

A Passionate Advocate of Innovation in Manufacture
of Precision Plastic Components

RAMblings

RAM, Inc. Quarterly Newsletter Q1:2023



raminc-cisco.com



RAM, Inc.

Engineered Plastic Molding and Tooling

ISO 9001 | AS9100

Our mission at RAM, Inc. is to provide our customers with quality products on schedule and within budget. Customer satisfaction provides the ongoing foundation of RAM's success.

Process Improvement Promotes Growth and Reliability

What is Process Improvement? What is the purpose of process improvement? Are there basic steps for process improvement and how do you identify process improvement?

Process Improvement can be defined as the proactive task of identifying, analyzing, and improving upon existing business processes within the organization, with the goal of improving process efficiency. Process Improvement may occur less frequently while continuous improvement is an ongoing process that is threaded into daily work practices.

Continuous improvement process is an ongoing effort to improve products, services, or processes. These efforts can seek incremental improvement over time or have a breakthrough improvement all at once. The delivery, implementation, and traction of processes is constantly evaluated and improved considering their efficiency, effectiveness, and flexibility.

Process Improvement is important for every business across all industries because it allows businesses to operate efficiently, maintain a competitive edge, and improve business agility. Growth of a business occurs when business meets and exceeds objectives, innovates to remain ahead of the market, and adapts to meet market and client demands. Businesses that embrace and promote process improvement save money, boost innovation, improve talent retention and create more value for their customers.

So, how do you begin process improvement to promote growth and reliability? First, start by defining the current process. This involves breaking down the steps involved in the process and identifying where the bottlenecks are. To do this, you can create a flowchart of the process, or simply write down the steps involved. **DMAIC** is a clever and useful tool that the RAM team utilizes to **Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, and Control** process improvements.

You first must objectively and clearly define the current processes- how do we do things now? Create a flow chart of your process to visualize how the work moves from to-do to done.

Going back to our definition of Process Improvement let's breakdown some of the basic steps for Process Improvement:

1. Identify the process: Start by choosing which process you want to improve. This can be a specific task or a larger process within the organization.
2. Analyze the process: Collect data and analyze the current process to identify where improvements can be made. This could involve identifying bottlenecks, waste, or areas for improvement in terms of quality, speed, or cost.
3. Redesign the process: Once you have identified the areas for improvement, create a new process that addresses these issues. This could involve simplifying the process, automating certain steps, or changing the sequence of steps.
4. Implement the new process: Once the new process has been designed, test it and implement it in the organization. This may involve training employees or making changes to the technology used in the process.
5. Monitor and evaluate: After the new process has been implemented, monitor its effectiveness and gather feedback from employees and customers. Continuously evaluate the process and make adjustments as needed.

Here at RAM, Inc., where we manufacture a variety of parts for various applications and customers, we utilize process improvement at all levels and in all departments. Some very specific applications where process improvement

has occurred at RAM include Fin Molding Tool Improvement, Machining Time Innovation and Improvement, and purchasing process and volume negotiation (very important due to past and current supply chain issues).

Engineering Manager, Jeb Hudson gives insight into Fin mold tooling improvement “The mold tooling modifications made allowed there to be matching temperatures in the two-cavity mold, which produces two parts with each molding cycle. The Improved mold yields less molded variation between the two cavities, thus helping with our down-stream machining processes to finish the parts.” In simple terms this process improvement increased part integrity and simplified the production process.

Procuring raw materials is critical to the success of business in a world marked by scarcity and supply chain disruptions, as it sets the baseline for workflow and costs. To secure the necessary raw materials for a key component of one of our primary clients, Program Manager Mike Lewis and Purchasing Manager Clifton Vaughn worked together to research, meet, and discuss with multiple vendors to compare their lead times and costs for RAM. Through their due diligence, Mike and Clifton were able to negotiate long-term agreements that resulted in a 30% reduction in raw material costs. Moreover, to mitigate long lead time interruptions, RAM purchased a 24-month supply of inventory.

Innovation and improvement in machining time can have a significant impact on a company’s bottom line by saving on labor costs, reducing machine wear and tear, increasing production output, and place businesses in a more competitive market position. To achieve this, RAM Production Operator, Justin Allday along with the support of Manufacturing Manager, Robert Duck successfully implemented lean manufacturing principles. They minimized non-value added activities, such as machine set-up and waiting on materials, to optimize the manufacturing process and increase efficiency, ultimately resulting in reduced machining times.

