

Embracing Change



By Rob Adler

As a newcomer to the agricultural industry I am refreshed by the number of times I hear one of our nutritionists or livestock specialists say, “My producer is excited about the positive results from the changes we made.”

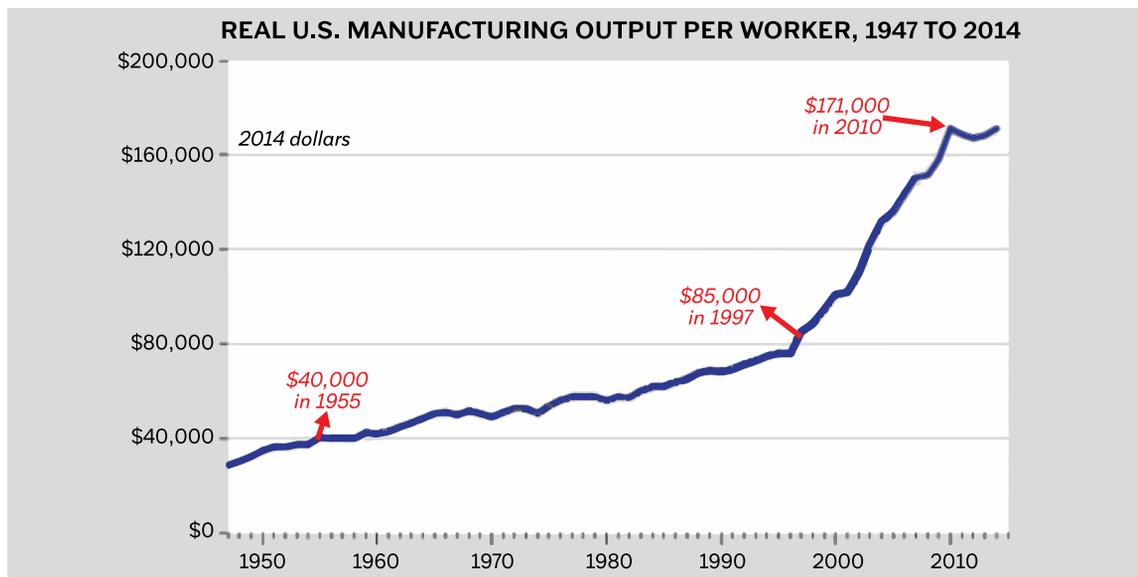
Before joining Crystal Creek, I spent 24 years in manufacturing. When I entered the manufacturing industry in the early 90’s the business culture was, “if it worked in the past it will continue to work today.” That mindset caused many of the processes, technologies, and building infrastructures to remain unchanged for a number of decades. When global competition heightened in the early 2000’s, many manufacturers found themselves uncompetitive resulting in the loss of jobs, bankruptcy, or jobs moved overseas.

The businesses that did survive, and continue to compete today, are ones that embraced change in their operations and progressed by installing a culture that looked for continuous improvement. This continuous improvement came from embracing the latest technologies and equipment enhancements, eliminating waste in their operations, and a dedicated reinvestment of cross-training their workforce. As a result of this culture shift of change, not only did these companies survive global competition, most thrived.

See the graph below showing worker productivity gains over the past 60 years. Note the timeframe from 1997 to 2010. In just over 10 years worker productivity more than doubled. Or revenues of the business more than doubled, while the headcount stayed the same.

As you look at your operation where would you gauge yourself and your culture? Are you progressive about utilizing the latest research and technology to better improve your herd health and profitability? Are you open minded to objectively look at a process and ask “is there a better way?” ...for measuring, cleaning, housing, storing, and maintaining or do you take the stance of the dinosaur and view what worked yesterday as the path going forward? Take the road that many in manufacturing did, embrace making positive changes and utilizing the professionals that can help you make changes. After all, how can we expect different results if we keep doing the same thing over and over? Change is good!

Rob Adler is the Warehouse Manager at Crystal Creek®. Prior to joining Crystal Creek® he held various mid and upper level management positions while working in the food and wood products industry. Rob has over 13 years of experience leading continuous improvement programs, has acquired his Lean Certification and has earned numerous Lean Sigma belts.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis & Bureau of Labor Statistics