



The Pacific Scientific HTL Moves Away from Fax Kanban

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Fax Kanban is old news to Pacific Scientific HTL

PR9.NET September 28, 2005 - A key component of Pacific Scientific HTL, an internationally renowned maker of aerospace safety equipment and military defense hardware, lean journey was to institute a kanban system that would govern the flow of materials from their suppliers and through their facility. While visual cues governed their internal production kanban system, fax releases signaled their suppliers.

After a year and a half of using the paper fax release system, it was clear that it simply didn't scale for PS/HTL's 100-plus suppliers, more than 100 fax numbers over 3500 parts on kanban, and 2000 signals sent each month. With numerous points of possible failure—did a fax get sent? Was it received? Was it legible? Was it acted on?—the system encouraged inefficient behavior all around.

A 20-minute webcast demonstration of Datacraft Solutions' e-kanban product had alerted Gintz to a system that aligned perfectly with what PS/HTL needed: a system that was easy to learn and use for buyers, planners, and suppliers, and visible enough that everyone involved could do their jobs without constant confusion and supply worries cutting into productivity. Clearly PS/HTL needed a way out of the paper fax morass and into some kind of controlled, electronic kanban system. As PS/HTL's Purchasing Manager Cari Gintz says, "What led us to decide to go electronic kanban, was sheer frustration and the need to start managing instead of reacting."

Datacraft Solutions and Gintz approached their work together as a project with measurable goals and a clear, phased implementation strategy. These were some of the specific goals PS/HTL targeted:

- Be assured of getting what's ordered, and only what's ordered, at the expected date
- Handle the unpredictable—spikes in demand and other exceptions—predictably
- Get a clear picture of the health of every cell and kanban at any time
- Automatically calculate expected-on-dock delivery dates based on replenishment lead times
- Rapidly bring suppliers on board and provide them visibility of the kanbans they support
- Shorten replenishment times based on true schedules rather than one-size-fits-all guesswork
- Evaluate and motivate supplier performance based on accurate tracking of delivery times and quantities

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