

Positive Productivity implementation in Raben Logistics

Interview with Jolanta Sawińska, Regional Director of Raben Logistics Polska

Krzysztof Pimpicki: Why Raben Logistics Polska is focused on continuous improvement?

Jolanta Sawińska: First we have to look at our roots, Raben Logistics Polska was inspired to follow the continuous improvement principles by the President of the Raben Group - Ewald Raben, who saw the need to introduce this issue to the company's directors and managers. After the first workshop Positive Productivity Raben Group has decided to start a pilot project in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, managed by 4 Results.

KP: Why Positive Productivity? What are the advantages of this approach?

JS: I name just a few advantages to convince you that this is a good solution. They include: positive attitude to work, greater involvement and motivation of employees, empowerment of people while improving business indicators, eliminating waste and providing more time for our core operation, which is executing customers' orders.

KP: What are the changes introduced by the project?

JS: First of all, the commitment and approach of employees has improved; they are also more eager to submit improvement ideas and implement them.

KP: What was the reception from the personnel?

JS: When we started the project in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, the first reaction of employees was probably curiosity, after that I saw first signs of resistance - the employees did not see benefits, but they were aware of additional activities required from them. However, already after first meetings, the employees reported that they noticed that we were listening to them, they felt that their voice was important and that there was somebody who took into account their opinions. And this was the first moment when their commitment, motivation and positive attitude started to be clearly visible. Today I can say that the employees are very involved. The team that participated in the project, is very motivated and has another ideas to work on. They start from themselves and implement improvements in their own environment.

KP: And moving to the level of measurable results - what are the outcomes of this employees' commitment?

JS: We can see it in our business indicators. During the project we defined these indicators as the area for improvement. Not everything is perfect yet, but we see how big is the change. A spectacular improvement that has brought the greatest effect so far, is better management of shipments in shuttle services. It provided savings generated by reduced number of vehicles dispatched from one branch in Poland (110 vehicles less per month). This results in tangible financial benefits. Currently, the most important issue on which the employees work in their teams is the improvement in timely delivery of shipments.

KP: You mentioned that one of these important effects of the project was providing more time for employees - how do you use this time?

JS: We decided that in the peak period, we would not employ new employees. Today, we are able to deliver significantly higher number of shipments than a year ago, having the same headcount and not compromising the quality of customer service. This means that some teams execute even 30% orders more. We also decided to focus more on building and protecting the relationships with customers (so-called farming).

KP: You already mentioned some next steps - you have worked on various improvements and projects internally. Can you indicate the benefits of cooperation with an external company at the project stage?

JS: In this aspect, the key issue was substantive support and transfer of methodology and knowledge. In addition, the pace of work was important, as well as engagement of consultants, which enabled us to quickly achieve quite spectacular results. They also motivated us to work systematically, to be disciplined and to have prioritized goals, in order to make our projects sustainable. Today, I try to expand the project. We start to implement our own program called "Better everyday." I think that without the experience of workshop in Grodzisk Mazowiecki managed by 4 Results, such swift copying and implementing the principles would not be possible.