We at RAM continuously work on process improvement, but we must also ensure that these processes are effective. To determine effectiveness, we rely on customer feedback, employee feedback, data analysis, and benchmarking.



Peter Caparelli from Bell Flight expressed his satisfaction with RAM’s expertise, stating, ***“It is truly a pleasure to work with such a competent and action-oriented team. The bulk of compression mold, injection mold, and vacuum forming knowledge is strictly due to RAM and the issues we’ve worked together.”***

“Process improvement promotes growth and reliability.” Dale Dietrich from Lockheed Martin praised RAM’s commitment to quality and reliability, saying ***“I know that you [RAM] share my same commitment to product quality and reliability. We thank you for your continued top-notch support as well,***



which includes engineering development and production."

Process improvement is an ongoing effort that requires continuous evaluation and improvement to drive business growth and reliability. By identifying, analyzing, and improving business processes, RAM can enhance our efficiency, productivity, and viability. RAM involves all team members as well as customers in the process to ensure a successful implementation.



THANKSGIVING PHOTO: (left to right) Kyle Houghton, Stacie Kennedy, Teresa Boyd, Richard Williams, Debbie Simmons, Gabe Anaya, Stephen Anders, & Wendy Beam

RAM, Inc. employees were able to spend time together celebrating this special time of year. Employees heard from CEO, Richard Williams as well as breaking bread together. RAM, Inc. Owner and Founder, Diann Morris was also able to be a part of this special occasion. Quarterly prizes were also awarded to some lucky employees.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



CHRISTMAS PHOTO: (left to right) Richard Williams, Stephen Anders, Keaton Casey, Teresa Boyd, Mary Lopez, Mark Trevino, JD Lee, Alex Conger, Jay York, Tracy Reeves, Jackie Melton, Jonathan Hernandez, Justin Allday. (kneeling) Philip Frank, Darrell Hilsinger

CONNECTION TO EDUCATION



RAM is a proud member of the Big Country Manufacturing Alliance working to support stability and growth of manufacturing in the Big Country. The BCMA is a cross-sector partnership between Industry, Education, Workforce and Economic Development. The BCMA works to educate students in the Big Country about careers in manufacturing.



Wylie HS Students
come out to visit and
tour RAM, Inc.

RAM, Inc. Participates at
WOW (World of Work)
Career Exploration Fair

Tarleton University
Engineering students
visit and tour RAM, Inc.



DID YOU KNOW ABOUT RAM

Education Reimbursement

RAM, Inc. provides reimbursement to employees and their families pursuing higher education.

Letter from the CEO



*This letter from RAM CEO, Richard Williams was first published in Q1 2020. While not that long ago, my oh my how the world has changed. As you read through this letter published at the cusp of COVID entering stage right and then taking center stage for most 2020, think about how timely this article reads about sustainability and how businesses need to have long-term success and show lasting value. Additionally, we added insight from leaders on the RAM management team to showcase how our team continues to sustain long-term success and are committed to **“Finding What Works and then Making It Better.”***

Throughout my career, I have led troubled and transitioning companies through turnarounds by executing the purchase of 35 small, medium, and large companies over 30 years, mostly in transportation and logistics. Most of these efforts were successful but there were a few failures – one failure was significant to me personally and to our entire team. As a part of this process, we completed due diligence (intensive operational and financial analysis) of about 200 companies. In these cases, even though we signed an initial Letter

of Intent, we decided these companies did not meet our acquisition criteria. I would like to share with you some of what I learned.

The first thing I learned is that we make mistakes, we fail, and these mistakes and failures are painful. Furthermore, mistakes and failures are unexpected – with unexpected results. With that in mind, I can also say these failures were instructive and ultimately beneficial. A key lesson I have learned.... Pain is Good... without which, likely we will not learn. Just as, and perhaps more importantly, my experience has taught me there is an unexpected gain that follows an unexpected loss. The customer for whom you have made a mistake or caused a problem – when handled with honest transparency – is a closer and more connected partner after the mistake than before. I have experienced this many, many times. It is counter intuitive, but mistakes make us better – teach us humility – bind us in [strengthened] relationships.

