

Founded in 2000 by Alan White, the company has grown into one of the most respected names in civil engineering consultancy. Based in Kilmarnock, Alan White Design takes on industry-leading projects across the UK and beyond, working with some of the biggest contractors in the engineering and construction industries. The business has collected a Millennium Product Award, Institution of Structural Engineers Structural Award, and been shortlisted finalists twice at the British Construction Industry awards, confirming its place as one of the foremost engineering specialists in the UK.



## Business Improvement Academy Project

A senior design engineer joined the BIA programme to apply Lean Management techniques to the developing Alan White Design Business (AWD). Upon attendance at the first few sessions it was decided to concentrate on 2 areas: the application of a paperless process within design activity and the development of a skills matrix for project planning.

## Project Analysis

All AWD projects require a high element of analysis and specialist engineering input from a series of touch points as they flow through day to day business activity. The analysis of these processes took place and data was built up to demonstrate the actual levels of Non-Value Add (NVA) activities. These included:

- Excessive manual checking of printed documents
- High amounts of clutter around the office

- Printed documents reviewed once and recycled – against ISO14001
- High costs of Paper/Ink
- Resource costs consumed waiting on printing, changing ink, adding paper etc.

Being involved in the BIA acted as a facilitation to take a step back and look at the impact of this poor utilisation of a highly skilled resource on relatively NVA activities. As the business continues to grow it is increasingly difficult to procure a highly skilled workforce to meet market demand and the data analysis highlighted the importance of maximising the resources within the business. This led to the further analysis of the management of staff to plan for the resourcing of projects and it was evident that the current paper-based system was inconsistent, time consuming and causing problems with inefficient completion of projects. It also highlighted the need to create a more organised system for skills deployment to specific projects so that skills gaps could be minimised through investment in structured training linked to operational activity.

## Making Improvement

The company introduced tablets to the office and worked with the entire team to use these on all projects, minimising the need to print off reams of paper and focusing staff to complete activity in a more value add format. Documents could now be checked off in real time, reducing waiting time whilst creating a visually clutter free office environment.

A skill matrix was introduced providing a more efficient means of tracking employee skills, leading to the identification and proactive management of skills gaps and addressing these up-front. As the office was decluttered, a “5S” system was introduced which has created a process to integrate increasing staff numbers into the office without significant space issues.



## Additional benefits

- Change management procedure improved
- 5S audit – low score – office refurb

Area	Criteria	Score	Comments
5S	1.1.1.1	1	
	1.1.1.2	1	
	1.1.1.3	1	
	1.1.1.4	1	
Change Management	1.2.1.1	1	
	1.2.1.2	1	
	1.2.1.3	1	
	1.2.1.4	1	
Paperless	1.3.1.1	1	
	1.3.1.2	1	
	1.3.1.3	1	
	1.3.1.4	1	



8

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## Business Benefits

The training matrix allows the company to monitor the ICE Training scheme which is in place for all engineers as well as specific software ability and soft skills. The system is being developed to tie in with the business plans to highlight future skills gaps and employment requirements.

The BIA Project charter document is now utilised and rebranded as a “change request form” in an improved change management procedure as historically there was no process to contemplate all risks and pitfalls of changes.

The 5S system has seen the company remove the clutter off shelves, book cases and unnecessary cabinets. The 5S plan is leading to an office refurbishment and redecoration.

The new paperless system is saving over £1,000 per annum in ink and paper costs and reducing the impact on the environment. The time reduction in NVA activity has the potential to increase resource capacity by £20k over the next twelve months.

*“Coming from a technical background, I entered the BIA programme with the desire to bridge a skills gap which would support my own performance as a Company Director, and ultimately help to drive forward business improvement initiatives.*

*Both projects offered a structured ‘model’ environment which helped me develop lean management techniques and apply them practically with support from the programme mentors. The processes and skills which were developed through this experience now give us a blueprint for future business improvement activities, allowing us to grow our business with confidence. The programme and projects have already yielded tangible results across many areas of our business, both expected and unexpected, but all of which have contributed to the achievement of our business objectives”*