

## C A S E S T U D I E S

# Facilitating Rapid Growth at a Hot Start-Up

### Situation:

A leading supplier of accessories for the Apple iPod and other personal music players had only two months to take their operations from capacity that could support \$20 million in sales to an operation that could support \$80 million. The supplier operated in a product category where the business changed on a daily basis requiring the operations and staff to be able to turn-on-a-dime to respond to daily change. This hot start-up company needed to revamp processes and increase the performance of an existing staff without sacrificing the very positive work environment.

If processes were not revamped quickly and if employee standards of excellence were not raised quickly, the company would not be able to fill the orders of a new retail customer and would lose millions of dollars in terms of the initial order and future orders.

The company also needed someone who could work with suppliers in Asia to prepare for the high-profile launch of an electronic product for their newest retail customers, Target and Circuit City.

The company needed an Interim Vice-President of Operations who could tackle these immediate challenges, lead and manage the international supplier relationship and prepare for the product launch.

### Solertis Response:

Solertis CEO, Ann Elliott, was immediately deployed to work on-site at the client's distribution facility to fill the role of Interim Vice-President of Operations.

- Immediate immersion into operations and assessment of labor utilization, material handling, processes, etc.
- Assessed staff numbers, competency levels and leadership potential
- Devised and implemented shift scheduling and attendance rules
- Set expectations for staff conduct, attitude, and performance standards without compromising staff morale or jeopardizing very positive corporate culture.
- Organized tasks to eliminate idle time and reduce non-value added movements
- Implemented simple, effective productivity tools and measures
- Scheduled team meetings to discuss productivity stats
- Identified opportunities for improvement and Best Practices
- Created and implemented quality control procedures
- Mentored and trained team leaders
- Reviewed and improved cycle count procedures and data collection tool
- Established tools to quickly capture and measure key metrics.
- Implemented ongoing safety training

Solertis led and managed all aspects of the reconfiguration of client's new electronic product in support of launch:

- Fostered relationships and coordinated visit of two engineers from Taiwan
- Utilized effective communication to insure that suppliers in Asia delivered critical raw materials to U.S
- Designed and set up production line for reconfiguration
- Managed supply of products to be reconfigured
- Hired and motivated temporary staff of 18 to work long shifts and weekends
- Refined and honed and refined and honed processes
- Monitored and reported productivity daily
- Awarded monetary bonuses to high performers who helped achieve productivity goals

### Results:

The company attributed the following results to Solertis' management and improvement of people and processes.

- The company was able to meet the challenge of increasing capacity to fill new customers' orders while ramping up to support growth of 30% - 50%
- Packaging rates increased 30% as measured by units per labor hour
- Staff was mentored, motivated and trained to perform at higher levels of excellence and to respond to daily changes in the business
- The company's hot, new electronic product was successfully delivered for launch at major retailer