

## Largo Foods Women take the lead on Change Management

### About Largo Foods UK

Largo Foods UK is a manufacturer and distributor of high quality, premium popcorn, managing the popcorn category for a number of customers. 2014 saw Largo Foods produce some 28 million packs of popcorn, supplying the major retailers and selling into both cinema and high street stores, major supermarkets and multiple retail outlets.

### Background to Training

CQM Training & Consultancy Ltd (CQM T&C) have recently been working on site with Largo Foods delivering business improvement techniques in particular, Food Manufacturing Excellence Apprenticeships, accumulating potential savings of up to £231,000.

Understanding the business needs of Largo Foods and having developed a close working relationship with the company, CQM T&C followed on this success by enabling Largo Foods to access funding secured by the National Skills Academy Food & Drink 'Women in Work' projects. This funding is specifically aimed at supporting the advancement of women in this sector through training and development across a range of in-demand food industry skills.

From a business perspective the training fitted in very well for Largo after Christmas and the women immediately identified two projects that could deliver significant results on two lines.

### Women in Work Funded Projects

**Project One: Chocolate Quality**  
**Team Members: Jane Boyes, Aleksandra Obara, Helen Brenan, Ruth Dyson & Terrie King**  
**Issue: Marks & Spencer's, a highly valued customer raised issues of 'scuffing' and 'blooming' with the chocolate covered product.**

Jane Boyes led her team to observe the whole process, gathering data and identifying the root cause of the issues. The team identified a lack of standard procedures and no control in place with regards to melting, cooling and decanting the chocolate which could lead to changes in the quality of the final product (blooming), and would cause issues further down the process.

Analysing the process to break up the clumps of chocolate coated product, the women were able to visually demonstrate this involved a very manual process which consequently caused scuffing. The team were able to compare the existing process alongside a new improved method, gathering evidence and collecting results to verify that the new method would significantly reduce scuffing, be more efficient and decrease waste.

The women successfully achieved more than they set out to do. Not only did they improve the quality of the final product responding effectively to a customer issue, but reduced waste and improved efficiency on the line by reducing the time by 20%.

**Project Two: Rejecting Product due to Weight Issues**  
**Team Members: Catherine Hadfield, Diane Jones, Eden Rushforth, Kelly Rushfoth, Susan Shaw**  
**Issue: Line 4 was erratically throwing good product off line, creating both product and time waste**

Catherine Hadfield led the team to observe line 4 and gather data to demonstrate the frequency and amount of unnecessary waste being automatically generated by line 4. Sensors should throw product off line which are under or over weight outside a given limit.

The team gathered data to show the variation in the amount of product being wasted with the line running at different speeds. Speeding the line up resulted in greater amounts of good product going to waste. Consequently, the women proved that production on the line is lower than it should be with a lot of waste being generated. Also staff were understandably negative about working on the line, finding it very frustrating.

The women achieved dramatic results. By Understanding the line and realising the root cause of the problem the team were able to suggest modifications that could be made to the line and also researched possible solutions. Implementation of the solutions will double production on line 4 and significantly decrease waste.

### Feedback on CQM T&C Training

**Jane Boyes** - Team leader dealing with customer complaints commented, "The training enabled us to understand all the issues with the 2 lines and more importantly it ensured we were able to dedicate the time towards those issues, which meant we would be taken seriously."

**Ruth Dyson** – Production Operative added, "Once we could show what the issues were, we were able to get the right actions taken to resolve them."

**Aleksandra Obara** Team Leader confirms, "We are more confident now. We will ask questions about other parts of the process, asking why it's done like that and make observations of how it could be improved."

As **Helen Brenan** – Production Operative points out, "Processing has always been a very male dominated area of our business, and it still is really. However the difference now is that we're not afraid to go in there, and we've got *loads* of ideas for that chocolate room."

Research from the last Women in Work funded project showed that training increases confidence, understanding of the business, motivation and effectiveness in the job for those women who participated.