The second thing I have learned is Leadership rests on three core basics - Vision, Passion, and Humility. A vision setting the team direction is critical as the team must all move together in the same direction, or it will pull itself apart. Teams without vision will wander and find it difficult to move in any direction thereby becoming stagnant with divisions, jealousy, and discord. Passion is infectious and taps into our humanity with inspiration. Inspiration reaches beyond the expected and connects with creativity. Humility is the simple realization that we are essentially human – all of us. Once we view ourselves, our team, each other as common in our humanity we understand each individual brings value. When valued, each of us will rise beyond what we otherwise believe is possible.

I have titled this note “Sustainability” which I define as lasting value – or long-term success. I have learned over my career that there are three general stages in a turnaround (troubled businesses functioning in a sound market – not dying or obsolete markets). A business in this condition will have many problems which must be addressed by leadership with Vision, Passion and Humility (as outlined above). This business will go through three stages:

Building Morale and Motivation

Troubled businesses are lost and hurt. They are low on both financial and human capital. They are out of cash and the team is dispirited - work is a chore and not a joy.

This is the most important First Step in a turnaround.

If the leader is not successful in building morale and motivation – the turnaround will fail.

Innovation - Top-Down

Creativity and Innovation are the keys to all wealth whether personally, in a business, community or nation. All wealth comes from creativity and if the team has not practiced creativity and innovation they will not know how to do so. They need this creativity modeled. In this critical second stage of a turnaround the leader must carry the responsibility to innovate within the organization. The key drivers of the business model must be determined and exploited through innovation. Simply put “Find What Works and Make It Better”.

Troubled businesses are stagnant, and the team is not innovating. They are not taking risks, not realizing the learning coincident with failure, and therefore not

finding successes. The team is both afraid to fail and afraid to succeed and their fears lock them in this stagnation.

In this stage the leader must innovate while teaching the team that it is safe to fail and succeed.

If the leader cannot begin this innovation process, the turnaround will fail. It follows that if innovation begins but does not happen quick enough to recapture both human and financial capital before the company becomes insolvent – the turnaround will fail.

Lastly, Top-Down Innovation can only sustain a company for a short time depending upon the volume. The smaller the company, the longer one or a few innovators can sustain the company. Larger companies or growing companies cannot rely upon one or a few innovators and if the transition to step 3 does not happen at the right time, the turnaround is likely to fail.

Innovation - Bottom-Up

This is the third phase of establishing a Sustainable Business Model. Bottom-Up Innovation is when the entire team is passionately involved in the vision and continually and organically innovating. This is where each member of the team – across all disciplines – maintenance, manufacturing, engineering, finance, and sales – all – each individual – innovates. They “Find What Works and Make It Better”.

Companies that fail to create innovators of every team member will eventually fall short of their potential. They may survive and perhaps thrive for a period, but they will not have found their best.

Companies with a full team of innovators will be ultimately sustainable as markets change, technology changes, customers change – everything changes – these companies will organically adjust, find new opportunity, and exploit those opportunities with surprising results.

These companies will have failures. Each of these failures will be followed by successes that will overwhelm their failures. The failures will be unexpected, but expected and the benefits will be unexpected but planned.

When functioning in this phase, no one person or small group of persons are essential to the ongoing success of the business and a company in this stage cannot fail. It may (and likely will) change drastically through many years as markets and customers change – but this team will be a business team that can operate any business in any market.

My view is that our company is at the beginning stage of phase 3. We have not mastered this phase and many (perhaps most) in our team do not yet innovate. I believe it is critical to the long-term success of our company to fully engage each person on our team in creative innovation – to establish a culture where “Child Like” Joy of Discovery displaces “Childish” Distraction.

I am convinced that each person has a creative “self” that when connected to others that foster creativity will find extraordinary value personally, and as a team.

Our long-term success – **Sustainability** – depends upon creating this team of innovators. We do this by **Finding What Works and then Making It Better**.

Richard Williams

One of RAM's greatest assets is its team members. Part of RAM's vision statement is "We aspire to have a safe and productive environment, while developing a group of individuals who are diverse, talented and empowered to exceed our customer's expectations." It is because of these practiced values that members of the RAM management team were able to easily share how they "**Find What Works and then Make it Better.**"

Nikki Lewis- CFO

"For me, it's about always keeping an open mind. Drawing on experience but being open to new opportunities. Never getting set on doing things a certain way but striving to see things from new perspectives. I am especially happy with the changes I've seen in the HR and Employee Relations areas since I've been here. From finding a new investment company with better returns for our employees' IRA accounts, to improved insurance benefits or adding a benefit such as disability insurance. Also, we have seen great benefit in hearing and implementing suggestions from employees through our employee surveys. A long time ago, someone told me, "If you're not growing and learning every day, then you are falling behind." Striving to always learn something from every experience and every circumstance, sets a broad foundation from which to draw, when we are searching to **find what works and make it better.**"

Dustin Williams, CTO

"**Find** the experts and listen to them. Then you can add their knowledge to your problem-solving toolbox. YouTube is a great resource."

