

Lean manufacturing at Floratech shortens lead time

When Floratech's parent company, Air Innovations, adopted lean manufacturing principles two years ago, the goal was to eliminate waste and streamline productivity. Employees enthusiastically embraced the program in which it is everyone's responsibility to look for and suggest ways to eliminate the wastes commonly identified on the traditional factory floor.

According to Rich Gozgian, Air Innovations' director of manufacturing, "Floratech's ability to provide on-time quality deliveries and shorten lead times has improved dramatically since the introduction of lean manufacturing." Production is expedited with each work station independent of the others and fully stocked with all the necessary tools and equipment to build a case.

Lean manufacturing at Floratech also embraces the "grocery store" concept of stocking popular models in the factory, providing the possibility of immediate turnarounds to customers. According to Rich, "the grocery store helps customers meet special store openings or seasonal planning needs."



Tom Cocopoti, line leader at Floratech's manufacturing facility in Syracuse, New York, checks pressure gauges as part of the company's quality control process.

Protecting your floral equipment investment

To look and operate at its best, your open refrigerated floral display case requires nothing more than a little simple care and common sense. According to the technical staff at Floratech, many cooler problems can be eliminated before they happen by instituting a program of frequent vase deck cleaning. Cleaning helps your cooler maintain a temperature of 35–40 degrees, the optimum required for cut flower preservation. And a regular cleaning regimen ensures a longer, healthier life for your cooler.

Why is cleaning so important? Proper deck maintenance minimizes debris buildup in the evaporator section of the refrigeration unit. Failure to keep this area clean may cause the evaporator coils to freeze up and the cooler to fail.

Water spilled onto the deck or in the vase holes also causes overflow in the evaporator trays. That water may then stagnate inside the cooler, providing a source of bacterial contamination (botrytis) that causes the flowers to quickly deteriorate.

Floratech recommends the following procedure to safeguard your cooler.



Never spill water into the vase holes of your floral cooler.

Easy 3-Step Vase Deck Cleaning

Perform 1–2 times per week

- Step 1** Turn unit off. Remove vases from the vase deck. Be careful not to spill any water on the deck or in the vase holes. This is an ideal time to clean and sanitize the vases.
- Step 2** Vacuum first, then wipe down deck with a soft cloth, and metal cleaner if necessary.
- Step 3** Return vases; fill with water/solution. Turn on display.

Floratech's open refrigerated floral displays sell more product by providing improved flower visibility, easy customer access and prolonged shelf life.

Protect this valuable investment!

For more maintenance tips, check the Floratech website at www.floratech.net

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Floratech announces promotion

Debbie Pelow, the voice of customer service at Floratech, was recently promoted to accounts manager. While continuing to serve as the main point of daily contact with customers, she will take on post-sale management responsibility of current contract account activity including: review of customer forecasts and construction schedules; writing and revising orders; and coordinating between sales, service and operations. "Debbie's reputation for prompt service

combined with her product knowledge makes her a valuable member of our team," said Cheryl Gressani, Floratech division manager. In addition to her customer service responsibilities, Debbie has gained field experience during the past few years by visiting customers' stores, attending trade shows, and expediting special handling requests on the Floratech factory floor.

"During her five years as sales and marketing coordinator, Debbie proved her commitment to customer satisfaction, which defines the focus of responsibility of this new role," said Michael Wetzel, president of Air Innovations, Floratech's parent company. "Our goal at Floratech is to exceed the expectations of our



Debbie Pelow is Floratech's new account manager.

customers, and we feel that Debbie's promotion is an important step in the process."

Debbie can be reached on her direct line at 315-452-7433, toll-free at 800-535-3295, or at dpelow@floratech.net.