

BAKERY GOES GREEN WITH LEAN THINKING



Brothers Louis and Dave with their father Luigi Bontorin who started the business 50 years ago.

Automation combined with visual management.



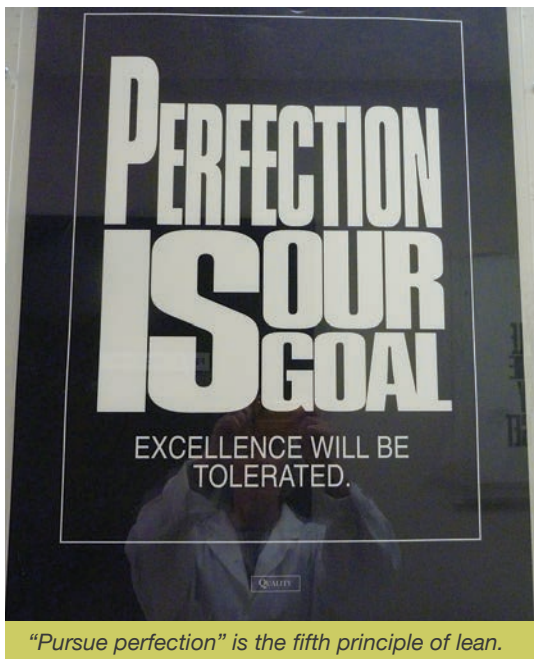
As it celebrates its 50th year in business, Calgary Italian Bakery is becoming more efficient and sustainable than ever. Environmental sustainability has rapidly become an important factor for large organizations when choosing suppliers.

For Calgary Italian Bakery, a request to see the company's sustainability policy has resulted in a lean and green journey that will not only satisfy customer demands but also brings unexpected benefits that will ultimately result in a lean-thinking, environmentally sustainable organization.

The bakery brought Brett Wills, president and CEO, Green Enterprise Movement, in for four full-day sessions to work with key employees and get them started. "We looked at our carbon footprint and got to know the terminology so we could start talking about sustainability," says Bontorin. "From there, we've built our three pillars of sustainability—environmental, economic and social—and we can see some of the things that we can do to become more sustainable."

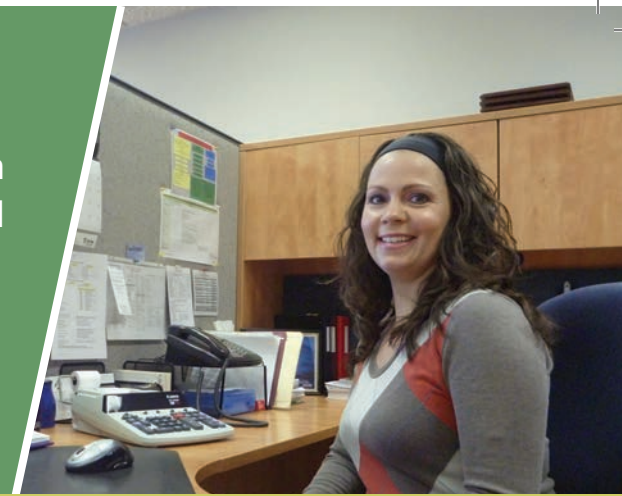
For several years, Calgary Italian Bakery has practised lean thinking, looking for improvements to make the operation as effective and efficient as possible. Co-owner Louis Bontorin, along with brother David, run the company their parents started in 1962, and when they were asked to produce a sustainability policy, they weren't aware they could use the concepts and tools behind lean to also reduce the company's impact on the environment. They discovered that the two went hand in hand.

A big surprise for Bontorin was that the information needed to evaluate and improve sustainability is often at hand. They found energy and water consumption on utility bills and information to determine the carbon footprint of the company's vehicles on fleet cards.



"Pursue perfection" is the fifth principle of lean.

Rural Development (ARD) has a number of initiatives in place to help agri-food processing companies interested in increasing their productivity and sustainability.



Christie Mann who enjoys working for a company that cares about the environment.

“You’ve got the information and you start putting it together. This is what our carbon footprint is, and now the challenge is to determine how much waste you can reduce and how are you going to do it, and then you start developing your vision—what you want to accomplish as a company,” he says.

It’s early in the journey, but already they are planning lighting and water audits and are sourcing a new waste hauler who will help them keep more waste out of the landfill. When they do start to implement, the results will come more quickly than they typically come with lean.

“It’s a way to get some really quick wins, and you can see it immediately on the bottom line. For example, if you use X amount of kilowatt hours less this month, you’ll see it on the utility bill right away,” says Wills. “It’s a great way to build momentum and interest in a continuous improvement program.”

It can also be easier to engage employees in a lean and green program than in a traditional lean program. “Whether it’s because of their personal connection to the environment, personal interest, or the fact that it is something they can take into their personal lives, it just seems to be a more

engaging program,” says Wills.

Christie Mann, accounts receivable manager at Calgary Italian Bakery, exemplifies Wills’ theory. She’s a strong supporter of the initiative, in part because it will drive down costs but also because of her personal beliefs.

“It’s the desire to do something positive for the environment,” she says, explaining her enthusiasm, “and to work for a company that actually cares about the impact that it has on the environment.”

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