Robert Duck, Manufacturing Manager

"I feel we found "**What works**" and now are "**Making it Better**" with the new tooling improvements and continued training in the Machine Shop. I did an extensive amount of studying and learning everything I possibly could. I wanted to be ready for if/ when my time came to interview for the Manufacturing Manager position... I made it better, and I couldn't thank Ram, Inc. enough."

Jeb Hudson- Engineering Manager

"RAM Engineering designs tooling that works for each particular application. Then we work to **make it better** by evaluating materials, manufacturing processes and operator ease of use to design the most efficient process possible."

Clifton Vaughn- Purchasing Manager

"Continuous improvement drives every successful organization forward; at RAM it is called **Finding What Works and then Making It Better**. This principle has been my driving force since joining the

company in 2022 where I have focused these efforts toward improving procurement & purchasing processes through more effective management of the PO cycle from beginning to end. I am also focused on the longer-term objective of gaining the most value possible from our ERP system as we prepare for continued growth into the future, ever forward."

Daniel Drews- Quality Manager

"When I started at RAM, 2 main goals mentioned were on time delivery and conforming parts. While there are many facets to the above that feed those two goals, I found keeping the vision/goals simple as stated above really helps to align the entire team. It seems to me that this is another "simple" straight forward but effective approach which in turn will align us to produce very beneficial long-term results once we continue to focus on **Finding What Works and then Making It Better** over and over again."

CELEBRATIONS

Join us in celebrating our Employees here at RAM, Inc.



WORK ANNIVERSARIES

David Ingram 22 Years

Justin Allday 18 Years

Becky Cockrum 17 Years

Susan York 17 Years

Robert Duck 16 Years

Danielle Rogers 9 Years

Daniel Bray 7 Years



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

RAM, Inc. Recognizes a valued team member selected to represent NYU in the RSA Conference Security Scholar program hosted at the RSAC 2023

Debbie Simmons 7 Years

Jeb Hudson 7 Years

Nikki Lewis 6 Years

Betty Nix 5 Years

Brittnee Snyder 3 Years

Mike Lewis 3 years

Teresa Boyd 3 Years

Stacie Kennedy 3 Years

Eric Lankford 2 Years

Kayla Wright 2 Years

Cameron Linam 1 Year

Eric Lankford, Cybersecurity and IT

Specialist at RAM, Inc. has been

selected to be one of two

representatives from NYU Tandon

School of Engineering Cyber Fellows

program for the upcoming RSA

Conference (RSSC), the world's

leading cybersecurity conference.

"We are proud of Eric's work and

accomplishments within RAM and the

broader Cybersecurity Community,"

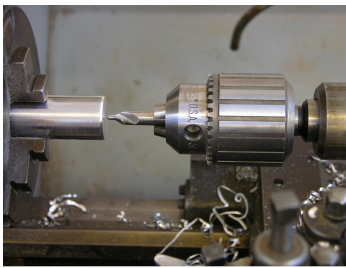
said Richard Williams, CEO of RAM,

Inc.

[Full Press Release](#)

PARTNER WITH RAM

Our team of highly skilled engineers and technicians are experts in design, tooling, and production. We work closely with our customers to understand their needs and develop solutions that meet their exact specifications. Our attention to detail and quality control ensures that every part we produce meets the highest standards.



RAM Engineering Tools

SolidWorks

PC-DMIS-CMM

SolidWorks Plastics Module

CAMWorks



RAM Engineering Services

ASTM Testing

Material Testing

Tensile Testing

Mechanical Testing

Reverse Engineering

Mold Flow Analysis



RAM Product Services

Injection Molding

Vacuum Form Molding

Compression Molding

Thermoforming

Dedicated Assembly and Deburr Areas

Tool Design

Ultrasonic Welding

Component Design
Consultation

CNC Machining for 4th &
5th Axis

Metal-to-Plastic Design
coordination

Cost reduction
initiatives

Engineering

Quality

Manufacturing

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