

# Case Study

## Wakefield Acoustics Ltd

Industrial Noise Control Manufacturer, based in Cleckheaton

### Jane Dawson, Managing Director

“The grant-subsidised consultancy help that MAS has given us to implement improvements to our manufacturing operation has resulted in a 65% increase in sales; and 25% improvement in productivity in year one with further double digit sales and profit growth in year two. Getting our people behind the changes was critical and they have given us 110% support. The feedback we have had is that they now feel more involved and empowered.”

### Company Profile

Established in 1980, Wakefield Acoustics Ltd designs, manufactures and supplies a wide range of noise control products and solutions primarily for industrial and environmental applications.

It is one of only a small number of UK companies that provides a complete noise control solution from initial noise audit, assessment and diagnosis through design, manufacture and installation, recommending the most appropriate products and implementation strategies accordingly.

The company operates internationally to provide bespoke solutions and has become an established partner for noise attenuation to a wide range of blue chip companies throughout the UK and worldwide.



### The Background

Jane Dawson, who became Managing Director in 2005, sought assistance from MAS to help improve the company's manufacturing capabilities and to support sales growth in existing and new markets.

The rapid expansion in company sales meant that the company needed to implement some fundamental changes to its processes and manufacturing methods, thereby increasing productivity and capacity. Current production methods and productivity required particular attention, in order to maximise future opportunities for significant growth.

The company's main priorities were to increase productivity by 20% and reduce lead times by 50%, achieving these with the introduction of new processes for improving product quality, such as 'continuous improvement' and 'lean' processes.

### Key Achievements

As by two MAS interventions the company has achieved the following:

- Initial output improvements led to 65% increase in sales in year one. Further double digit growth was achieved in year two, including a reduction in sales lead times by over 50%
- Improvements in the production processes with the introduction of documented plans, leading to a 50% reduction in manufacturing lead times
- Valued added improvements made through improved manufacturing processes and materials management
- The introduction of new processes across all sectors of the business to improve consistency and remove variability
- A Works Supervisor and a Working Team Leader were appointed.

# Making it Happen

MAS specialists Stephan Matykiwicz and Ralph Woodhead began the project by carrying out a diagnostic review of the business and undertaking a value stream mapping process. This involved analysing a number of completed projects in detail by looking at, for example, process information flow, contract timescales and customer relationship management.

Based on their findings they recommended changes in three key areas: production planning, introducing new processes across all sectors of the business and training the workforce in developing lean manufacturing and team leading skills. Stefan and Ralph introduced the team to a number of techniques that would help improve workflow and bottlenecks in key areas and processes within the business.

Standard procedures and processes were also developed to provide production scheduling capabilities, allowing the team to easily identify issues. Process stream mapping was used to identify limitations and to establish all equipment throughput restrictions.

A programme of weekly review meetings were also held. The meetings helped to clarify project status and gave the team the opportunity to review performance and output requirements.

Employee participation was encouraged across all areas of the business, as was involvement and empowerment. This ensured a high level of understanding of the new processes. It also helped to develop co-ordinated improvement strategies.

All the employees were given comprehensive training and support to reinforce the changes put in place, with everyone attending a Lean Manufacturing course. New roles to support the changes were set up, including a works supervisor and working team leader.

The full potential of the business is now better understood and the company is able to focus on increasing sales through a structured output capability.

The success of the project has led to Wakefield Acoustics using MAS' services on two more separate occasions.

## What Wakefield Acoustics people said:

"The changes we have made to our manufacturing areas have enabled the company to increase its output in a far more structured and controlled way improving turnover, productivity and quality levels."

**Rick Pickard,**  
Operations Manager

"Increasing capacity at such a fast rate was not going to be easy but with the help of Ralf and Stefan and getting our own team on board we have been able to make big improvements."

**Ian Hargreaves,**  
Works Supervisor

### About MAS

MAS is a national DTI initiative, delivering practical, hands-on manufacturing advice and expertise to help you improve your performance. Delivered by experts with real-life knowledge and experience, MAS has already given advice to hundreds of businesses in Yorkshire & The Humber. Why not see how MAS can help your business?

### For more information

If you feel your business could benefit from MAS, why not complete your details below and fax to us on **0113 368 5261**. You can also contact: [enquiries@mas-yh.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@mas-yh.co.uk) or visit the website [www.mas-yh.co.uk](http://www.mas-yh.co.uk)

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nature of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like MAS to contact me to discuss (please tick box/es):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hands on manufacturing improvement       | <input type="checkbox"/> Product development              | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuous improvement             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical and materials issues           | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing organisational 'change' | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce training and development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lean manufacturing                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Process analysis                 |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing control and factory layout | <input type="checkbox"/> Improving workforce productivity |   |

I would like to join the Manufacturing Network and receive a free monthly e-newsletter about funding opportunities and events

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