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Commitment to QRM Principles Speeds Delivery

In 2004, faced with steep competition in the form of low-cost, overseas manufacturers and massive conglomerates, Phoenix Products wanted to strengthen its competitive advantage and market position as a uniquely responsive supplier. Meanwhile, at nearby UW-Madison, the Center for Quick Response Manufacturing (QRM) was instructing manufacturers about its strategy and tools for speeding delivery by reducing lead times. The QRM approach seemed a promising way for Phoenix to advance its goals on responsiveness.

Phoenix launched its first QRM project in 2005. The student project was geared towards eliminating inefficiencies throughout the fabrication processes. In 2006, a second student project was launched with a focus on identifying bottlenecks in the assembly stages. A third project in 2007 targeted material handling and storage operations. 2008 saw the integration of the efforts and their final implementation.

Results have been dramatic. Lead times on *docklite*®, for example, were reduced from a 7-14 day lead time to just 3 days. Lynn Benishek, Materials Manager states, "We recently reduced the sales lead time of many of our industrial floodlights by 50%, our inventory situation has improved dramatically, and our on-time delivery is at record high levels."

Regional Sales Manager, Tom Feldhusen, appreciates the efforts, emphasizing that customers require much faster deliveries than they did only a few years ago and that on-time performance is now more critical than ever. "The status quo has been redefined. QRM has allowed Phoenix to manufacture products faster, with higher quality and with more flexibility. Phoenix can now offer more to the customer for less."

Further improvements are expected. Lynn Benishek notes, "The focus this year will be to apply QRM principles to the supply chain. By improving our supply chain throughout, we will further enhance our ability to respond to our customers' delivery needs." ◇

Jennifer Oven
Marketing Coordinator

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