

LIFE SCIENCES

Manufacturing

Productivity  
improvement  
Manufacturing  
excellence  
Process robustness  
Blitz Kaizen approach  
Compliance  
improvement

making rapid  
and sustainable  
performance  
improvements

why

wci

**“we assure  
compliance  
and boost  
performance  
through  
simplification  
of core  
processes”**

### The Situation

There are precious few companies with manufacturing at their core who can say they have no unhealthy flab to lose. Budgets mean they need to lose that preferably sooner rather than later. Most people believe crash diets to be dangerous. But there is an exception to the rule. There is a way to get your productive systems lean and fit quickly and permanently – without damaging your corporate health. “That,” say Marty Boom and Paul Cooper “is what WCI’s ‘Blitz-Kaizen’ regime is all about!”

### The Solution

It is now widely acknowledged that an unfit enterprise is a failing enterprise. You may be smart, competent and reliable, but to stay a world class player, you need to be lean, fit and agile too. And you can make it happen. With WCI’s Blitz-Kaizen methodology you can get your operation back to top, world class performance in weeks – and keep it there. Speed and sustainability is the key. Our proven approach to Lean Compliant Operations is so robust it’s transferable to any enterprise. Knowledge and improvements learnt are sustained long-term, meaning there is no need for continuous external intervention – even from WCI!

So, what is Blitz-Kaizen and how does it work? ‘Kaizen’ is a word originating from Japan, the translation of which is “to change” (Kai) and “good” (Zen). Thus, the meaning of a Kaizen process is “changing for the better.”

The design and duration of a Blitz-Kaizen is flexible to suit the needs of the client and

their teams but, an intensive ten day event will transform the workplace/operations through the application of world class manufacturing principles and is geared to achieve rapid shop floor improvements. The technique is applied where a client has the need to make improvements over a very short period, as opposed to a 2-3 month implementation period.

### The Benefits

By applying world class manufacturing and one-piece flow techniques in selected areas of a manufacturing plant but also in QA and QC, a client can reduce inventory, compress lead times, improve product quality and increase productivity. Cases 1 and 2 are examples of how this has worked in the life sciences industry.

What the organisations used in case 1 and case 2 are achieving is special to them. But their success is based firmly on proven and transferable principles. Any company in need of a proven, rapid and sustainable fitness regime can adopt and adapt it. It can be rolled out across a group, with reducing overheads as success is repeated. The instant performance improvement the Blitz phase brings is not magic – there is always a lot of flab to go. But the enduring benefit lies in making learning and improvement permanent and self sustaining.

## Case 1:

### Grey skies over Ireland

As the Irish business climate cooled, life science majors like WCI’s client Schwarz whom arrived in sunnier times considered

## “we benchmark performance and processes”

their options in order to stay efficient. Move to Eastern Europe? Outsource to Asia? Or avoid the upheaval and find a way to reduce costs where they are?

Schwarz’s Shannon plant produces top quality feedstock nitrates. “But,” recalls WCI’s Marty Boom, “it needed an instant 30% productivity improvement to justify staying in Ireland. Before the Blitz, WCI conducted a short but intensive investigation and analysis, using our proven procedures. This showed that Schwarz had the potential and the workforce to improve efficiencies and keep the site in Ireland.”

WCI began the Blitz-Kaizen improvement project by setting up cross-functional, multi-disciplinary project teams of five to seven people, all seconded from jobs in the plant. Each team were allocated a part of the manufacturing process and had to:

- Establish what the current process was
- Devise instant, low investment, high return improvements

and then

- Make those improvements happen

Communication is a recurring theme. It is key to growing and sustaining the improvement culture. Teams involve and maintain contact with operational staff from day one, encouraging and developing operators’ first hand knowledge whilst utilising their experience.

In the first Blitz, we identify people to become ‘change experts’ for the company.

**“we apply cross industry supply chain best practice to deliver service, cost and stock improvements”**

Their role is to spread the word on the new ways of working which ensures understanding and ‘buy in’ to the new ways.

### **Benefits**

We ran three Blitzes (in API, Galenics and QA) and were in the Shannon plant ten weeks altogether. At six weeks performance and improvement was 40%, much of that in the first two weeks. Today, Schwarz expect to continue raising their performance and stay in Shannon.

## Case 2:

### Karate swings into action

Huddersfield Manufacturing Centre (HMC), part of Syngenta, a global agrochemical producer, makes the active ingredient for the insecticide ‘Karate.’ Demand is cyclic, with an early spring peak that challenges the manufacturing plants and their management teams. However, plant and process unreliability resulted in low productivity, with management and their teams chasing product through the process in order to meet delivery deadlines. The site realised they had to break the ‘reactive cycle’ and create the ability to meet peak demand in a solid and robust way, supplying reliably and responsively at lowest cost.

WCI started working with Syngenta during July 2002 and soon found a plant and team facing a manufacturing challenge. People were operating in reactive mode because previous improvement initiatives had failed to make sustainable change, with gains disappearing shortly after the

**“we have delivered 40% improvements in 6 weeks”**

focus was taken away. WCI’s short investigation identified a lack of systematic plant monitoring, recording and feedback with intensive activities aimed at short-term improvements.

In order to ensure sustainable improvements a system was developed to proactively identify and address root causes. An internal project team worked with WCI to develop a Manufacturing Excellence Programme (MEP), comprising of six work streams;

- **Asset Care**
- **Process Robustness**
- **Effective Maintenance**
- **Learning and Development**
- **Information Systems**
- **Communications**

The team used WCI’s rapid Blitz-Kaizen event throughout the Karate processing stages. They focused on generating a wave of enthusiasm, true engagement and real achievement, buying time to work on a more sustained programme building on the early gains.

### **Benefits**

“The approach paid off from the first week” Paul Cooper says with some pride, “...the Blitz teams identified over 150 improvements to the plant, process and supporting systems – go into the plant now, there is the programme board in the foyer, with performance measures, milestones and MEP communication briefs. Walk around, it’s clean, tidy, organised, things in the right place, nothing lying about...the change is evident and the operators are upbeat. Engineers and

**“we have reduced accidents by 66%”**

Chemists have worked together to stabilise and improve the plant and the process. These are the visible outputs of transformation, of a culture of enthusiasm and success.”

Kevin Williams, Global Head of Manufacturing at Syngenta commented “the pragmatism with some push was exactly what has turned around our manufacturing plants at Huddersfield. The whole approach is now starting to sustain itself in 5 out of our 8 AI plants globally. The main reason in my view that it has sustained itself is that ownership and commitment from shop floor workers has arisen from the change process used.”

The Karate manufacturing plant has improved operational effectiveness levels, with no micro-management or reactive activities. These improvements occurred with a negligible increase in capital expenditure. The project team and workforce, knowing they have made the success, are confident that they themselves can sustain it in the long-term. Since WCI’s involvement tangible benefits have been realised; with the plant delivering record output in 2004, Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE) has been implemented across all plants to measure and eliminate losses and a 66% reduction in accident frequency has been recorded. This culminated in 2004 with the site winning the Chemicals Industry Association Award for the project. In addition to this the plant ran at an 18% increase in 2005 compared to 2004 proving that WCI’s Blitz-Kaizen works.

**The HMC site was the 2004 UK winner of Chemicals Industry Association Award for the project**



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