

How THRIVE worked for maintenance

"We began using the Thrive software in September 2006, and it's a great tool. We define what we consider to be our important information; Thrive makes that information visible to us in real-time, or close to it. It also allows all departments to view other departments' activities, so it brings transparency to all areas.

"We use Thrive for scheduling; we can track all planned and unplanned maintenance activities. Thrive's trending information is a very important driver for our next CI activities. I really like the amounts and types of information that are, literally, at your fingertips.

"Learning and implementing the Thrive program was not difficult at all. We trained initially for a few hours. If you've

used any type of CMMS, you can pick up on this. Within minutes, you'll see the benefits of Thrive's maintenance module.

"Scott is like part of the family. When we began using Thrive, he was here for as long as we needed him. The program runs smoothly and rarely requires tech support, but if we do have a question we can easily reach [LeanTech] via phone call or e-mail and they respond right away. The great thing is that he really listens to us, and he makes the software work to fit our needs. Thrive has the added benefit of letting us use updates that other users are requesting.

"For anyone who is considering similar software, I suggest you talk to Thrive users as part of your decision-making process."

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Reporting Tools and Dashboard

- Objective decision-making
- Simplified data input
- Dashboard
- Personal Portal
- Project Management



Thrive™

PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS

Maintenance

- Reduces equipment downtime
- Reduces capital spending
- Improves efficiency
- Increases capacity
- Reduces repair costs
- Improves ROI of capital equipment
- Improves equipment re-sale value

Quality

- Reduces waste and rework
- Reduces warranty claims
- Improves production yield
- Increases productivity
- Increases capacity
- Improves process control
- Improves customer satisfaction

Safety

- Reduces lost work time
- Reduces worker's compensation costs
- Reduces health insurance claims
- Improves worker morale
- Increases safety awareness
- Improves ergonomics
- Improves housekeeping
- Increases productivity
- Prevention of future injuries

Human Resources

- Improves communication with employees
- Improves employee training and development
- Tracks and documents employee training
- Simple-to-use internal job application and hiring system
- Objective performance review data for each employee

Inventory Management

- Reduces inventory costs
- Improves inventory accuracy
- Maintenance materials planning
- Provides parts number history

Order Management

- Improves on-time delivery
- Improves order efficiency
- Improves customer satisfaction



Thrive™

SOFTWARE HELPS INTEK PLASTICS

IMPROVE OPERATIONS:

A CASE STUDY



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Thrive™ Software Program

Thrive™ is a web-based application created to help manufacturers become smarter decision makers, better communicators and superior manufacturers. Thrive was born on the factory floor – in the offices of department managers who were directly responsible for product improvement, manufacturing efficiency and quality control. The concept started out as a tool to help department managers apply lean manufacturing techniques to their own manufacturing processes. Thrive has evolved into a full-featured package that spans the manufacturing plant – from the shop floor to the corporate offices.

Client: Intek Plastics

Founded in 1961, Intek Plastics designs and manufactures engineered thermoplastic extrusions, fabricated sub-assemblies and value-added services for OEMs requiring high performance, custom solutions. Located 30 minutes south of the Twin Cities, Intek Plastics' facilities serve medium to large industrial OEMs in construction, refrigeration, agriculture, recreation, appliance, telecommunications, point-of-purchase and transportation.

The company's more than 260 employees are dedicated to the principles of lean manufacturing and continuous improvement. More than five years ago, Intek Plastics began weaving lean manufacturing principles into the strategic plans of all functions within the business. It is a guiding philosophy and framework for all decisions and actions. Intek's Jim Southcotte explains, "our philosophy is that there's always room for improvement. We're always striving to do better – and better serve our customers while reducing our costs and reducing safety incidents."

Intek was searching for ways to improve its productivity and communications. Focus areas included a desire to:

- Better serve clients
- Reduce scrap waste
- Reduce safety incidents
- Control inventory production– become a just-in-time supplier
- Reduce unnecessary supplies of raw materials
- Have access to immediate production data
- Create transparent communications between all departments
- Better utilize all resources – both in materials and manpower

Kevin Lillo, Intek's vice president of manufacturing

Lillo is responsible for all manufacturing at Intek's three sites, from planning of production and materials through the conversion process. He also oversees tool design and build, maintenance, and manufacturing engineering areas. About 210 of the company's 260 employees are part of Lillo's manufacturing support teams or the people on the floor in value-adding roles.

