Top 10 Lean Manufacturing Solution Providers 2016

Lean philosophy has been prevalent in the manufacturing industry as an effective tool for elevating competitiveness of organizations. Lean Production is an assembly-line methodology, which mainly focuses on eliminating waste within the manufacturing system and promoting efficiency. Lean tools like kaizen, JIT (Just-in-time), VSM (Value stream mapping), 5S (workplace organization methodology - especially a shared workplace), SQC (Statistical Quality Control), preventive maintenance and total employee involvement, eliminates the wastes in all manufacturing industries.

The core idea of Lean is to maximize customer value with fewer resources and factory floor data as actionable intelligence, thereby resulting in a perfect value creation process that has zero waste. As such, lean strategies strive to reduce inventory through better communication about production processes which in turn save money and boost productivity. The Lean methodology also creates a system of continuous improvement in quality, technology, processes, company culture, productivity, safety and leadership. Businesses in all industries, including healthcare and governments, are using lean principles to respond quickly to changing customer requirements with high variety, high quality, low cost, and fast throughput times.

There are scores of solution providers in the lean manufacturing arena. Our selection panel has evaluated these providers based on their ability to assist CIOs and enterprise holders overcome the challenges in the sector.

We present to you Manufacturing Tech Insights’ Top 10 Lean Manufacturing Solution Providers 2016.

Visual8 Corporation

Company: Visual8 Corporation
Description: A planning, scheduling, and optimization solution provider for unique manufacturing and logistics problems
Key Person: Kieran Concannon
Website: visual8.com
Visual8 Corporation
Enhancing Lean Manufacturing with Advanced Planning & Scheduling Solutions

In the current era of globalization, industries are adopting new tools and techniques to produce goods to compete and survive in the market. The most daunting issue faced by manufacturers today is how to deliver their products or materials quickly at low cost and good quality. One promising method for addressing this issue is the application of lean management principles and techniques. “Lean manufacturing plays a crucial role in the development of the modern manufacturing industry. Imagine the wonders it can create with additional manufacturing optimization tools,” says Kieran Concannon, Founder and CEO of Visual8. The company has developed a variety of manufacturing simulation, production scheduling, and process analysis tools—designed to simplify complex process analysis and enhance production scheduling in a highly-visual and intuitive package.

Visual8 was borne from the idea that detailed process modeling, combined with dynamic visual displays could provide powerful insight into the many operational and process design challenges faced by the manufacturing sector and ultimately allow firms to make better decisions. “We realized that by implicitly incorporating advanced planning and scheduling algorithms into our solutions, we could not only provide more accurate process models, but also intelligent production planning and scheduling solutions,” adds Concannon. Visual8 specializes in the use of computer simulation and modeling combined with detailed optimization techniques to develop sophisticated, dynamic Advanced Planning and Scheduling (APS) tools to help clients address their specific business challenges across a variety of industry sectors. According to Concannon, traditional tools, such as spreadsheets or high-level capacity-based planning models can be difficult to set up or change and are generally ineffectual when managing complex production systems. The organization's flagship V8-APS framework fuses advanced production process models, complete with all the operational guidelines, conditions and imperatives, with the latest optimization techniques to give an intelligent, quick and adaptable planning and scheduling solution tailor-made to meet customers’ business objectives.

The company’s solutions automate lean principles and make them available to a larger audience synchronizing advanced software solutions into complex production environments. They typically work with firms that are already into their lean manufacturing journey—where waste has been identified and eliminated, processes streamlined and improved, facilities rearranged to improve flow, and the organization structured to align efforts. “Lean principles are embedded within all of our solutions, be it an optimizer reducing waste, or an APS that maximizes production efficiency,” asserts Concannon. “Advanced planning and scheduling tools are the endgame of lean manufacturing. At a certain point, an operation can only be as lean as its production schedule.”

Visual8 recently assisted Moen—a client with a fully formed and highly intelligent ERP system in place. The client was working in a challenging manufacturing environment, which needed immediate attention. The company was able to provide a seamlessly-integrated, cloud-based sequencing engine providing optimized machine lineups in an extraordinarily difficult production environment. The benefits were pronounced, drastically reducing planning effort and increasing production yields.

It is pertinent to mention that the company continually balances the advancement of their existing suite of solutions with new endeavors. For example, they recently extended and deployed their V8-APS platform to handle pharmaceutical supply chain planning as well as marine transportation logistics applications.

The company has created a global footprint starting from Europe, Asia, and Middle East all the way across North America. They frequently seek out technology partners with complimentary solutions that help them expand their reach and enhance overall solution offerings. “As long as there are difficult problems in manufacturing and logistics, Visual8 will serve a valuable purpose,” concludes Concannon.