

## Improving your way out of the Dark (chocolate) Ages!!!



Paradoxically when you look at the Production Line they call the Cavemill at **Darrell Lea's Chocolate Plant** you do think you have gone back to the manufacturing dark ages. Built in 1963 it is one of the original Lines Darrell Lea grew their chocolate sales with and today still has a very important role to play in producing some of their much loved moulded chocolates.

Back in April 2011 after a half-day kick-off workshop, a team was formed to review the performance of the Production Line. Meeting for 1.5hrs each week for 12 weeks, early on in their analysis the team began to confirm with data what those who worked day to day on the line had known for a long time – overall performance was low and frustrations ran high.

Issues that needed to be addressed included:

- Set-up and shut-down times were increasing;
- A large number of minor stoppages during production runs;
- Poor planning around break times causing lost time;
- “Band-aid” equipment repairs; and
- Lack of understanding between maintenance support and operators.

It was common for key operators to start their day wishing they would be transferred to another Production Line so as to avoid the hard work and frustration of running the line.

After 3 months of focused weekly improvement activity, the Cavemill Team (as seen in Figure 1) was able to detail a

remarkable improvement in the performance of the line during their presentation to the Supply Chain Leadership Team.

**Figure 1 – Cavemill Team**



Key achievements from the improvements to the Line included:

- A doubling of Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE);
- Reducing line set-up time by 1 hour;
- Increased OEE allowing more batches and varieties to be produced in a day's production run;
- Improved communication between production operators and their maintenance support; and
- A significant reduction in minor stoppages during production runs.

The turnaround was summed up by some of the comments captured during the team's presentation:

*“Every time I visit the line you guys look happier!” – HR Manager*

*"We are spending less on rubber bands!" –  
**Factory Manager***

*"We no longer wish we could be transferred to  
another line for the day" – **Line Operator***

Darrell Lea's **Supply Chain Manager**, Scott Atkinson, best summed up the impact of the team's work via the following correspondence to his Supply Chain Leadership Team after the team's final presentation:

*"I would like to congratulate everyone..."*

*It is the result of thirteen weeks of hard work  
that contained an amazing amount of detail  
and a disciplined look at how we operate this  
important piece of equipment...*

*When we commenced our **TPM & Lean** rollout  
we knew it would lead to results, but what I  
saw today only confirmed my resolve to roll it  
out further and get many more people  
engaged with the philosophy...*

*Well done again and thanks for a great  
morning..."*

CTPM would like to congratulate the Cavemill Team on their achievement and we look forward to many more success stories along the way!

For further information please contact:



**Vince Agostino**

Senior Navigator

Phone: 0419 876 488

Head Office: +61 2 4226 6184

Website: [www.ctpm.org.au](http://www.ctpm.org.au)