Associated Packaging Technologies (APT)™

$1.3 Million Annual Savings: After Eight Years, a Quality Defect is Resolved

SCORECARD

- Resolved a quality defect of eight years within two months
- Saved $1.3 million annually
- Equipped employees with a powerful, uniform rational process for defining, specifying, and resolving problems

CLIENT: APT is the world's largest manufacturer of crystallized polyethylene terephthalate containers for the food industry, the leading source for plastic food trays in the North American frozen food industry, and a major source for plastic food trays in other markets, including case ready meats, institutional, prepared foods, and bakery.

CHALLENGE: Slivers known as angel hair are an unwanted byproduct of cutting plastic trays. Since the opening of an APT plant eight years earlier, angel hair had been an ongoing quality defect that took a substantial toll in man-hours, capacity, financial resources, and employee relations. Angel hair had become the costliest quality defect in the company—and a seemingly unavoidable byproduct of tray production. Fueled by customer complaints, management pressure, and a surge in teamwork, APT was determined to resolve this issue.

SOLUTION: APT brought in Kepner-Tregoe to equip employees with Analytic Trouble Shooting® (ATS℠) skills for defining, specifying, and resolving problems that affect quality and other issues. ATS complements and enhances statistical quality tools and data. Not tied to a specific machine or process, this flexible, critical thinking-based approach focuses on two types of activities: finding cause and taking action.

RESULTS: Within two months, the most probable cause—machine tool clearance—was identified and fixed. New specifications for tool clearance and strict regulations to meet this standard were implemented company-wide. Resolution of this defect resulted in annual savings worth $1.3 million. ATS has strengthened problem solving, production, and process maintenance while uniting the ideas of each department with a common language and approach.

"…Kepner-Tregoe's Analytic Trouble Shooting was critical to our success."

— Carl Cusaac, APT Plant Engineer