"Intek's manufacturing needs to perform with absolute excellence, while simultaneously driving down costs. Our goal is to offset all inflationary costs (other than direct materials) with real and sustainable cost reduction. Five years ago, Lean became our chosen methodology for continuous improvement. Since implementing Kaizen teams, we have attacked waste in every process. Besides measurable, double-digit improvement results in safety, quality, delivery, cost, inventory, space, etc., we also have seen the financial processes transform from standard costing to lean accounting.

"A large portion of my time is spent on the strategic level, setting direction and crafting the next year's plans. To us, Lean is not just a program – it's a way of life. It is HOW we do what we do. Lean is woven into the strategic plans of all functions of our business; it is a guiding philosophy and framework for our decisions and actions. If there's waste anywhere, we want to employ the tools to eliminate it."

"Thrive has enabled us to get aligned, shed several disconnected applications, and eliminate wasteful administrative tasks."

How THRIVE worked for strategic planning

"We began using the THRIVE system about two years ago to support our processes. Thrive is a one-stop place for several key activities and information. Thrive has enabled us to get aligned, shed several disconnected applications, and eliminate wasteful administrative tasks. This software provides simple solutions, and has made it a lot easier for us to implement many new lean processes throughout the company."

"When we installed the Thrive software system, it was quite easy to get started. It's very intuitive. And Scott from LEAN Technologies was here right from the start, providing hands-on assistance and training for all of us. We experienced a relatively simple learning curve, and were able to more clearly see Intek's "big picture" – both in manufacturing and communications – within the first week of using Thrive.

"During the past two years, I've told dozens of other manufacturing leaders to forget about other ERP packages they're looking at. Just call Scott at LEAN Technologies, and buy the Thrive package. You'll get high integrity and high service, which translates to high value for your business."

Jim Southcotte,

Intek's extrusion group manager

At both of Intek's plants, Southcotte is in charge of all extrusion production, product supervisors and floor associates except for shipping, wrap and maintenance. His job is to make sure the company hits its goals, products are of the best quality and delivered on time, and customers are fully satisfied.

"Our company's philosophy is that there's always room for improvement, and our manufacturing is based on the fact that we always have the means to do better. We use various Lean tools for continuous improvement and adjustment elimination. We strive to always better serve our customers, while reducing costs and lowering safety incidents. "In the past, we always seemed to have too much inventory on hand. Since we began implementing Lean strategies, we've been able to reduce our inventory levels by about 60 percent for both finished goods and raw materials. Now we are more just-in-time, focusing on exactly what the customer wants or needs. Our profits have gone through the roof."

How THRIVE worked for manufacturing

"The Thrive program has gotten us a lot more focused as far as where we place our emphasis. Labor was always a big issue; we tried the shotgun approach of trying to run things faster to utilize our labor force. But that drove up our scrap. With Thrive we're able to pinpoint our key problems, narrowing the focus to each resource and how to utilize it best. Thrive gives a clear picture of our entire

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operation, and it's so easy to use. The 'dashboard' gives us a great visual of what's happening on the floor, at any time. I can see what ran last night, what's currently running, what's on setups. Thrive gives us alerts in real time – we can see any problems and resolve them immediately. In fact, a floor supervisor can see the screen light up red or green, based on whether or not we're meeting the plan at that moment. Before this, we'd have to pull together data, build paretos, and find out what happened the previous week. Now we have all of the information – today – and can make immediate adjustments. This has been a huge asset.

"In my area, we use Thrive to track our scrap and to follow production. How much scrap are we producing? How efficiently are we running? We can look at an individual die, individual run, individual person, then use this information to train them on how to make improvements. We can also check our production numbers to make sure we're meeting goal. Even if I'm in another building, I can track performance with just a click. Thrive gathers a lot of data and puts it in charts for me. And it collects the right information, giving us the data we really need.

"Setting up the Thrive program was really simple. From the time I first got involved, it took about a week to get it out to the people on the floor and then we were rolling. It's pretty self-explanatory. We just had to figure out what we wanted to utilize, then [Lean Tech] set it up for us. The service has been great. I've recommended the Thrive program to a lot of other manufacturers, since it's worked so well for us."

Dave Swenson,

Intek's operations maintenance supervisor

Swenson's job is to improve equipment reliability through the use of Lean, TPM and 6-sigma methodologies. He works to create an environment in which the maintenance department works as a team with the rest of the operations group. His group includes maintenance clerk/buyers, maintenance team leads, maintenance mechanics and maintenance helpers. In addition to their daily responsibilities, all are required to participate in MDI as well as supporting and joining C.I. (continuous improvement) teams.

The operations maintenance group handles procurement of maintenance and operations MRO items, maintenance inventory control, scheduling of daily planned maintenance activities, equipment reliability, predictive/preventative/reactive maintenance, and operations support as needed.