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**TO COMPETE WITH CHINESE IMPORTS, WINEGARD COMPANY APPLIED  
KAIZEN PROCESSES TO ONE ANTENNA PRODUCTION LINE TO  
CONTINUE DELIVERING QUALITY PRODUCTS WITHOUT A PRICE  
INCREASE.**

The Immediate Concrete Payback From The Kaizen Team Included Reduced Utilization Of Floor Space By 46% - Improved Process Flow By 38% And Reduced Order-To-Ship "Lead-Time" By 60%.

Burlington, Iowa, August 2, 2003. Kaizen is a process of meaningful changes through practice over time to effect improvements. A typical Kaizen Initiative is quick and simple rather than slow and fancy. It's a structured method of continuously improving through the application of intelligence and ingenuity rather than money. It brings together focused project teams of employees to make significant, low cost changes and eliminate non-value added steps in any business process within short time periods, in this case, 5 days.

Winegard put together a team from many different disciplines within the company that would have an impact on the work of the team and the objectives it was given. This Winegard team was made up of antenna production supervisors, line workers, maintenance, tooling, and production scheduling and antenna design engineers, along with representatives from management.

Their Mission was to create a manufacturing assembly cell that applied "Waste Free Manufacturing" principles with a focus on an uninterrupted flow of all assembly operations. "I assigned the Kaizen Team the objectives of create an antenna production cell with a "One Piece Flow" process utilizing multi-task operations from the first assembly operation to final pack-out", said Steve Leavitt, COO at Winegard. Specifically, these goals included an antenna production cell that would assemble Winegard's three highest volume antennas that would meet both average and peak customer demands. Mr. Leavitt continued "We wanted to identify and put into place more quality check points, reduce the overall space requirements by 40%, improve productivity by 25% and reduce manufacturing lead-time by 50%, pretty ambitious goals"

To start the Kaizen process, Winegard management first chose a good representation of the antenna models that they typically built on one of its antenna lines, that when changed, would support the majority of the antennas built on that line. "We picked the 4 top movers on this line that, as it turned out, represented 88% of the antennas we build on that line and the team concentrated on changes that impacted those 4 models", said Bob Howell, Director of Distribution Systems/Off-Air Antenna Division and a Kaizen Team member .

"When we first looked at the manufacturing process for these 4 targeted models, we identified 17 different stations with separate operations that need to be performed by 10 production line

workers using the processes in place”, said Mr. Howell. After the Kaizen Initiative was completed, the implementation of the recommendations of the Kaizen team included the combining of some assembly tasks to one station, instead of several and changing some of the assembly processes and assembling sequence. As a result of these changes, Winegard was able to reduce the 17 assembly stations on this line to 6 and reassign 3 workers to alternate duties. “We also wanted to provide better customer service as another objective of this Kaizen. And we succeeded here also”, said Brian Stone, responsible for Continuous Improvement at Winegard and also a Kaizen team member.

One of real benefits achieved was the deduction in order fulfillment time from 7-10 days to 4 days. High on the list of Winegard production goals is the objective to reach “Build-To-Order” status. When a Winegard customer place an order, they order many different antennas, pre-amps, satellite dished, cabling – the challenge to overcome in getting to “Build-To-Order” is dealing with the huge mix of antennas built every day. Mr. Howell said “If we improve our throughput, we can fill more orders per day and reduce building cost and eliminate 46% of the floor space, now available for use in building other antennas. But we can’t get there yet until we have other new processes for shipping and warehousing in line. This was the first step”.

He went on to say “No Winegard employee lost or will lose there job because of the changes resulting from a Kaisen initiative. The 3 antenna line employees freed up by these changes are already used on another line.” Winegard Company intends to continue to pursue a corporate culture of continuous improvement throughout the Winegard organization. The decision to use the Kaizen methodology as one means to this end was determined to be very successful.

Winegard Company was founded in 1954 in Burlington Iowa by John Winegard. He began designing outdoor TV antennas in 1948 in order to receive the TV signal from TV station WBKB (now WBBM) broadcasting from Chicago, two hundred miles east of Burlington. The Winegard Company, now lead by his son, Randy Winegard, continues to make major contributions to the development of television and radio reception technology.

The Winegard Company is widely considered an innovator and pioneer in product design, performance and assembly and has consistently adapted to meet the challenges of the ever-changing electronics market. It remains committed to continuous improvement in the quality, cost and delivery of its products and services to effectively meet all of its customer’s needs and currently designs and manufactures more than 1,000 different products in four product lines distributed in all states and worldwide, including:

- **Satellite Antennas and Mounts:** Residential antennas ranging in size from 46 cm to 1 meter, including mounts and accessories
- **Mobile Television Reception Products:** Recreational vehicle, truck, marine, and automotive applications. Satellite systems ranging from manual crank-up models to automatic satellite tracking systems with GPS/DVB. Off-air antennas including bi-directional and omni-directional VHF/UHF/FM antennas. Ground Antenna Mounts and Accessories.
- **Off-Air Antennas:** From DC to 5.8 gigs VHF/UHF/FM/AM Antenna Systems, Distribution and Preamplifiers, Power Supplies and Accessories
- **Telemetry:** Medical and Data Antenna Systems, Distribution Amplifiers, Power Supplies and Accessories.

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If you’d like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with **Steve Leavitt** or **Robert Howell**, please call Michael Sherman at 319-754-0604 or send an email to [msher@winegard.com](mailto:msher@winegard.com)