

Approved for immediate release

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PAVING THE WAY TO HIGHER OUTPUTS

Specialist paving manufacturing company Tarmac TopPave is the latest business to benefit from a Manufacturing Reliability™ programme from Midlands-based Lorien Engineering Solutions.

Tarmac TopPave, wholly owned by Tarmac, is at the forefront of the development and production of hard landscaping products to meet challenging needs of the commercial and domestic markets.

TopPave's growing reputation has been built around product quality and customer service and the company has come to recognise that it is impossible to stand still in the quest to become ever more efficient. In early 2004 TopPave initiated a production improvement programme, asking manufacturing specialist Lorien Engineering Solutions to design and facilitate a six-month programme at the company's factory at Aveley, Essex.

Lorien deployed its Manufacturing Reliability™ programme, which puts into place the 14 critical systems of work that Lorien believes are essential ingredients to achieving consistent, highly efficient manufacture.

Lorien consultant John Lewis said: "The people at the Aveley factory were extremely receptive to implementing some new ideas. We started by doing a two-day visit to the site, and later found that even at this early stage our observations were being acted upon without hesitation."

The work centred around three production units manufacturing concrete block paving and a range of decorative concrete slabs. The manufacturing and packing operations are automated, minimising manual handling as much as possible. John Lewis said: "The process uses sand, grit, cement and water – substances that are ordinarily kept away from automated machines – but TopPave have devised efficient

methods of maintaining plant cleanliness whilst minimising the manual handling tasks involved.”

TopPave Factory Manager David Mullins said: “The various elements of the programme were very accessible for our people, including managers, engineers and operational staff. It was difficult to foresee the effects that Lorien’s approach could have, but the processes they have suggested and implemented really work for us.

“Some of the key ingredients included organisational change, with engineering support working through the production managers, and establishing an OEE (Overall Equipment Effectiveness) measurement and reporting system. We have also established Focussed Improvement Teams who have used root cause analysis to good effect, eliminating some of our nagging problems.”

The programme contained a number of elements, including:

- Leadership training
- Organisational restructure
- OEE measurement and reporting
- Daily meetings
- FIT activities
- Machine settings system
- Rapid changeovers
- Cleaning analysis
- Maintenance organisation review

Operations Director Miles Davies said: “I have been aware of Lorien for about eight years, when they were helping Lever Brothers with their improvement programmes, and have always been impressed with their work. The experience at our Aveley factory has been a good one and I believe we can re-apply the technique to some of our other operations.”

Managing Director Mark McColl said: “A degree of caution is required when employing external people to analyse and facilitate change within your business. Lorien have been a very responsible partner, helping us to establish best practice

and being very honest with us in terms of what is needed to make this durable in the long term. I am looking forward to the continued success of the Aveley plant.”

John Lewis of Lorien said: “MR assignments are a great way to boost your confidence of production operations. We work throughout the organisation, from factory floor to the board, and at TopPave, in common with other clients, there is a lot of energy and determination to take production to the highest level possible. The trick is capturing this energy, and making the improvements long-term ‘wins’ through the systemic approach we advocate via the MR programme. TopPave are now entering the second phase of the programme – and this is a ‘phase’ that has no end. The early improvements are very encouraging.”

Lorien Engineering Solutions is a multi-disciplinary engineering design, project management and manufacturing consultancy based in Lichfield, Staffordshire.

The company has a staff of more than 60 specialists who design and deliver manufacturing projects and consultants who lead manufacturing improvement programmes in brewing, drinks, food, industrial and pharmaceutical production environments. Working for many of the world’s top manufacturing organisations within the UK and overseas, Lorien Engineering Solutions has added many millions of pounds of bottom-line benefit to client organisations.

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