



Case Study: Crown Paints

Crown Paints

Crown Paints, with headquarters in Darwen, Lancashire has roots extending back nearly two centuries. The company of today is the UK's largest and most successful independent paint manufacturer. The breadth of Crown Paints' portfolio encompasses the professional and DIY user, with brands known for quality and reliability. Their professional finishes – notably Crown Trade, Sandtex Trade and Sadolin – are specified for some of the UK's most prestigious buildings, while those for domestic use have found favour with several generations of homeowners. Always at the leading edge in colour, Crown's paints and wood stains can be relied on consistently to deliver a little extra both in aesthetics and performance.



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A little about Crown Paints...

It's not just paint, it's personal...

Crown Paints have a proud history dating back to 1777, and since that time has perfected their knowledge of the paint market over the 200 years they've been in business. It's true what Crown say's, it's not just paint – it's so much more than that!

Crown Paints' head office is located in Darwen, Lancashire and the business also has a manufacturing site in Hull, East Yorkshire, as well as over 130 Crown Decorating Centres throughout the UK and Ireland. In 2011, The Hemple Group, based in Denmark, acquired Crown Paints as they looked to expand their offering into the decorative paints business.

The Crown Paints brand is a household name and their products cover some of the most famous buildings in the UK, as well as holding onto a loyal customer base who have used, and will continue to use, Crown's products for generations!





The Challenges

The challenges of multisite manufacturing...

Crown was well down the path of their Lean journey. However, having tried twice before with Lean implementation plant-wide – they had previously fallen short due to lack of buy-in at both a senior management and shop-floor level, and had struggled to instil a culture of continuous improvement.

The plant had issues with waste management, recycling and was seeing value pour out of the stream as they found staff didn't have the direction they needed in order to succeed. Senior business management at the site knew that Lean held the power to help the company succeed.

The Crown team knew that the key to success was staff engagement, but they weren't sure exactly how to guarantee success at every business level. Luckily, through mutual contacts, and a bit of business development, we met with Crown and soon understood that the key to unlocking all their Lean implementation problems was effective, engaging visual management.

By August 2015, the site had started working with Clarity Visual Management; Steve Lomax, Operations Manager with Crown Paints and 30-year veteran, says that "it's all about improving the business through our relationship with Clarity."



Partnering for improvement...

Soon after our initial meetings where we established our strategic direction and decided on how best to start implementing, Crown began to roll-out our Visual Management to the key areas of the site and it wasn't long before they started experiencing success.

The team strategically chose the site's Effluent Plant as the first area to hone focus as it was an area which was long-neglected both in terms of time and investment.

"It's a crucial part of the plant and if it doesn't run the plant doesn't run. We wanted to show we were serious with the Lean programme this time, so we picked the Effluent Plant because it was in such a poor state and we wanted to showcase the work we'd done with Clarity."

"The quality of the products Clarity has done for us has been very impressive and it's really transformed the way we present information. In the past, something similar would have been really poor and would have hardly any resource given to it; what Clarity has done with their magnetic overlay systems is enabled us to produce visual management in a consistent, cost-effective way."

Of course, visual management was not a new concept for the Crown team; they simply needed the resources and skills to enable visual management to be an engaging tool that facilitated their Lean programme. Clarity offered the specialist advice and consultancy the team needed and through understanding Crown's goals, the Clarity Team were able to comprehensively address the challenges the site was facing with its visual management.

"In the past, each area would have come up with their own visual management. It looked poor and people didn't buy-in to it, in the same way, they could tell we'd done it 'on the cheap'."

In the two years that Crown and Clarity have been working together, the service has expanded beyond the typical consultancy and we have since implemented visual management across the entire site in various forms. The reason for the expansion of work was simply down to the reaction of the site to the work Clarity provided – from the humble beginnings implementing 6S visual management in the Effluent Plant, other departments caught wind and soon started placing orders of their own.

Originally, the scope of work for Clarity was to ensure employee engagement in one department through KPI boards, magnetic overlays, signage and shadow boards. Since then, we have facilitated the plants 6S programme in providing effective and professional shadow boards and cleaning stations throughout the manufacturing process.

"With the cleaning stations we've had from Clarity, we now have colour-coded systems across the site, they look very professional."

"What's really great is because of the quality of the boards it really helps us with the performance of our various KPIs. As with anything of this nature, it takes a while for people to come on board but after a while they do and it's been very beneficial."

According to Steve, the hard work across both businesses was well worth it.

“We’ve tried 6S and continuous improvement on and off at this site with various different budgets and I would say that with Clarity, this is the first time that we have had had buy-in from the top and throughout the business and it’s working better than we ever could have hoped for!”



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Steve Lomax – Site Operations Manager, Crown Paints



Thank You!

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