POWERS™ CULTURE POWERS BUSINESS™

INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURING

CASE STUDY

A MANUFACTURER FIGHTING A $1M BACKLOG AND AN ERP TRANSITION LIFTED BOXING PRODUCTIVITY 23% AND RECOVERED DAILY SHIPPING REVENUE 17%, WITHOUT EXPANSION, HIRING, OR NEW EQUIPMENT

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

A new ERP, a pending plant relocation, and a temporary workforce had a long-established manufacturer of industrial safety products running on improvisation. Backlog passed $1M, daily shipping targets went unmet, and supervisors were firefighting instead of leading. POWERS installed hourly production discipline, line-level performance tracking, and the leadership routines required to hold both, lifting boxing productivity 23% and laying the foundation for a successful plant transition.

THE SITUATION

A new system layered onto an operation that had never been standardized, a workforce in flux, and a plant relocation closing in.

A long-established manufacturer of industrial safety products used in healthcare, industrial, and commercial environments was operating through the most disruptive period in its recent history. The company had absorbed several major transitions over the years, including mergers and system upgrades, and the cumulative complexity had outpaced the operating discipline holding the work together. The most recent transition, a new ERP system, had landed on top of workflows that had never been formally documented.

The ERP transition introduced a steep learning curve for both leadership and frontline workers. Bottlenecks compounded. The order backlog climbed past $1 million. Daily shipping targets of $150,000 went unmet. The boxing department, expected to produce 1,000 pieces per shift across both shifts, consistently fell short of the target.

Underneath the system disruption, the operation was carrying two more loads at the same time. A plant relocation was approaching, requiring a three-month inventory build to bridge the production gap during the move. And the workforce, in anticipation of the move, was already in flux, with permanent employees departing and temporary labor filling in. Training gaps multiplied. Performance standards drifted. The operation needed external expertise to stabilize while it absorbed all three changes at once.

PERFORMANCE RESULTS

23%
Boxing productivity gain

17%
Daily shipping revenue increase

19%
Cutting line productivity gain

THE DIAGNOSIS

Three compounding pressures producing the same outcome from three directions.

ERP transition without operating discipline underneath
The new system's complexity created bottlenecks and delays because the workflows it was meant to support had never been standardized. The technology amplified the disorder rather than resolving it. The backlog grew to over $1M as a direct consequence.

A workforce in flux ahead of relocation
Heavy reliance on temporary labor, combined with permanent workforce attrition tied to the pending plant move, made it nearly impossible to train consistently, hold performance standards, or maintain a stable production rhythm shift to shift.

Inventory pressure layered on top of disrupted capacity
The plant relocation required building three months of inventory to bridge production during the move. That demand landed on a workforce already stretched, with no surplus capacity to absorb it. Maximizing production without overburdening the floor was a planning problem the operation did not yet have the tools to solve.

THE DIAGNOSIS (CONT)

Supervisors firefighting instead of leading
With the system unfamiliar, the workforce unstable, and inventory pressure mounting, frontline leadership was consumed by reacting to the day's emergencies. Hourly production rates went unmonitored. Shift targets were aspirational rather than managed. The leadership tier the operation needed most was the tier least equipped to operate under the conditions.

No real-time visibility into line performance
Production lines, including the smart line and the cutting line, ran without performance tracking sufficient to identify variance in the moment. Problems were visible only after the shift ended, by which point corrective action was already a day late.

Coordination gaps across operations, HR, finance, and customer service
The disruptions in production reverberated outward, but the cross-functional communication needed to absorb the impact was running on relationships rather than routines. Decisions were made in silos and reconciled too late to prevent downstream consequences.

WHAT POWERS DID

Installed the operating discipline the new system required to actually work.

Working alongside the leadership team, the POWERS team began on the floor. Manufacturing and shipping targets were broken down to the hour, and supervisors were coached to manage each shift against them in real time rather than reviewing the result the next morning. Workflows were streamlined, and resource allocation was adjusted to match where the work actually was, not where the legacy structure had placed it. Training for both permanent and temporary staff was tightened so the floor could absorb new hands without losing the standard.

Production line optimization happened in parallel. The boxing department and the smart line, two of the most critical production assets, were re-engineered around clearer process steps and real-time performance monitoring. Targeted training programs landed the new methods directly in the work. Daily collaboration with the planning team ensured production priorities were communicated through the right channels, and weekly reviews surfaced variance for continuous adjustment.

The leadership work was the through-line. The operations manager, distribution center manager, supervisors, and line leads received structured development on the routines that hold a plant together under pressure: communication, accountability, follow-up, and team cohesion.

WHAT POWERS DID

Improved communication channels closed gaps between operations, HR, finance, and customer service. The leadership tier was rebuilt to navigate the conditions the business was actually operating in, not the conditions it had been trained for.

The inventory build was the final layer. POWERS worked with leadership to develop a detailed plan that maximized production capacity against the relocation timeline without overburdening the workforce. Resource scheduling was optimized. Labor management strategies kept the floor supported. The three-month inventory target was met without compromising daily fulfillment.

THE FULL RESULT

$2M+ Annualized Savings

Engagement delivered 166% of target savings, with positive cash flow achieved fifteen weeks ahead of plan.

49% Productivity Gain

Units per nozzle hour climbed from 176.82 to 263.78, as cell manufacturing and clearer standards replaced decentralized production.

12% Labor Cost Reduction with Wage Increases

Leadership cut labor costs 12% in Q1 2024 while raising pay for the hourly workforce and leadership team. The two moves were possible together because the operating system finally extracted full value from every labor hour.

40% Volume Increase, Sustained

Production volume rose 40% versus 2023 and held through Q1 2024, as the new cell structure unlocked capacity the old layout had been absorbing.

133,000 sq ft Floor Space Recovered

Over a third of the 400,000-square-foot facility was returned to the operation as handling consolidated and the cell structure replaced spread-out production. The recovered space supported inventory consolidation, a new pre-labeling area, and capacity for growth.

18% Cost per Unit Reduction

Early 2024 saw an 18% improvement in cost per unit, a structural shift rather than a one-time gain. A task that had previously required 36 Fillers was completed with 24 after the engagement.