

# AERIAL VIEWS AND TEAMWORK ARE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Sigma Components' change agent, **Chris Lovelock** takes an aerial view of his workshop in Farnborough as the team starts its journey through the Government's Sharing in Growth (SIG) programme.

**S**haring in Growth is about planning for the future. It's about developing our skills, honing our systems and where necessary overhauling our processes to be as efficient and responsive as possible. In a global market it's essential that UK companies like Sigma Components are ready, competitive and able to clearly demonstrate the unique skills and experience we can offer.

As one of the first firms in the country to sign up to the programme we were initially followed, interviewed, questioned and evaluated by a team of highly experienced engineers for 12 weeks and it has been a revelation.

When you're working in a manufacturing environment, it's all too easy to get caught up in the minutiae of specific programmes. But by simply charting the journey of one product we've been able to climb above day-to-day activity to identify strengths and weaknesses on our workshop floor. It's a simple practice but one that has already proved invaluable helping us to identify potential areas for growth.

Key to the early success of the programme has been ensuring the workforce is on board. The visual nature of the SIG feedback has really helped when it comes to sharing the programme across the company and staff are engaging with the process and reacting positively to the suggestions. We've already put a training programme in place to enhance the skills of the team and unlock individual potential so there are real incentives for everyone to get involved.

The programme started by using a value stream mapping technique to identify all the unnecessary elements in our processes. We've also identified new systems that could improve communication between departments and maintain standards. But the programme is not just the same old lean manufacturing and management training principles. That's because the value engineers and procurement engineers who have assessed and challenged us are also the ones who are standing beside us as we make the changes.

Over the next two years, we will be permanently supported by these experts and their skills and experience are proving to be a hugely valuable resource for our team.

At our Hinckley site, where the programme has been running for longer, the benefits are being felt - especially around speed of innovation - and a floating team has been created to share learnings across all our sites.

Here at Farnborough, the emphasis is on building robust systems that will prepare us for significant growth in a lower cost market and we have a lot of opportunities to explore. Everything we do is focused on making improvements that customers can see based on a

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principle of 'on time, in full, right price, high quality'.

Delivering on time is key for our customers, so we're setting ambitious targets to enable faster turnarounds. We're also seeking to reduce burdens on our systems and reshape our processes to ensure we have the capacity for increasingly large orders and can continue to deliver in full. Of course,

price and sustainability are also important issues so we're also looking at ways to reduce overheads and costs while retaining control of the supply chain and improving our speed of response.

Our team has always been driven by the need for high quality but the SIG programme is helping us maintain this while developing our place in the global market through world-leading innovation and quality. The key to it all is taking the aerial view.

There are always new areas you can work on but, without an effective overview, it's all too easy to become distracted and lose sight of what is strategically important.

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