

GHSP Hart Teams Finish First in Honda Quality Circle Competition

Setting the bar higher for Honda's own internal process improvements

October 13, 2008



Island Day Dreamers
1st Place Problem Solving



Aces Wild
1st Place Display Board



Civic Crusaders
1st Place Project Team

Hart, MI - Two teams from the Hart, MI GHSP plant placed first in each of their respective categories in the Honda of America Manufacturing's Fall 2008 Supplier Team Presentations and Seminars quality circle competition, "raising the bar for Honda's own quality circles," according to one Honda executive judging the competition. The competition was held from September 30 through October 1 in Indianapolis, Indiana, and was open to all North America Honda suppliers. As many as 100 suppliers to Honda and 600 people attended the conference. GHSP Hart even placed first in the display board judging, making them the Michael Phelps of the competition, winning the gold in every possible category.

A quality circle is a group of employees who meet voluntarily and on a regular basis to discuss performance and problems evident in their working environment with the goal of implementing solutions to identified problems. Quality circles stress employee development and motivation, team building and working together to solve problems while reducing errors and enhancing quality and productivity. To date, the quality circle program has resulted in a savings of almost \$400,000 for GHSP Hart in improved processes and efficiencies.

The Honda Supplier Quality Circle Competition has two categories, problem solving and project circle, and suppliers can enter one team in each quality circle category. GHSP picked their top team in each category to compete by presenting the problems they identified and how they implemented their solutions over the past six months.

The GHSP project circle team that placed first at the fall conference experienced success with reducing startup downtime, running checks on the Honda Civic line before each shift starts. Since working together and balancing the line's workload through quality circle practices, they have reduced the time it takes to run the checks from 27 to six minutes, saving \$24,777 annually. This team placed first out of 15 teams.

The GHSP problem solving team presented the work they accomplished on inventory accuracy, increasing it from 88 percent to 98.3 percent and saving GHSP an estimated \$41,250 annually. This team placed first out of 27 teams at the competition.

Back in the spring of 2008, GHSP Hart entered the North American Quality Circle Central Region Competition for Honda suppliers for the first time, and achieved second and fourth place in their categories with those teams. This was the first time any Honda supplier has entered two teams and received trophies in both categories, let alone their first time being in the quality circle competition.

The GHSP team who placed second out of nine teams in the project quality circle category presented how they built and implemented a quality circle program with the employees at GHSP Hart Plant. This team is saving the company \$84,494 annually.

GHSP's fourth place team identified issues with the GHSP paint line and worked with the painting process to reduce paint defects, saving an estimated \$36,000 annually for the company. There were 19 teams entered in the problem solving category.

Winners of the Honda Quality Circle Competition receive large two-foot trophies and individuals receive medals. Depending on their placing, winning teams are recognized at Honda internal conferences and competitions and invited to places all over the world to present. GHSP's teams will be Honda's guests in Brazil to present their solutions to Honda employees since they placed first in the competition. The teams who placed second and fourth this past spring attended the Honda Homecoming celebration in Ohio as their recognition.

"We value Honda as a primary customer and want to improve development and cost savings," said Gary Wendt, quality manager for GHSP Hart location. "Building quality circles at GHSP has been an enjoyable process, lots of fun with competition, and the program is gaining momentum



here. We anticipate having six teams compete internally for spots in the spring of 2009 Honda quality circle competition.”

GHSP is a leading global supplier of mechanical and mechatronic control systems to surface transportation industries, including automotive, heavy truck and others. The company serves its customers from concept to delivery with world class product design, development and program management, as well as excellence in manufacturing in locations around the world.

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