

Sherry Jordan of Custom Direct wins a trip to Japan from Lean Sensei



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Industry: [Marketing](#)

Press Release Summary: Joppa, MD December 5, 2008—Custom Direct initiated its lean practices in 2006 when it started the journey toward World Class status. Sherry Jordan, Lean Coordinator, attended the annual AME conference and after telling the Custom Direct story, won a trip to Japan to learn from the best in Lean.

Press Release Body: In 2006, when [Custom Direct](#) decided to strive for World Class status, one of its first initiatives was to become a lean company. In order to do this, **Custom Direct** began using Baldrige criteria for Performance Excellence and Lean Manufacturing techniques as road maps in addition to having employees attend annual conferences held by the **Association for Manufacturing Excellence**. The **AME** is a non-profit organization that helps companies become lean in a number of different ways. Everything from lean supply chain management to lean accounting is taught by the AME through interactive training and professionals who provide help and insight by sharing their own success stories.

Sherry Jordan, who has worked for [Custom Direct](#) since 1995, became the Lean Coordinator in 2006 to help guide the company through the Lean portion of its journey. Ms. Jordan was chosen as someone who would be committed to the journey and capable of addressing any resistance to change that was sure to be encountered. With the support of the **Maryland Technology Extension Services (MTES)** and Ms. Jordan's guidance, **Custom Direct** has made significant progress in becoming a Lean organization. Ms. Jordan has also earned her bronze certification in Lean awarded by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Shingo Prize, and the **AME** and serves as a reviewer of applications that are submitted for other bronze level hopefuls.

Having attended the **AME** conferences since 2006, Sherry Jordan always looks forward to traveling to the event and being able to learn new Lean tools and techniques by touring other organizations and hearing presentations from Lean specialists. At this year's conference, held in Toronto, Ms. Jordan learned of a contest

that **Lean Sensei**, a consulting firm, was holding through the **AME** event. The individual who told the best story about his company's journey from good to great would win a trip to Japan to learn from the masters of Lean. Although reluctant to write her story because the odds of winning seemed slim, Ms. Jordan decided to tell about **Custom Direct's** journey in Lean. She told how the company began the journey by engaging employees (and the executive team) and that today, only two years later, the company has realized a 35% improvement in delivery and in some cases, a 45% decrease in defects.

Because she wrote the story quickly from memory and the fact that more than 2400 people from thirty-four different countries attended the conference, Ms. Jordan was shocked when she learned that her entry had won the contest! Traveling to Japan, for five eighteen hour days, will no doubt bring only good things for **Custom Direct** as Ms. Jordan will learn from the best in Lean. This trip, which will take place in April, 2009, will strengthen her understanding of Lean concepts and enable her to implement new procedures at **Custom Direct**. Ms. Jordan will also be sharing her story and the details of her trip to Japan at next year's AME conference in Kentucky.

When asked about her huge accomplishment, **Sherry Jordan** had this to say, *"I was pleasantly surprised to hear that my entry was chosen as the winner! I will do my best to ensure that it pays off for Custom Direct as we continue on our journey to World Class Status! There's no slowing down in our journey - we have to plow forward regardless of the perceived obstacles."* Congratulations, Sherry!

About

Custom

Direct:

Offering an array of products, Custom Direct is an environmentally friendly company that has been operating since 1992. Initially only producing checks, Custom Direct has grown to produce other stationery products, custom designed and printed products, and anti-fraud services. With so much to offer, Custom Direct truly has something for everyone.

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