

Uniroyal[®] gains an edge over its competition

Chemical

When Uniroyal Chemical Co., Inc. wanted to gain an extra edge over the competition, they employed Kepner-Tregoe (KT), as always.

Well versed in the KT Problem Solving & Decision Making (PSDM) process for identifying, specifying, and resolving issues, the company's Continuous Improvement team identified areas for improvement using KT's Situation Appraisal. The team ranked the five highest impact issues by evaluating priority in terms of seriousness, urgency, and growth, and used KT Decision Analysis to select the highest priority issue.

The issue at hand? "Poor appearance of bagged bales of synthetic rubber." To elaborate, some of the bags bulged, occasionally leaning onto other skids holding bags. At times, the entire skid toppled, tearing bags and contaminating the product. Though affected bags were usually found before being shipped to customers, in the previous year, 99,000 pounds of rejected material were repackaged, reprocessed, or scrapped due to these problems. The team's job? Determine the cause of the poor appearance and identify and implement the best solution.

Applying KT Problem Analysis, possible causes were identified and many eliminated through analysis and testing. The final answer? Certain types of rubber were too soft to be contained in bags during the initial cooling and settling period causing the disfiguration and consequent leaning of bags.

With the root cause known, the team considered possible solutions following the KT Decision Analysis method. So what solution best met the preset criteria? Placing the bags into a box. Specifically, employees placed the bags into a reusable box to provide support and protection during the cooling and settling period. The box was removed from the skid prior to shipment. Through feasibility trials, the team demonstrated that this solution resolved the issue at hand.

After the solution was implemented, rejection of bagged bales due to poor appearance ceased. By using PSDM to gain an extra edge, Uniroyal increased production capacity and customer satisfaction and eliminated the costs of reworked and scrapped bales.



SCORECARD

- Additional annual return of \$753,092 due to extra production capacity
- No further rejection of bagged bales due to poor appearance
- Substantial cost savings due to reduction in rejections, reprocessing, scrap, and manpower
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Increased safety