



Case Study: Sugarlands Distilling Co.

Website: www.sugarlands.com

Industry: Distillery

Sugarlands produces a wide variety of moonshine and whiskeys at its distillery in Gatlinburg, Tenn., where it also a popular tourist destination.

“Thrive’s software is very good. And the company has been excellent checking in with us to make sure everything is going smoothly.”

Greg Eidam, Head Distiller



The Assignment

In a plant running two lines with two shifts a day, productivity was measured manually by line operators who counted cases of Sugarlands products stacked on pallets. The plant’s management knew they weren’t achieving maximum productivity. They also had a lot of downtime events for various reasons but were unable to gather precise data that told them why, which would help them devise solutions. The lack of data also kept them from being able to prioritize their problems. Additionally, the inefficiencies weren’t just related to Sugarlands production lines but with their line operators and employees, as each person handled things differently with little coordination between them. Once the company decided it need a productivity tracking software system, it didn’t take long for them to find Thrive. The plant’s head distiller, working with electricians, directed the hardware installation process and helped the line operators learn how to correctly input the data. There was a learning curve as not all the line operators had the same level of computer expertise and some of them resisted the change to the new system. The company also brought in an employee to monitor all the productivity and downtime data input from the Thrive system to make sure everything thing was being done correctly.



The Results

The Thrive system has been a success. The data collected has helped the company diagnose the problem areas that were previously missed. As a result, they changed the process on both lines which has led to improved productivity. Thrive’s system also alerted the company to equipment issues that previously had been ignored. Rather than delaying new equipment purchases, the company quickly upgraded the problem areas. Finally, it became apparent from the data collected from Thrive that Sugarlands needed to hire more people to work on their productions lines to improve their efficiency.



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