Jim Athon

Triad Systems
People. Process. Performance.

Summary of Experience

Jim Athon has been consulting for more than 20+ years successfully deploying Lean principles and Six Sigma problem solving including changeover time reduction, establishing pull systems, improving equipment reliability and eliminating defects. Jim has facilitated numerous kaizen events, done extensive training and provided coaching and mentoring for over 1000 projects. He has a unique ability to communicate to any audience at any proficiency level, and is skilled at enabling others to understand complex concepts by using commonly understood language and examples specific to their industry and projects. He has experience in several industries including Paper & Printing, Automotive, Consumer Electronics, Aerospace, Fiberglass, Internet Service Provision, Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals, Life Sciences, Injection Molding, Sheet Extrusion and Medical Insurance amongst others. His clients have included Air Liquide, W.L. Gore & Associates, Chevron, Quadrant Plastics, Vycom Plastics, Brentwood Industries, BAE Systems, West Pharmaceutical, Roche Diagnostics and Tyson Foods. Prior to consulting, Jim began his career at AlliedSignal Automotive and then GE Industrial Systems in both line engineering roles (Industrial Engineer, Manufacturing Engineer and a Design Engineer) and in Continuous Improvement (Black Belt and Master Black Belt). Jim teaches lean/6σ courses on behalf of the Pennsylvania and California state university systems.

Selected Accomplishments

- Supported the value stream mapping effort for an Advanced Materials company helping to deliver 20+% capacity release (capital-free) and set their path to 30+% capital-lite capacity improvement
- Supported the value stream mapping / kaizen efforts for the lead site of an Electronic Cables & Components business' transformation that achieved 95% OTD targets (from base of ~70%) and reduced defects by 75%
- Led the value stream mapping / kaizen efforts for a laminate manufacturer resulting in 7% yield improvement (64% loss reduction) and 35% capital free capacity release via rate increases with no incremental cost
- Led the value stream mapping / kaizen components of a business turnaround for a filter manufacturer resulting in significant capital free capacity release enabling cost reduction (1.5 to 1 shift), 5-7% yield improvement (with more to go) and significant inventory reduction (30-40%)
- Implemented a Lean Sigma deployment for a petroleum refinery that generated more than $44M in hard dollar benefit; projects included maintenance cycle time reduction, increased yields in primary and secondary distillation columns, increased MTBF on critical equipment, improved planning of product slates, improved waste water treatment efficiencies, etc.
- Led an equipment changeover cycle time reduction effort for a pair of petroleum refining plants' biannual catalyst change process leading to a 15% reduction in downtime and $2.7M revenue increase
- Led an OEE improvement effort for an injection molding manufacturer who was experiencing missing shipments and excessive overtime that resulted in moving OEE from 68% to over 91%
- Led a rework elimination project for a conduit manufacturing firm that saved over $1M after being told the problem was unsolvable; disciplined data collection and regression modelling combined with DOE reduced the severity of defect causing rework by over 90%
- Helped a leading food manufacturer develop / deploy a Lean Six Sigma improvement initiative that delivered more than $3.6MM for the first two waves of projects that included sanitation efficiency improvements, defect reductions, line capacity increases, and reduction of environmental waste
- Assisted a PEX extrusion plant with their scrap reduction and material variance reduction projects that dropped the material scrap on a single production line over 50% in 4 weeks generating an annual savings in excess of $300k; used multiple regression analysis and designed experiments (2k and RSM) on the pipe extrusion lines to develop optimal operating conditions (leading to a dramatic reduction of wall thickness and concentricity variation) and then developed visual standard work documentation, job setup instructions, and comprehensive control charting and response plans to insure continued operational success
- Led a series of projects for a leading fiberglass manufacturer that reduced the incidence of contamination in pipe mineral wool insulation by over 50%, reduced the severity of Trimethylamine odors by 85% on refrigeration and cold appliance insulations (reducing customer complaints and the loss of market share), and reduced low density fiberglass insulation manufacturing defects by 85%; collectively saved more than $650k including both direct and resin costs while protecting market share and the business' value

Educational Background

BS, Textile Engineering, Southern College of Technology
AS, Industrial Engineering, Southern College of Technology