What does automotive manufacturing have to do with saving lives?

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZnc4tNBteM

Beyond the Road https://www.toyota.ca/toyota/en/canadian-blood-services

The auto assembly lines of Japan may seem like an unlikely place for a biologics manufacturer to learn about process improvements, but Canadian Blood Services’ production and distribution facility in Brampton, Ont., has certainly benefited since Toyota Canada began sharing its proven practices in manufacturing production.

The Brampton production site, which opened in 2011, is one of nine Canadian Blood Services manufacturing sites in Canada. The site supplies 100 hospitals, processes 344,000 units of whole blood and ships 460,000 units of blood each year. It also ships 65,000 litres of plasma to be further manufactured into plasma protein products to meet various patient needs.

As part of its corporate social responsibility, Toyota shares its manufacturing process knowledge with organizations to help them become more productive, maximize available resources and improve quality and safety, all principles that align with Canadian Blood Services’ strategic priorities. With the goal of making a significant contribution to a not-for-profit organization, Toyota chose Canadian Blood Services as the first Canadian organization to benefit from its teachings.

The collaboration between these two unlikely partners started in early 2015. It began with one goal: to help improve the lives of all Canadians by identifying opportunities for improvement in the Canadian blood supply chain.

Toyota advisors became part of the production and distribution teams, making regular visits to the Brampton site and sharing the fundamental principles of the Toyota Production System (TPS) — a system based on a customer-first approach and continuous improvements with a shop floor focus.

The system is rooted in the basic principles of “lean” manufacturing: eliminating wasteful activities, lowering operating costs and making process improvements. It’s a systematic method of using people and equipment resources to maintain a continuous work flow at every stage of the process for optimum manufacturing.

Representatives from both organizations worked together over the course of the year to identify and solve problems. Key improvements include:
- Production and sorting improvements, to gain additional production time of two hours per day.
- Standardized storage areas to improve workflow, creating additional benefits for employees such as less time in -20°C freezers.
- Thirty per cent reduction in steps taken by employees as a result of reorganized workstations creating better workflow for employees.
- Forty per cent reduction in packing time. By reorganizing storage areas, making problems more visible and standardizing work processes, employees can find the right products quickly and more accurately.

At the end of the project, on behalf of Toyota and its dealers, Toyota executives presented Canadian Blood Services with a cheque for $320,000. The donation will be directed to Canadian Blood Services’ Cord Blood Bank.


To learn more about our collaboration with Toyota, visit toyota.ca/BeyondTheRoad.

To read more articles, please visit the BloodNotes section of blood.ca