

Transforming the way to do business

Seeing problems and opportunities in a new light has brought significant benefit to Stadco Ltd, helping to transform the skills of their workforce and the way they do business.

Stadco is able to trace its history back to 1812 making it one of the oldest registered companies in the UK. Over two centuries, the company has been able develop and grow throughout an ever changing UK manufacturing landscape and now occupies a position as a major tier one supplier to the automotive sector.

Today Stadco's core business revolves around the stamping and assembly of products from structural parts through to skin panels and complex assemblies, in both steel and aluminium.

Problem solving is something that manufacturers in the automotive industry like Stadco are well used to but, because each business tackles it in different ways, there was no consistency in reaching solutions which can be transferred across the sector.

Thanks to the Automotive Industrial Partnership, a single industry-wide offering is now available with rigorous certification requirements based on training to resolve real problems and saving the industry millions of pounds.

The innovative Advanced Problem Solving programme is led by Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd on behalf of the industry and Stadco's Business Planning and Improvement Director Mike Khanna is more than happy with the results so far.

The Advanced Problem Solving programme takes the tools from Six-Sigma (a well known approach utilised by the manufacturing sector to reduce productivity defects) and embeds them into whichever problem solving methodology is being applied.

Training is delivered by specialist provider Capella Associates. Two levels of Advanced Problem Solving are available, 'Green Belt' and 'Black Belt'.

The Green Belt training is aimed at those at engineer level, while Black Belt is for leaders/supervisors – though they are also suitable for other employees working in data rich environments such as logistics or management accounts.



"We have had 24 employees from across the business involved in the training, each delivering their own project which has brought cost savings and new opportunities," said Mr Khanna. "We estimate the benefit to be £400,000 so far – the training has been very cost-effective."

Mike Khanna,
Stadco's Business Planning
and Improvement Director





Delivered over a period of 10 months, the training is a mix of taught (classroom) days, on-site coaching, project work and presentations/reviews.

It involves delegates applying the learning as they go through the course on a work based project which delivers real business benefits.

Stadco has a turnover of £230m, a workforce of 1300 and a high-profile client list including Jaguar Land Rover, Ford, Vauxhall and BMW.

The company sent 24 delegates from across its four plants – three in the West Midlands - on the Green Belt course, with plans to send more on Black Belt training in the future.

One example of the benefits the training has delivered was in its Electrophoretic paint facility used to apply a protective coating to parts before delivery to the vehicle manufacturer.

We had low utilisation and high running costs in the paint plant,” said Mr Khanna. “One of the Green Belt projects focused on how to improve the efficiency of both loading and planning the line as well as energy cost savings. It has been a great success. We have doubled the level of efficiency in that area, whilst reducing costs.

“We have had fantastic feedback from employees who undertook the training. They are applying the skills they learned, not just to the projects but to their day-to-day work.”

“For some of the team this was the first formal training they had undertaken since leaving school. We strive to be a learning organisation - continuously transforming ourselves and our processes. As organisations grow, they can lose their capacity to learn as company structures and individual thinking becomes rigid. When problems arise, the proposed solutions often turn out to be only short-term and re-emerge in the future. Therefore, to remain competitive we need to find ways of working more effectively so this programme has been a perfect fit.”

One of the key priorities of the Partnership is to support supply chain employers to gain access to industry standard technical, leadership and management programmes to upskill their existing workforce and develop new recruits.

The employers driving the Automotive Industrial Partnership include Bentley, BMW, Ford, GKN, Honda, Jaguar Land Rover, Nissan, Toyota and Vauxhall.

Employer led skills organisation Semta, industry trade association the SMMT, Industry Forum, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and UKCES are also supporting the Partnership.

For more information on the *Advanced Problem Solving* course and the Automotive Industrial Partnership visit

automotiveip.co.uk 

enquiries@automotiveip.co.uk 

0845 643 9001 

@automotiveip 