



Inside IPI

INCOMING!!!

Years ago, the company where I worked was getting thrashed by its Japanese competitors. A lot of American companies like mine were studying what the Japanese were doing in order to learn the “secret tricks” they must have been employing to beat us.

One news article I recall at the time quoted a Japanese saying that “every defect is a treasure”. Well that was a real side-splitter for us, because at the time we were knee deep in treasures!

In retrospect, I can better understand the saying - mistakes provide an organization with an opportunity to improve. A defect exposes a weakness in a process, and gives work teams a chance to problem solve. So I don't laugh at “every defect is a treasure” quite so much now, even though many of us have a lot more treasure than we would like.

Last year I noticed in my monthly Metric Board reviews that many work teams were unaware of defects that had reached our external customers. It was clear that we needed to improve the communication between customers with a complaint, and the part of our organization that was in the best position to address the underlying cause. If we aren't aware of a problem, it's unlikely that we're working to address the underlying cause.

So we recently developed a new Corrective Action Request (CAR) process that is intended to improve this communication link. We check in with every customer after they receive an order from IPI to verify that the customer was satisfied. If not, our customer service team gathers information about the problem and

forwards it to the corresponding plant manager. The plant manager then determines which work team can most effectively lead a group to solve the underlying cause.

CARs are not guided missiles we launch to point out some sort of shortcoming or personal failing - a big part of PIMMS is to make problems visible so that our organization can work to identify and address the root cause. In some cases your manager may ask you to help solve a problem that doesn't fall squarely in your area. Rather than “it wasn't MY fault” I hope you see this as a vote of confidence in your ability to help IPI address an issue that has led a customer to make a complaint.

We all recognize that there's way too much “treasure” laying around at IPI, but also that each of these is an opportunity for continuous improvement, and that when we address root causes, these same problems are less likely to keep appearing. Satisfied customers mean more opportunities for all of us, staff and associate alike.

We'll keep tinkering with the CAR process to improve its effectiveness, and I'm always happy to hear your ideas!

-Dan



Recent Projects

City of Indianola



Waukee Public Library



Churdan Public Library



Recent Projects

Municipal Housing Authority, Centerville



Jackson County Sheriff's Office



Dunlap Police

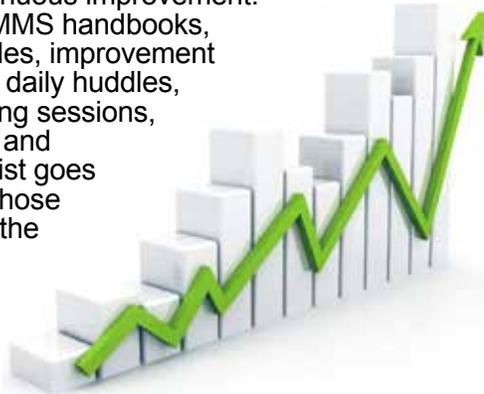


Lean Highlights

Why PIMMS #2.... Learn & Develop Skills

As we travel down the path of our IPI lean journey, I like to remind everyone WHY we are spending the time and resources to make these changes in how we work. We all have many opportunities to learn and develop our skills. Our Number 1 reason of why we do PIMMS is to make everyone's job better by making it safer, more efficient, or a more pleasant environment to be in. One of the things that makes your job better or more rewarding is to have the opportunity to improve the things you already know how to do. Another way is to learn and develop new skills! Lucky for us, we have many ways to learn and develop skills related to lean and continuous improvement!

We have our PIMMS handbooks, eLearning modules, improvement events, projects, daily huddles, PPS brainstorming sessions, countless books and articles and the list goes on and on! And those are just a few of the things we can do to learn and develop skills without ever leaving your work area!



The great thing about lean and continuous improvement is just about every organization is participating in some form or another. And in the lean community, we are normally very willing to share what has been successful or what we learned when things did not achieve the results we expected. So there are also a ton of outside resources available through many different sources. There are seminars, lean coffees, structured courses, and projects or tours with other companies through the Iowa Lean Consortium (ILC) where individuals can learn and develop skills. Often there are also opportunities through other schools, companies, professional organizations or consultants as well. Obviously many of these resources are only available to our staff, and it is limited on how many can participate at one time. But any of the information obtained can be brought back and shared or utilized with everyone that we work with.

