



Powertech Willard Batteries

Powering improvement, quickly

Willard Batteries is part of Powertech Batteries, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Powertech Group (one of the largest power electronics and telecommunications group in Southern Africa.) Its core business includes the manufacture and distribution of batteries, DC power systems, cable and cable accessories, transformers, including electrical accessories and lighting technology.

“With a very structured approach and focussing on systems, management controls and performance metrics, as well as people discipline and compliance, the Renoir project not only resulted in a 300% improvement in throughput on a defunct production line, but also salvaged the major investment and averting a possible impairment.”

Glenn Geldenhuis
CEO, Powertech Batteries

Key Results

Increase in average batteries per day of 32% in week 10

Reduced total rework by 74% in week 18

Reduced seconds by 87% in week 17

Reduced scrap by 56% in week 18

Willard Batteries is one of those rare brand names that has truly found its way into the hearts and psyche of many South Africans. Acknowledged as a reliable, quality product that offers value for money, also a hardworking brand in terms of its ability to meet the needs of a diverse market.

ANALYSIS

The Analysis was focussed on defining the key areas for improvement, evaluating the system controls in place, and the overall supervisory/managerial effectiveness. As a result, Renoir committed to an improvement in Charge Room production of 35% and quality indicator improvement of 20% within 18 weeks.

PROJECT APPROACH

The Focus Process® included an analysis of:

- Existing capacity management and production planning indicators and processes
- Overall management control system gaps
- Ownership by production of quality
- Communication interfaces between functions
- Quality assurance within the Charge Room
- As well as role clarity, workforce skills base, activity and time analysis, shift handover effectiveness and KPI gap analysis.

The Project focussed on defining and developing and installing solutions for each of the following areas:

Management Control System (MCS) and Production Planning process

The creation of an electronic production and quality indicator recording, reporting and analysis system, plus all associated shift controls and visual capacity management boards. Gaps in reporting and production planning and scheduling were pinpointed. The Focus Process® also revealed significant gaps in the availability of key quality indicators, variance from plan, scrap, seconds, rework, capacity utilization, downtime, battery charge cycle time data and information.

Communication, skills and behaviours

In response to skill gaps identified during the Focus Process®, training material was developed on the shop floor along with classroom training, conducted over 10 weeks. Covering 30 different topics, the training included sessions to improve the behavioural alignment of supervisors to the new MCS requirements. An active management behaviour

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“The Renoir type of project brings people back to structured approaches, thinking things through and placing emphasis on the real problems associated with the core issues hampering the end results.”

Hannes Viljoen
COO, Willard Batteries

“I would like to thank the Renoir Team for their contribution to the turnaround of the Battery Machine Lines. The tools used were of the best I’ve seen used. The implementation plan had clear direction.”

Lourens de Beer
Factory Manager BM Line,
Willard Batteries

THE RENOIR GROUP

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assessment, training and coaching process was installed during the installation phase of the project. To improve visibility and understanding, numerous displays of the work area, the charge process, charge profiles, shop floor visual aids and performance indicator boards, were developed.

Continuity, continuous improvement and sustainability of project deliverables

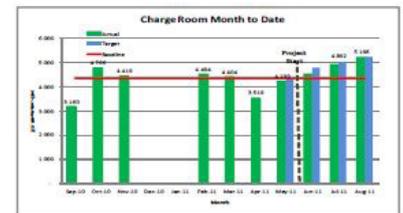
A System attainment assessment and reporting tool was installed to track progress on MCS compliance, understanding and usage. A repository was created of all project templates and models and a structured handover was conducted to ensure client continuation and improvement. A prioritised improvement plan was compiled for driving improvements beyond the project targets and closure date.

RESULTS

Project results were comprised of tangible and intangible benefits. Tangible results include:

Production Improvement

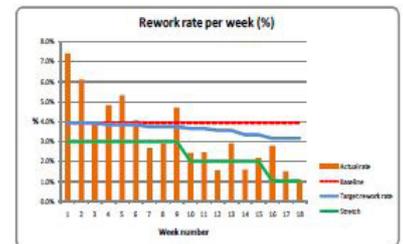
Improvement in production, measured by the average number of batteries, increased consistently every month from the start of the project:



By week 10 of the project, average daily production of batteries increased by 32% compared with the stretched baseline and by week 18 the variance from plan had decreased by more than 40% since the project start.

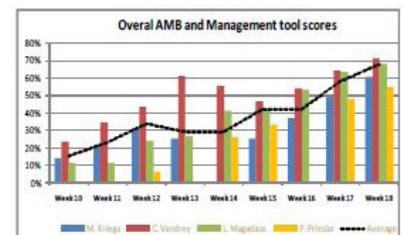
By week 18:

- Total rework decreased 74%
- Batteries per FTE also increased by 34%
- Active management behaviour (AMB) scores increased by 345% through on the floor, one on one coaching
- Scrap and second rates reduced significantly over the project duration to 0.09 % and 0.18 % respectively



Other capabilities and improvements installed included:

- Leading quality indicator tracking and reporting controls for 15 variables published within 5 minutes of the end of any shift
- A visual management board of 82 charging baths and graphical tracking of capacity utilization, per battery type, per hour and per bath
- Installation of a structured shift handover and supervisor coaching and assessment process
- Development, measurement and reporting of new defect and rework indicators
- Standardised production planning using average charge time to more accurately determine capacity loading



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