

Efficiencies Gained from New Processes

Energy Absorption Systems, Inc. (EAS) (www.energyabsorption.com) is the world's leader in the design, manufacture and marketing of highway crash cushions and other highway safety devices. The 40-year-old company in Rocklin selected Sierra College to present Process Improvement training that helped staff rethink processes that had been adopted over the years according to Aaron Cox, Continuous Improvement Team Leader.

"We've saved time, reduced redundancy, eliminated errors and increased consistency using more standardized processes to replace duplicated systems that had grown with the company," said Cox. "Rather than having multiple spread sheets and databases of information, we are now planning to replace them with our ERP [Enterprise Resource Planning] software in 2009."

Energy Absorption Systems has also sought ways to reduce "inventory time/wait time" when an operation is waiting to be processed by another employee, explained Cox. "If a plan is checked by three people, you lose time while it sits in each person's in-box," said Cox. "If the process changes to require only two checkers, you save one person's time plus the wait time between checkers. We are also eliminating steps and combining procedures. For example, engineers now have the option of making minor changes on drawings themselves without having to wait for technical services so a project can proceed. This makes our company more responsive to customers."



Inspiring Your Future Workforce

Math at Work - To help students understand the value of learning math, Sierra College is collecting examples of how employees use math on the job. Send in your examples of how math is being applied to your work and include photos if you have them. Send them to Sandra Scott at sscott@sierracollege.edu.



Lincoln High School's iDesign program using SolidWorks® and manual and CNC machines would welcome business speakers, classroom volunteers, job shadow and internship opportunities, and surplus materials that students can use for projects. Contact Carol Pepper-Kittredge at (916) 781-6288 and check out the program blog at www.lhsidesign.com/blog.



The **CACT Tech-Explorer** Catapult is now introducing middle school students to technical careers with hands-on experiences using mills, lathes and drills to manufacture catapults. In addition, we've added electric, electronic and solar components. Learn more at www.tech-explorer.com.

South Placer Robotics Club will be building a robot to participate in the FIRST Robotics (www.usfirst.org) competition that kicked off January 3. To support the program, contact Stephen Miller at smiller@rjuhsd.us.

Supply Chain Management

**New
Classes**

Sierra College CACT will offer three Supply Chain Management classes for individuals in 2009. These courses are co-sponsored with the Sacramento Chapter of the Association for Operations Managers (www.apicsacramento.com). The first class on Execution & Control of Operations starts January 13 in Roseville at the Sierra Gateway Campus. The next two classes are Master Planning of Resources, starting March 3 and Strategic Management of Resources, starting April 21.



County Learns New Survey Methods

Placer County engaged Sierra College Training & Development to offer a survey class to employees in August. According to Lisa James, Project Manager, the class was completely customized to the county's needs. "Our in-house architects made recommendations and employees in the building maintenance and capital improvement departments submitted requests so the class covered topics of greatest interest," said James.

"The instructor also suggested many practical tips that made surveying faster and easier. Employees practiced using new laser surveying equipment and reviewed calculations as well."

According to participants, the most useful applications they learned were "laser shooting and the math to square buildings," "applying grade and topographical surveying" and "calculating fill or removal of dirt."

Training that Boosts Productivity

If you've invested in Microsoft® software but employees only use a fraction of the built-in tools, you could boost productivity with employee training. Excel®, Access® and other software training can be customized to your business needs. If new supervisors are taking on additional responsibility, they'll be more effective with management training. Retain clients by developing employees' listening, communication and customer service skills. Call Judy Schmidt at (916) 747-2162 to learn more about how Sierra College customizes business training or go to www.sierracollegelearning.com.

Clean-up saves Comtek \$100,000

Comtek Computer Systems (www.comtekcomsys.com), in Rancho Cordova and Rocklin, provides product repair and refurbishment services for original equipment manufacturers (OEM's) and other maintenance service organizations. In less than 45 days, Comtek and Sierra College trained 300 employees to re-evaluate the effectiveness of their work space, eliminating over \$100,000 in excess or unused tools, rework equipment and supplies, according to Steve Tichy, Business Process Analyst for Comtek.

"As a result, excess materials uncovered by the evaluation are being returned to suppliers and other 'found resources' add up to future savings," said Tichy. "Plus, workers from the plant floor to the office areas now can visually see all the tools they need to do their jobs, increasing productivity and giving our company a competitive advantage."

Comtek's dramatic savings were possible because of 5S – a Lean business tool that stands for Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize and Sustain. "We were absolutely blown away by how much excess had piled up over the decade of growing a start-up company," said Tichy.

