



The Client

One of the nation's leading transportation suppliers, providing traditional rail-based transportation services as well as intermodal containers and trailers. With a proud history of more than 150 years, strong guiding principles and an unambiguous purpose to capitalize on the efficiency of rail transportation to serve America, the company had a demonstrated track record of success, yet was always looking to get better.

The Challenge

A rich history can sometimes cause stagnation: "...That's the way we've always done it...", "...Why change when it's worked fine for 100 years..." The company had overcome these challenges on its own many times, but when it came to deploying more sophisticated performance management tools, shoring up the leadership disciplines around these tools and optimizing business processes, they looked externally for help.

The Solution

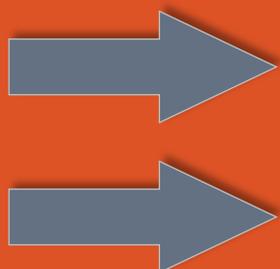
Over the course of three years, our consultants completed nine Performance Improvement projects for the company, working in 24 departments. We reported directly to the CFO, who had her VP of Performance Improvement closely involved. Additionally we asked that a member of the PI team be seconded to our team, thus completely dedicated to the work we were doing. They agreed. This strong support on the ground and at the exec level played a big part in the success of these large-scale change initiatives.

Each project followed essentially the same methodology:

- Developed activity summaries and activity details for all areas in scope
- Conducted interviews, data analysis and side-by-side observations to establish processing standards, surface improvement opportunities and develop performance targets
- Reduced waste and eliminated non-value added steps through element analysis and process redesign
- Designed and installed fully automated and integrated performance management tools using activity-based management principles and a balance scorecard
- Institutionalized the use of and adherence to the PM Suite by working daily with the supervisors and managers to ensure they understood the system, believed in the inputs/output and were able to communicate the results with confidence to their team
- Reported out key performance indicators weekly to the execs and managers, thus holding them accountable for results
- Tracked progress against project success criteria weekly, thus holding ourselves accountable for results
- Communicated project goals, reasons for change and results on a regular basis with everyone involved (and many who were not) to ensure buy-in and a common understanding of purpose

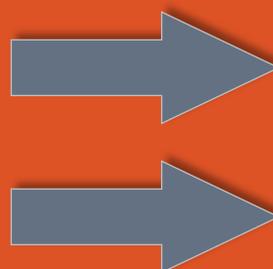
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