

COOPER STANDARD NAMES 2024 KAIZEN AWARD TOP FOUR FINALISTS

Cooper Standard is continuing its tradition of celebrating continuous improvement with its 12th Annual Kaizen Competition. The global internal program works to identify and recognize the Company's best global Kaizen projects and acknowledge teams who are making significant lean advancements in manufacturing. This long-standing program honors accomplishments of top performers who show dedication to implementing lean manufacturing.

On a quarterly basis, Cooper Standard plants are evaluated, and leaders score teams who find ways to optimize equipment, streamline operating processes, and reduce waste and cost. At the end of the year, finalists are identified and compete in Cooper Standard's Global Kaizen Competition. This year's competition placed a stronger focus on the Company's product lines, with two winners selected from each product group: sealing; and fluid handling systems.

This year's Finalists from Sealing Systems are:

Tarazona, Spain – Direct Labor Optimization on EPDM Extrusion Lines

By evaluating the facility's extrusion lines, the team was able to significantly reduce scrap, energy and material usage, emissions and changeover time. The automation and improvements achieved enabled significant cost savings and the reduction of necessary equipment to support future projects.

Aguascalientes, Mexico – Waste Reduction Using 3P Lean Methodology

A previous winner of Kaizen Awards on multiple occasions, the Aguascalientes team again earned recognition as a regional finalist for implementing Production, Preparation and Process (3P) to eliminate waste at the plant. The evaluation led to direct labor improvements, better utilization of floor space, cost savings, waste reduction of materials and use of electricity. The changes removed non-value activities and inefficiencies in manufacturing processes.

This year's Finalists from Fluid Handling Systems are:

Kunshan 2, China – Direct Labor Efficiency

The Kunshan 2 team strategically met customer program requirements of production volume increase and Value Stream Mapping (VSM) targets. Each cost item was evaluated to identify major improvement areas that resulted in scrap reduction, lowered quality risk and better direct labor efficiency. Better utilization of time and energy was achieved using problem solving, line balancing and quick changeover implementation.

Torreón, Mexico – Equipment Capacity Improvement

The Torreón team was recognized for improvements to the capacity of basic equipment and release space to allocate for new customer programs. The project identified ways to efficiently use, eliminate or move equipment to other plants for better use of capital and resource utilization. Changeover times significantly improved as a result and led to a direct impact on operational efficiency. The strategic execution of this project resulted in significant energy consumption improvement, increased productivity and capital savings.

On December 11, Finalists will present to a panel of global Cooper Standard leaders who will select one Global Winner based on the project's lean improvement, use of lean principles, ability to be implemented at other plants, and alignment with the Company's Purpose, Mission and Values.

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