

K-Way wins award for boosting local manufacturing sector

K-Way, the manufacturing division of the Cape Union Mart Group, was awarded the 2013 Best LEAN Team Award for the Western Cape region, as one of nine participants in the Clothing and Textile Competitiveness Improvement Programme (CTCIP), a joint national initiative by the dti and the IDC.



According to the CTCIP organisers, the Best LEAN Team trophy is awarded annually to one of the firms participating in the four-year long programme in each province to recognise the exceptional efforts and performance of the teams at each manufacturing firm.

The programme facilitators select winners annually based on a number of stringent criteria. These include the firm's level of participation in programme activities; its level of commitment to a Lean manufacturing culture and continuous improvement; feedback from expert consultants on-site and, most importantly, the firm's performance as measured through a variety of world class manufacturing KPIs, measured during the annual benchmarking exercise.

Operational improvements

The factory entered the LEAN Manufacturing Project almost two years ago and has shown exceptional operational improvements:

- Overall repair rate has improved from more than 10% to less than 2%
- Overall absenteeism has been reduced from more than 5% to less than 3%
- Overall on-time delivery has improved significantly
- Reject rate has improved from more than 2% to less than 0.8% in 2012 and below 0.3% in 2013
- Efficiency levels have improved from less than 65% to more than 85% in 2012 and more than 95% in 2013
- Employment increased by 8% in 2012 and by 10% in 2013

K-Way, along with the KwaZulu-Natal regional winner, has been invited to have the award presented by Minister Rob Davies, Minister of Trade and Industry, at the 5th Annual Retail Clothing Textiles Imbizo from 16-17 August 2013, in Stellenbosch. The Imbizo is a seminal industry event that aims to map the medium term future of the industry in South Africa.

Best Practice Award

The factory is also one of the first players to become involved in the Western Cape government's Cape Clothing and Textiles Cluster (CCTC), a partnership with 31 regional manufacturers and six major retailers that aims to improve the competitiveness of the clothing and textile industry, so as to ensure its future success and sustainability. K-Way scooped the prestigious 'Best Practice Award' for showcasing excellence in world class manufacturing at the cluster's AGM in March 2010.

Western Cape Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Alan Winde, visited the K-Way factory in Ottery, Cape Town, in August 2012 and commended them for world class manufacturing excellence. "The success of local manufacturers, such as K-Way, shows that sustainable development in the clothing and textile sector is possible when companies grab hold of all opportunities offered to find innovative and economical ways of manufacturing."

"We're exceptionally proud of this latest award," says Andre Labuschaigne, CEO of the Cape Union Mart Group. "The K-Way factory is an integral part of our business' success and these kinds of accolades are not possible without the commitment and passion from every single one of our employees at K-Way."

"Over the past eight years demand for its products has increased substantially, with sales increasing more than five-fold over the time period. Getaway Magazine's 2012 Readers' Choice Gear Awards revealed that out of 100 garments owned by its readers, 43 carry the K-Way brand."

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