Recently a number of our staff from several locations were able to attend a conference hosted by the National Correctional Industries Association held in Minneapolis April 15th – 17th. Not only did our group get to attend and meet with some of our vendors, and peers and people doing similar work in correctional industries from all across the country, we also had the opportunity to attend presentations on a variety of topics related to correctional industries. A few of us were lucky enough to present and share some of the good things being worked on within IPI! I never get tired or sharing with others the things we are working on within our operations across the state. Sharing the successes, and the things we are learning as we travel on our journey is a great way to develop ourselves. I want to give a special thanks to our director Dan Clark for providing the opportunity for us to share our story of PIMMS and also to Custom Wood Production Coordinator Rod Kramer and to Metal Furniture Senior Technician Ron Beemer for helping to answer audience questions and sharing their experience of deploying lean in the areas they work in. Long story short, we had the audience very interested in hearing about what IPI is doing with continuous improvement and lean. At the end of our presentation we had people from many states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi just to name a few) approach me and ask for contact info and more information on PIMMS! That is very exciting to know that people out there, doing very similar work to what we do, and they want to learn more and possibly develop something they can use to help their operations:

- Make everyone's job safer and more efficient.
- Teach and develop skills for everyone.
- Help everyone become a better supplier to their customers!

Each of you should be proud to know that you are a part of teaching and developing the skills for yourselves and others that will continue to make the processes we use at IPI become better, and the people at IPI achieve our three goals. By achieving them, we will have a much better place to do our work, every day!

GREEN in '19!
Steve Forbes

Employee Highlights

New Employees



Ron Beemer

Welcome Ron Beemer to Anamosa. Ron joined IPI as a Technician in the Metal Furniture shop in February.



Bill Schumacher

Rockwell City Operations welcomed Bill Schumacher as a Senior Technician last fall. Bill previously worked as a Correctional Officer at NCCF.



Kelly Goodman

Kelly Goodman joined IPI's team as the Production Coordinator of Rockwell City Operations in April. He brings with him eighteen years of correctional experience. Kelly will also coordinate NCCF Industries.



Cristina Bañuelos-Moriel

The Des Moines Showroom welcomes Intern Cristina Banuelos-Moriel! Cristina is an Iowa State University student studying marketing, digital media and advertising. She will be working with IPI's social media and marketing efforts.

Retirements

Congratulations and Retirement Wishes to Custom Wood Production Coordinator Kent Ashline (August 1998) and Rockwell City Operations Senior Technician Doyle Austin (January 1999).



Doyle Austin



Kent Ashline

Promotions

Rod Kramer

Congratulations to Rod Kramer on his promotion to Production Coordinator in Anamosa Custom Wood.



New Products



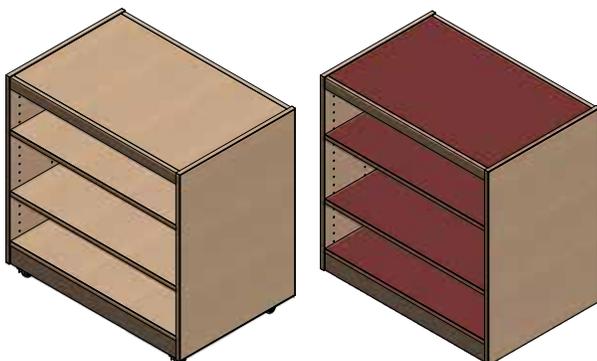
Children's Book Bins

Eye-catching yet functional for children's areas, Children's Book Bins are produced in Anamosa Custom Wood. Primary laminate color options are bright and inviting.



Lego Activity Tables

The table top on Lego Activity Tables features oak veneer on one side and Lego® compatible base plates on the other side for tons of fun in children's activity areas.

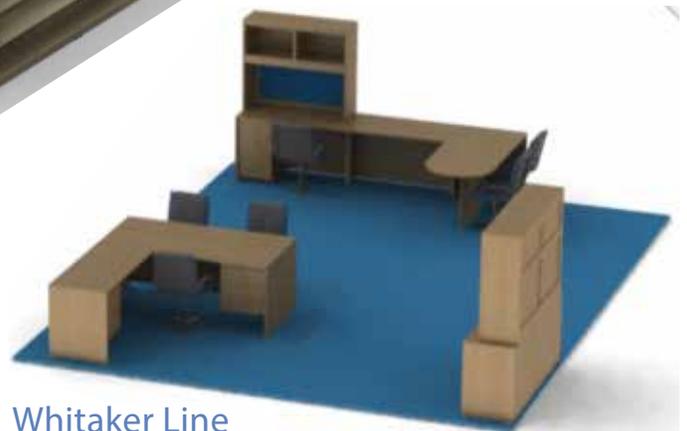


Maple & Laminate Shelving

Coming soon out of the Anamosa Custom Wood shop are new lines of Maple Shelving, with or without laminate shelves tops. These new lines will be set up as starters with add-on units for easy configuration into longer runs.

Expanded 700 Series Shelving

The 700 Series Shelving is being expanded to include more standard options including a wide variety of specialty shelves. The new options will be available soon!



Whitaker Line

Fort Madison Furniture's Whitaker Line of wood office furniture has been revamped to combine it and the Auburn line into one comprehensive, versatile line.