



Scientists at the Lincoln, Nebraska, site worked to develop the new inactivation process and analytical assay. Pictured from left to right are Technical Project Managers Eric Wicklund and Chad Locke.

**Engagement in Action**

# Engaged Teams Bring the Concept of Collaboration to New Levels of Success

Across PGS, one results driver stands out as key to delivering consistently exceptional success: teamwork. In fact, in a sampling of results – from Ireland and Italy to Canada and the United States – high-performing teams figure prominently as the primary ingredient in PGS' success.

**Best Practice Sharing at Its Best**

The creation of high-performing, cross-functional process teams has revolutionized production at the Primary Care/Oncology plant in Ringaskiddy, Ireland, as well as at other company locations in the country. This concept was introduced in Little Island, Ireland, six years ago, and the two leadership teams have worked together closely to ensure this best practice was replicated at Ringaskiddy.

"Adherence to our production schedule is

critical because shortfalls are difficult to make up by the end of the year," said **Claire Ahern**, Process Team Project Lead. "The team approach has accelerated innovation and problem solving at Ringaskiddy as people with different perspectives brainstorm and work together to ensure on-schedule results."

The first process team was introduced for *Neurontin* in March 2009, and productivity on this process improved by 96%, yield increased by 4% and the plant has seen a cost reduction of USD \$435,000. That outcome has led to the creation of additional process teams, and, today, there are 16 in place with nine active at any one time.

"We have seen process teams eliminate barriers to high performance, which gives us the agility to make quick decisions that are essential to continuous improvement," said **Stephanie Kealy**, Competitiveness & Engagement Team Leader. "Our colleagues tell us the team approach has improved communication and given them a better

understanding of other functions and overall processes. It's created a better working environment and made everyone feel more involved in what we do."

**A Team Focused on Continually Delivering High-Value Results**

It's one thing to adopt the principles of Lean manufacturing – it's quite another to make those principles work optimally and actually realize their potential.

Take the case of consolidating all *Effexor* production at Newbridge, Ireland. The challenge was not only to make the consolidation happen but also to make it work – effectively and efficiently.

Enter the *Effexor* Cross-Functional Process team, established in February of this year. Its mission: ensure high-quality *Effexor* production and encourage increased levels of colleague engagement in the plant's manufacturing processes. The team made this happen by adopting practices that had worked so well at the nearby Ringaskiddy

plant. They included brief, early-morning sessions designed to both review and refine ongoing performance factors, as well as weekly 90-minute meetings to cover big-picture production issues.

Some of those sessions gave Newbridge colleagues opportunities to make suggestions and voice their opinions on ways that would assure continuous improvement in all *Effexor* manufacturing operations.

**Bronagh O'Rourke**, *Effexor* Processing Supervisor, Newbridge Process team, pointed out, "The combined results of our team sessions and weekly assessments let us know where we are, how well we're doing and where there are needs for adjustments in virtually all phases of the *Effexor* manufacturing process."

Continuing, Bronagh said, "Through the efforts of the Newbridge Process team, process planning and implementation are improving continually. Also, collaboration between functions – and alignment with production requirements – is at an all-time high. Whenever process investigations are required, they get closed faster than ever before. Lessons learned through the *Effexor* successes are being applied throughout the plant."

**Improving Work Flow and Productivity**

Three years ago, the Established Products solid dosage plant in Ascoli, Italy, reorganized into four multifunctional, high-performance teams each focused on a set of technologically similar product families. That means each team directs its attention to ensuring all the materials and informa-

tion needed for optimal results always are in place. At the same time, each team concentrates on improving production efficiency from when the orders are received to final product release.

The team approach has resulted in the growth of Ascoli's product portfolio year after year – with no increase in on-site resources – all while continuing to satisfy its customers. Both operators and staff have the opportunity to cross train and develop through assignments in different areas, while multifunctional support staff facilitate engagement and the implementation of ideas for improvement.

"Organizing a big plant around multifunctional teams has made complexity more manageable at Ascoli," **Piet Swartelé**, Manufacturing Director, explained. "Our team-based, flow-path focus guarantees that we will keep improving the productivity of the whole plant, not just some of its parts."

**Remarkable Improvements and a Team Goal on Delivering More**

**Louis Bernier**, Production Services Manager, detailed just one of the successes delivered by the Inbound Process team at the Consumer Healthcare plant in Montreal, Canada: "At the receiving dock, this team reduced overall cycle time for the packaging component from 48 hours to 48 minutes."

Another key contributor to the time savings was the elimination of manual packaging documentation with a web-based tool. The

Cliff Boley, an Operator at the Charles City, Iowa plant performing a final inspection and packing of Porcine Circovirus *Fostera*.



team also introduced a just-in-time Vendor Managed Inventory system that provides our suppliers with a view of future demand for 80% of our packaging materials. It's a system that not only helps suppliers better anticipate the plant's process needs, but it also has reduced inventory work in process from 250 to 160 pallets.

continued on page 29

Newbridge, Ireland, colleagues engaged in a Process Team meeting. Pictured from left to right are Liam Ryan, Operational Lead; Ger Dooley, *Effexor* Supervisor; Teresa McGarr, Planner; Colm O'Reilly, Technology Specialist; Valerie McCarthy, Quality Control Supervisor; Stephen Callinan, Reliability Engineer; and Keith Brennan, Engineering Technician.

