
CASE STUDY

How a Precision Manufacturer Improved Productivity by 32% - Without New Machines

Industry: Precision Manufacturing | **Revenue:** \$25 Million | **Employees:** 120

The Situation

This precision manufacturer had already invested heavily in equipment, and still it kept missing customer delivery dates. From the inside, that's a maddening place to be — you've spent the capital, the machines are capable, and yet the orders keep slipping out the back door late.

The day-to-day told the real story: excessive downtime, schedules that changed constantly, no standard way of doing the work, endless expediting, and departments that didn't communicate well. Leadership was convinced the issue was capacity. After we assessed it, the real culprit was clear — process instability. The work simply wasn't running the same way twice, and you can't schedule or improve what isn't stable.

What We Did

We brought discipline and rhythm to how the plant operated, and we developed the leaders to sustain it.

Daily management system A consistent cadence for running the floor, so problems surfaced and got solved the same day instead of festering.

Visual performance boards Performance made visible to everyone, so the team could see how the day and week were really going.

Standard work A defined best way to do each job — the foundation that makes quality and scheduling predictable.

Problem-solving routines and Leader Standard Work Structured habits that turned firefighting into steady, disciplined leadership at every level.

The Results

Within nine months, the same plant and the same machines were producing dramatically more — because the way they were run had changed.

- Productivity increased 32%.
- On-time delivery improved from 81% to 97%.
- Overtime was reduced 28%.
- Customer complaints fell 45%.
- Profitability increased by roughly \$650,000 annually.

“We thought we needed more equipment. What we really needed was better leadership and process discipline.”

— Plant Leadership

The Takeaway

You can't buy your way out of a discipline problem. When the work isn't stable and the leadership rhythm isn't there, more equipment just adds more to manage.

Stabilize the process, develop the leaders, and build a daily rhythm of accountability — and the capacity you've already paid for finally shows up.

Curious where your organization stands? Take the free Leadership Operating System™ assessment, or book a discovery call with Tom at northstarlc.com.