



Cott Beverages improve and sustain with FME

One of the largest beverage manufacturers on the planet, Cott Beverages, has recently completed their first Food Manufacturing Excellence (FME) apprenticeship programme with FDQ.

This month, our team had the opportunity to meet with the Cott project leader and lean consultants CQM Training & Consultancy Ltd (CQM T&C), to find out what the FME project has achieved for the business and just what it took to run.

"The outcomes have been great for our business," said Mark Heath, Operations Manager at the Kegworth site. "The operatives we selected for the programme have been responsible for key improvements in our business; solving problems which management teams had tried a number of times to overcome, as well as cutting waste in areas which we thought were not possible."

"What is really fantastic," continued Mark, "and something I hadn't really expected - is the fact that these gains are truly sustainable. By gains, I am referring not only to the waste reduction, but the improved performance and communication between teams. This work has led to on-going improvements which are affecting our site positively every day. In some cases projects which began as part of the FME apprenticeship are continuing to secure greater gains for the business."

Mark was particularly delighted with the fact the FME programme managed by CQM T&C linked directly to Cott's overall business strategy, and is contributing in a real and worthwhile way to the objectives the business has set.

Peter Booth MD of CQM T&C, the Derbyshire based lean consultants who delivered the programme, confirmed that one of the secrets to Cott's success with FME was the high level of buy in from both managers and team leaders.

"All those undertaking FME really committed to the programme," said Peter. "The individuals involved have grown in confidence, improved their communication skills and as a result are using their knowledge of the business and problem-solving abilities to challenge what happens on the shop floor day in day out."

"Communication can often be considered a touchy feely skill and perhaps not of key importance in a factory environment. The reality however, is that it is crucial, particularly as food manufacturers often have around 40% of staff for whom English is not a first language."

"The outcome from this first Food Manufacturing Excellence programme for Cott has been sustained improvement; real and lasting improvement, something of a holy-grail for manufacturers" concluded Peter.

Project specifics

Projects looked at performance improvement in a number of areas: quality, cost and customer service.

One particular project tackled a long term problem Cott was having around over-production on bottling runs, which resulted in the storage of some 950 part pallets of goods each week. The work of the apprentices reduced this by 350 per week, generating significant savings for the business week in week out. This issue of part pallet production was a growing problem, which is now in the process of being reversed.

Others achieved 50% reduction in overtime; reduction of time lost in changeovers; standardisation of weighing of raw materials etc.

About FDQ

FDQ pioneers the most innovative qualifications in the food industry – for the food industry – and our learners stand out from the crowd.

FDQ is approved and regulated by the national qualifications regulator in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and we have powers to develop and award vocational qualifications.

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