

# OFFICE SUPPLIES

## Implementing Lean solution to improve sales effectiveness

### The Challenge

World's largest office supply company was not realizing sales goals and needed help to reduce costs and time associated with the sales force efforts and activities that were mired down in the support and administrative processes.

### What We Did

We conducted our analysis in two of the company's major service centers reviewing the processes and systems for managing the sales and support groups. We found multiple barriers around how sales and support would communicate and pass proposals back and forth on items involving pricing and administrative requirements. Compounding the issue was inefficient approval processes and constraints due to legacy systems from past acquisitions. Field sales submissions for approval were taking up to 4 weeks causing long turn arounds for sales and customer complaints. Sales reps were frustrated and many not meeting their goals.

Working across both locations in the support areas we applied Lean Office methods to workflows and processes improving the sales submission requirements for approvals. We sat down with leaders to streamline levels of approval a sales rep was authorized to approve before submitting for higher approval. Working with pricing department personnel we were able to eliminate many of the legacy system requirements and minimize the back and forth communications with sales. We then worked to eliminate multiple touch points for sales and remove barriers from system limitations that plagued the overall cycle time. We incorporated clearly defined roles and implemented training across the company for improved interdepartmental communications all resulting in significantly reducing the sales organizations time spent on administrative backend support processes.

### The Result

- Process and systems improvements reduced sales cycle time by 20%
- Returned 32000 hrs to the sale organization and achieved a total savings of \$16M
- Gains in efficiencies and salesforce effectiveness allowed them to refocus on targets and realized a 6:1 ROI

