



The close working relationship between KMF (Precision Sheet Metal) and one of its most strategically important customers is paying dividends to both parties, as they work together to develop service level improvements

In business it is a common belief that there is always room for improvement and at KMF, the Newcastle under Lyme-based manufacturer of fully integrated bespoke sheetmetal work, continuous improvement has become second nature for its 300 plus employees. A good example of this is a recently implemented programme of service level improvements with Schneider Electric, one of KMF's key customers.

The programme is a joint venture headed up by KMF's Debra Woodcock and Arunas Milasius from Schneider Electric, who had an initial brief to systematically reduce batch sizes across the extensive range of products manufactured by KMF on Schneider Electric's behalf.

The intention is that by looking at batch size requirements and matching them closely to Schneider Electric's rate of consumption, the burden of extra inventory held will be significantly reduced.

"This is a great programme for KMF to be involved with, especially with such a high profile customer," remarked Keith Nicholl, KMF's business improvement manager. "KMF's approach to manufacturing improvements over recent years coupled with a commitment to invest in the latest technology means that we can challenge the traditional concept of economic batch quantities and greatly reduce the waste that results from over production. The combined knowledge of Debra and Arunas will ensure that this project is guaranteed to produce the often quoted 'win-win' situation."

KMF's On Time In Full (OTIF) measure for its Schneider Electric contracts is in excess of 98.5% over the last two years. However, by implementing the service level improvements that are being identified, savings through inventory reductions are expected to be significant. This initial stage, once fully implemented will provide the basis for further cooperation between the two companies, with plans already in place to reduce what are already very short leadtimes.