

A seed processing facility strives to meet the long-term global customer demand for high quality vegetable seeds.

Agriculture



About the Client

Seed processing facility's key objective was to meet the long-term global customer demand for high quality vegetable seeds. Plant is a unit of a Switzerland-based world-leading agribusiness committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology.

Situation

Client made business decisions primarily based on revenues which are tracked monthly/quarter/yearly versus understanding whether they are "winning or losing" on a daily basis.

To meet customer demand and enhance timely service and output, Client needed better planning so that they could manage proactively. It was essential to determine details like the volume of the backlog and the true cost of producing a bag of seed including the number of hours to produce it. Before the project, supervisors didn't manage hours, they managed revenue.

In the initial assessment of the culture, DB&A determined that there needed to be a shift from managers largely focusing on the technical aspects of the business to becoming a more people-focused environment where management empowered the workforce to drive operational and financial performance. There was a lack of consistent communication and accountabilities at all levels and within all functions and areas. There was also ineffective and inconsistent floor-level metrics. Finally, there was an inability to identify and quantify "real-time" operating barriers and initiate self-directed solutions.

Client agreed that DB&A's approach of focusing on frontline manager execution was a huge opportunity. DB&A focused on the areas of Quality, Warehousing, Shipping and Receiving and Operations.

Implementation

The implementation involved DB&A consultants working on-site for the duration of the project. One-on-one coaching of frontline managers encompasses 85% of DB&A's model.

DB&A and the Client established ground rules for the implementation. The Client's management team set expectations, ensured compliance/utilization, held employees accountable for actions, and bore the overall weight of the installation of the Management Operating System. DB&A provided tools, trained on the tools/system/processes, coached, supported front-line managers, and provided immediate and constructive feedback. It was an authentic partnership where DB&A was the facilitator of change and the Client was the owner of change.

Behavior Changes and Process Improvements

DB&A expanded the management team's capabilities and overall capacity leading to the following changes/improvements:

- Leads have an orderly process to execute their daily plan
- Front-line leads supervise proactively rather than reacting after problems occur
- Leads manage by floor-level metrics rather than by emotion
- Individual departments have the ability to be measured by goals and targets
- Top-down expectations are communicated with specific deliverables for follow-up which drives process improvements to the floor-level

Operational and Financial Results

Area productivity increases were as follows: Conditioning 48%, Handpick 48%, Treat/Pack 46%, Warehousing 19%, and Seed Lab 28%.

DB&A achieved 111% of the guaranteed annualized savings.

What the Client Said About the Culture Shift

"We are slowly moving from a culture that was simply satisfied with getting work done to a culture that is capable of quantifying the successes and failures on a day-to-day basis. The new measurement system allows for flaws to easily surface and come to fruition. Now, we are able to see how everything affects production and this creates a quicker road to solving problems."

– Technician

"We now review visual operating and performance charts. When deviations occur, lengthy and thorough conversations follow to identify root causes. In the past, we had no way to uncover these problems because there were no measure to trigger these discussions."

– Supervisor