

SUNSET

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (KAIZEN) PROJECT

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Mastronardi Produce is a private company that produces and distributes greenhouse-grown tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers. As one of the leading players in the US greenhouse produce industry, company revenues have been showing yearly growth of over 15% in the past five years and are now approximately 1 billion dollars per year.

This Tauber project focused on Mastronardi's largest distribution center in Livonia, Michigan. Mastronardi Produce is interested in achieving operational excellence through lean methodologies, and the objective of the project was to evaluate and introduce operational improvements through multiple lean kaizen events. The objectives of the events were to reduce waste and establish new standards of work while focusing on safety, customer service, product utilization, and cost. These kaizen events aim not only to make immediate improvements but also to create a lean culture where the employees are empowered to make change.

After acquiring thorough understanding of the overall processes throughout the facility, the Tauber group decided to focus on improving the product inspection process as the overarching theme of the 2016 Tauber project. The Tauber group held three kaizen events in total: the first event focused on inspection in the production area, the second event on inspection at the shipping docks, and the third on establishing a structured, well-rounded training program for new inspectors. After concluding each event, the team delved into finalizing and initiating implementation of the solutions with cooperation and support from relevant teams.

The Tauber group implemented five major changes: moved the inspection process upstream in the production area with heightened quality inspection while eliminating a non-value-added area of the facility, made new SOPs for inspectors in Production and Shipping, painted visual aids in the shipping area to increase safety, increased accessibility to equipment and tools for the inspectors, and established a structure for a well-rounded training program for inspectors. The implementation of these major solutions is either complete or in progress. The expected savings from these improvements amount to approximately \$1.7M per year.