

UniRac Recognized for Progressive Manufacturing

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, May 8, 2007 - UniRac's Lean Manufacturing drive has been recognized with a 2007 Progressive Manufacturing Award from *Managing Automation*.

"We've already seen great dividends from this program with new levels of quality, cost, and delivery performance," said Richard P. Welch, UniRac's Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, who initiated the drive last fall.

"The rapidly growing solar industry provides us the opportunity to be proactive around this lean initiative and forward looking in its contributions to the company. We're committed to a long term continuous program of improvement, not a one-shot or limited effort."

The award will be presented in Las Vegas on June 14. As a recipient, UniRac is eligible for one of the magazine's High Achiever awards, to be announced that evening.

Lean Manufacturing stresses systematic approaches to identifying and eliminating waste and any activities that add no value to the product. It strives to continuously improve product flow based on the customer's "pull-signal" demand. An example is "just in time" delivery of materials via a supplier-managed inventory process. As a result, the right materials are always on hand to fill orders.

Welch stressed the impact on the customer in terms of meeting demanding short-cycled delivery expectations "On-time deliveries were 100 percent in April and are greater than 99 percent for the entire year. We deliver a significant percentage of our products in one to five days from order receipt."

"UniRac delivers on time and they do what they say they will do," said Ed Bless of Blueline Power of Marina, California. "Many aspects of supply are time-critical, and everything in the supply chain happened as it needed to happen. By meeting its commitment, UniRac came through for us." Blueline recently completed an array atop the Monterey County (California) Weekly, which featured the installation in its **cover story** May 2.

Welch identified employee involvement as the largest contributor to the program's success. "I'm truly encouraged by the acceptance across the organization." He also credited key contributors to the lean effort: Andrea Holling and Matt Moser of the New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership, who provided Lean training classes, and Brian McMillan, a representative of Global Shop Solutions, the developer of UniRac's Enterprise Resource Planning software.

"As an environmentally conscious company, we aggressively practice recycling and waste-product elimination which coincides with the lean principles around waste reduction," said Welch. That effort ties into the company's long-standing commitment to green business practices and a preference for partnering with suppliers who employ the same practices.

Managing Automation (www.managingautomation.com) covers technology solutions for progressive manufacturers. It is based in New York City.