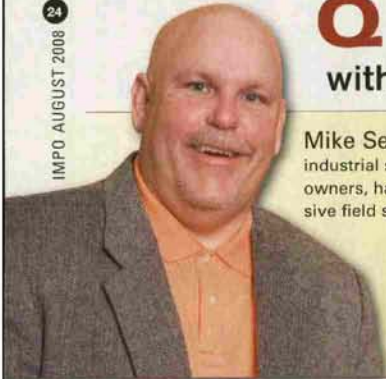


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Q & A

with Mike Seals, Jabezco Industrial Group

Mike Seals is president/principal of Jabezco Industrial Group, Inc., which was founded in 2001 as an industrial solution provider based out of Jackson, TN. Seals, along with the additional three principal owners, have over 90 years experience in the manufacturing and construction industries, and their extensive field staff consists of talented and experienced personnel who are committed to successful project completion on a consistent basis. For more information on Jabezco, please visit their website at www.jabezco.com or call (731) 512.0330. Jabezco's partner, The Access Group (TAG), is a team of experienced engineers, technicians, and manufacturing professionals providing business solutions and consulting, project engineering services, contract resources, maintenance and facility services, and training services to the industrial community. For more information on TAG, visit their website at www.theaccessgroupllc.com or call (615) 206.0191.

Q: Which does Jabezco see as the most critical issues currently facing its manufacturing clients, i.e. what is keeping industrial plant management up at night?

A: In today's dynamic and volatile marketplace, we see numerous concerns among our industrial clients. With tremendous pressures on costs and ultimate profit margins, one of the most obvious concerns is how to stay competitive and profitable in such an environment. Several subsets of issues that fall under this concern include: finding and retaining qualified personnel, battling the escalating energy prices, competing against foreign market entries, maximizing production capacities at operating facilities, balancing and implementing new technologies and the capital costs associated with such strategies, and developing operating efficiencies and economies to maintain and improve operating profits.

Q: What type of value can companies attain from scheduled, consistent kaizen events?

A: There are numerous values that can be obtained from the implementation of a regular kaizen strategy. One of the most important and obvious benefits is the continued financial rewards that are gained from kaizen exercises that eliminate waste, improve processes, and increase productivity.

In addition, there are significant underlying benefits that are gained from such a program. These include developing a culture within the organization that encourages and emphasizes continuous improvement. With that kind of culture in place, a company's ability to create and implement positive change becomes a way of life. In addition, this culture creates an environment whereby employees truly feel they are part of a team solution

where their input is relevant and pertinent in the process. Such a culture builds team unity, creates healthy dialogue among work peers, and takes advantage of ideas and thoughts that may otherwise be suppressed. When team members become a regular part of this improvement process, tremendous tangible and intangible dividends can be realized throughout the organization.

Q: How can consultants help mediate and improve these types of events?

A: The utilization of an outside consultant or facilitator can pay significant dividends in getting your kaizen program off the ground. Some of these benefits include the following:

- Independent—The outside facilitator is an independent resource that is unbiased, not privy to the organization's internal "politics", and provides a fresh face to the problem. This independence also allows the leader the freedom to speak, participate in, and question activities.
- Experience—The facilitator brings a broader resume of experiences that becomes invaluable as the kaizen exercise is executed. This experience provides the facilitator methods and techniques by which to more effectively complete the exercise resulting in bottom line improvements. In most cases, the consultant provides a broader perspective than an internal agent.
- Focus—The facilitator brings intentional and strategic focus. Unlike staff employees, the facilitator has no other job responsibilities except to lead, manage, and complete the exercise. Such focus is critical to complete the tasks completely and timely.

Q: Sometimes the finer elements to lean are overlooked when companies apply a "broad brushstroke" lean initia-



tive. Explain some of your specific lean enterprise services, and how they can be beneficial tenets to an overall lean approach.

Lean implementation is about growing people and changing the way you do business, not about doing events. One of the ultimate goals is to understand the global business objectives of the operation and then develop specific lean exercises and events into meeting the overall objectives.

ties are excellent candidates for such a relocation study. Operations that can share technologies and support staff are also good candidates for such a consideration. In addition, an operation that is experiencing changes in where its customers are located and the logistic costs associated with getting their products to them are becoming key issues in understanding the strategic locations best suited to execute the

A: Lean implementation is about growing people and changing the way you do business, not about doing events. One of the ultimate goals is to understand the global business objectives of the operation and then develop specific lean exercises and events into meeting the overall objectives. **Jabezco** and our partner—The ACCESS Group (TAG), LLC— can help tie lean initiatives to a company's business objectives and deploy the required actions down through the organization. We work with all levels of the company's associates to optimize the use of all assets: machines, facilities, materials, people, time, and money.

Some of the detail services and strategies offered include: strategy development, kaizen and operational training, event facilitation, value stream mapping (waste identification), and performance of actual kaizen events.

Q: *Which types of variables might a company analyze when considering a relocation?*

A: There are several factors and variables that may lead a company to consider an operational or plant relocation. Firstly, understanding the company's operating and manufacturing capacities can lead to this decision. An organization that has multiple operating facilities where one or more plants are operating at inefficient operating capacities is a definite candidate. Consolidation of production activities can maximize operating capacities which can provide a very quick and positive return on the relocation investment. Secondly, plants with excessive labor costs or labor problems deserve consideration. In addition to these issues, other factors that can drive such a decision include logistic costs surrounding servicing customers or obtaining raw materials and redundant overheads present at multiple operating plants.

Q: *Typically, which types of operations are good candidates for this approach?*

A: As discussed above, operations where there are multiple facilities operating at less than maximum capaci-

ties are excellent candidates for such a relocation study.

Jabezco works with its clients in helping them assess their current operating structure, understanding their overall business objectives, and developing a strategic plan that interweaves all the factors and issues to meet and exceed the overall business objectives. As this plan is developed, we work with our clients to develop the plan, plan the plan, and then execute the plan. Throughout the relocation process, Jabezco stresses to its clients the unique opportunity they have at improving their processes when executing the relocation so they do not just move one set of problems to the new facility. Take advantage of the interruption; fix those areas that need fixing.

Our intent is to apply focus, experience, and unbiased knowledge, in order to not only relocate technologies and equipment, but also to improve cultures and operations. The clients that we have helped the most and have experienced the greatest gains are those companies that admit they need outside professional support, take advantage of incorporating change, and allow us to be an integral part of the entire relocation process.

Q: *What types of benefits could a company gain from outsourcing maintenance or other key personnel?*

A: There are numerous benefits a company can realize by outsourcing maintenance tasks. Some of these enhancements include cost reductions (carrying costs associated with employees can be reduced by outsourcing and shifted to the contractor), improved productivity, greater flexibility in scheduling and manning (shifts burden to contractor), and reduction of costly and unproductive distractions associated with labor problems. In addition, by outsourcing maintenance tasks to an outside resource, a company gains the expertise and knowledge of a company (contractor), versus just hiring a maintenance employee with limited expertise and experiences. **IMPO**