

ADDITIONAL LABORATORY SPACE SUPPORTS BUSINESS GROWTH

Problem

A large clinical laboratory was challenged by the limited space available to manage their business. The lab had tripled in size over a 10-year-period, and the volume of testing had increased by 75% during that time. Despite attempts to optimize the existing space by staffing three shifts, day-to-day logistical challenges were increasing, and departments were not comfortable in their working environment. The concerns weren't limited to cramped quarters. The lab also wanted to ensure that safety and ergonomic needs were met.

Solution

A **VWRCATALYST** Lean Six Sigma Process Consultant was assigned to lead a project, with the objectives of improving lab conditions and recommending solutions to support the company's long-term goals. The consultant began by developing a project charter, clarifying corporate goals, identifying key project stakeholders, and engaging an executive sponsor to ensure the project had the appropriate commitment.

During an initial discussion, the executive sponsor proposed two options: relocate to a new facility offsite, or transform the existing work space. After further analysis, during which the **VWRCATALYST** consultant collected data and interviewed stakeholders, a third option was proposed. This hybrid solution included space renovation and a phased, partial relocation that would maintain the quality of testing service and cycle time to the lab's customers. In order to ensure the space optimization of the nearly 35,000 square-foot lab area, a VWR Furniture Specialist was added to the project team to maximize the flow of inventory, personnel, and samples throughout the facility. This specialist was also tasked with facilitating plans, drawings, and a road map to ensure successful implementation.

Based on the consultant's analysis, the following recommendations were developed, and a multi-generational project was planned:

- Optimize lab space through 5S methodology (Sort, Straighten, Sweep, Standardize, Sustain), removing unused supplies and equipment, and implementing a point-of-use lab supplies inventory management system
- Modify racking systems to optimize stockroom space, walk-in freezers, and refrigerators
- Provide modification proposals to free up lab floor space: utilize mobile lab stations and adjustable work areas, and redesign cabinetry to remove under-counter storage drawers
- Reconfigure existing equipment and identify new technology with a smaller footprint
- Eliminate a second stockroom at the facility
- Offsite storage within a VWR warehouse to reduce inventory footprint

PROBLEM

A large clinical laboratory was challenged by limited space as well as safety and ergonomic risk factors.

SOLUTION

A **VWRCATALYST** consultant was engaged to maximize the flow of inventory, personnel, and samples.

RESULT

The consultant determined that 17% of overall square footage could be returned with space with a 5S program.

Results

During this initial project, it was determined that 17% of the overall square footage could be returned. This included relocating some manager offices from within the laboratory to the administration area, and closing a second stockroom. With the elimination of this additional storage, a new staging area helped the furniture project team prepare for implementation and minimize disruption to the lab and testing areas.

The additional improvements from the 5S program, creation of work cells and new lab redesign, provided an additional 3,000 square feet.

VWRCATALYST is also working on the following future projects for the clinical lab:

Inventory and Equipment Management

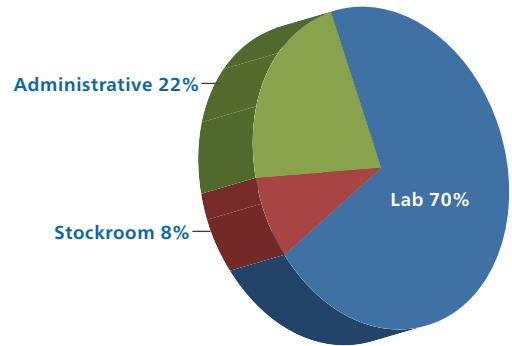
Reduce the existing inventory volumes throughout the facility and manage to the point of use in the labs. (Primary stockroom → Secondary stockroom → Closet storage → Bench top)

Supply Chain Harmonization

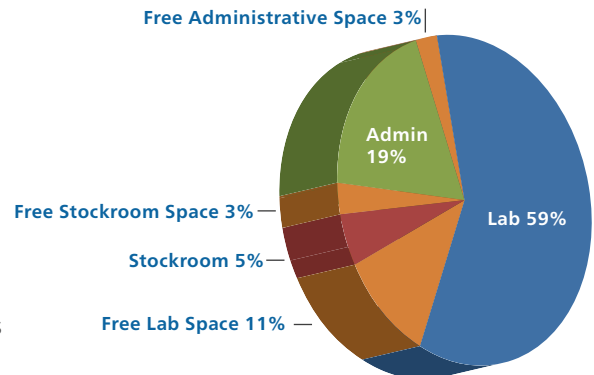
- Reduce vendor base and consolidate through distribution model
- Product standardization

Service/Support

- Expand materials management team to support lab in non-scientific activities



Square Footage by Business Segment



Available Square Footage Increased by 3,000 square feet, or 17%

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