the deliverability of CAPS as designed. From this we guided and supported, and in places led, the development of a deliverable and sustainable Production System. Subsequently Iter has supported the initial deployment and coached the central and site teams in preparing and starting the journey towards operational excellence. All of this was achieved remotely (because of Covid), with no member of the Iter Team ever physically meeting any member of the Johnson Matthey Team.

Designing the Approach

We started by simplifying the many tasks and the six pillars of activity into three core aspects:

- **Lean Tools**
- **Functional standards (S&OP, facility branding, CI planning)**
- **Enablers (asset tagging, KPI definitions, standardised plant structure)**

Next a 'wave' based implementation structure planned to be fully delivered and embedded over five years was evolved to roll out content and achieve sustainable improvements in performance. This is operating through a cell structure at each site (appropriate groupings of work teams) for involvement at all levels from shop floor to senior management. Iter defined a standard approach for developing this content, to ensure thoroughness and consistency, its deployment, to ensure true bottom-up engagement, and a self-assessment process to measure the effectiveness of implementation and identify area of focus and programme improvement.

To close the implementation and recognition loop, we developed an award and recognition structure to acknowledge cell and site achievement.

"Lighthouse" Site Deployment and Team Coaching

We then supported the central team with their design deployment method, site preparation and communications in the initial "lighthouse" implementations. Once the initial implementation started with the first "lighthouse" site we worked with the central and site teams to deliver initial workshops, to identify needs and put site deployment plans in place. Whilst providing a wealth of technical knowledge and experience our biggest contribution was developing delivery teams with the focus and confidence to deliver a sustainable Production System.

As the deployment has moved to implementation across all sites, Iter is leaving the programme on track for sustained success.

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● **The Results**

Material benefits are starting to emerge with leading indicators starting to show improvement in the lighthouse sites, but more significantly the Clear Air Division of Johnson Matthey now has:

- A simple, clear framework for creation and deployment of all aspects of the global production system
- A robust method for assessing the effectiveness and impact of the system
- Commitment of Group Senior Management and commitment of sites to CAPS
- A more confident, capable and well-equipped internal group team
- A firm foundation for the delivering improvements in operational performance and costs
- The emergence of global standards and the early signs of a sustainable culture of bottom-up Continuous Improvement

We are proud of the support that we have provided to Johnson Matthey and the progress made across the most challenging environment of working remotely across three continents.