



## Press information

Release immediate: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Ref: TUF13/002

### **TUFNOL COMPOSITES INVESTS IN LEAN TRAINING ACROSS WORKFORCE TO INCREASE CAPABILITIES**

Tufnol Composites – the leading UK manufacturer, machinist and stockist of high performance laminates, composites and engineering plastics – is embarking on a Lean training initiative in a bid to expand the business' manufacturing capabilities and up-skill its workforce.

The Birmingham based manufacturer, which has been operating from its headquarters in Perry Barr since 1929, has enlisted West Midlands based Lean training provider, Lean Education And Development Ltd (LEAD Ltd), to work with teams of employees on projects tailored to their area.

Roy Thomason, Tufnol's Managing Director, explains: "Currently we're running four projects, with one of them, for example, focusing on a total re-organisation of one of our machine shops. We're engaging all employees working within that area in the project, which will enable us to introduce new processes, effectively bringing in-house some work that we have previously had to sub-contract. This will mean that not only are we extending our capabilities, but making significant cost-savings in the process.

"Essentially, we're instigating a culture of continuous improvement", he continues "which can understandably lead to a little reluctance at first, especially amongst some of our longer serving employees. However, once they took ownership of the process, we immediately began to see benefits in terms of improved organisation and visual management.

"The four current projects will run over the course of a year and involve 50% of our workforce who will each work towards gaining a total of six qualifications including a diploma in Business Improvement

Techniques. Assuming the projects continue to be successful, we then plan to engage the remainder of our employees.”

LEAD Ltd has been successfully delivering Lean training projects to a growing number of large manufacturing businesses since the company was co-founded five years ago. Max Jones, Business Development Director and one of the five co-founding directors of the company, said: “Tufnol, like many established manufacturers in the UK, already had a way of operating that worked for them. But there is always room for improvement.

“Tufnol is pioneering a supply chain improvement initiative led by GKN Aerospace, who already understands the benefits of our training in terms of both the business and each of its employees, who are obviously the key to any company’s success.

“Our training projects encourage participation and input from all employees, so they feel fully involved and important to the business. Following completion of the project, each employee receives their six qualifications – all of which are recognised by awarding bodies. By this time the workforce should be running a more efficient and less wasteful operation, resulting in increased productivity and reduced costs.”

LEAD Ltd were introduced to Tufnol by GKN Aerospace who are promoting the deployment of Lean in their key suppliers.

Tony Richards – Head of Supplier Development – GKN Aerospace Europe said “By embracing this initiative Tufnol are demonstrating their commitment to Continuous Improvement and the GKN Supplier Development Programme. This identifies Tufnol as a supplier that GKN will want to work with on a long term basis to our mutual benefit.”

Tufnol Composites is a key supplier of engineering plastics and composites to a number of industries including Aerospace, for which it holds the industry required AS 9100 Revision C quality accreditation.

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**Caption for photograph:**

1. One of the four project teams at Tufnol Composites embarks on a lean training course led by LEAD Ltd.
2. Some of the workforce at Tufnol Composites currently benefitting from lean training.

**Issued on behalf of:**

Tufnol Composites Ltd  
Wellhead Lane  
Perry Barr  
Birmingham B42 2TN  
Tel: +44(0) 121 356 9351  
Fax: +44(0) 121 331 4235  
Email: [sales@tufnol.co.uk](mailto:sales@tufnol.co.uk)  
Website: [www.tufnol.com](http://www.tufnol.com)  
Twitter: @Tufnol

**Press Enquiries:**

Sarah Morris  
NC Creative Group  
Corner Oak  
1 Homer Road  
Solihull  
West Midlands B91 3QG  
Tel: +44 (0) 121 711 6510  
Mob: +44 (0) 7711 379304  
Email: [sarah@nccreativegroup](mailto:sarah@nccreativegroup)  
Website: [www.nccreativegroup.com](http://www.nccreativegroup.com)