

# Gold'n Plump Poultry Gets a Birds-eye View with Quality Companion



Using Quality Companion by Minitab helps Gold'n Plump teams complete their continuous improvement projects faster, and makes it easy to demonstrate the results to their executives.

## KEY FACTS

### ORGANIZATION

Gold'n Plump Poultry, Inc.

### OVERVIEW

- Headquartered in St. Cloud, Minn.
- Largest integrated chicken producer in the upper Midwest
- Products sold in 40 states and internationally
- Approximately 1,500 employees
- Contracts with over 300 growers in Minnesota and Wisconsin

### QUALITY CHALLENGE

To become the benchmark of manufacturing excellence for the poultry industry.

### PRODUCTS USED

Quality Companion by Minitab® and Minitab® Statistical Software

### RESULTS

- \$5.2 million in company-wide savings from projects in 2009
- Easier to share results with peers and management
- Faster, more consistent project execution
- Standardized projects across all locations

Gold'n Plump Poultry provides chicken products to stores, delis, and restaurants in 40 states. Commitment to process excellence has helped the company thrive even in tough times, and Minitab Statistical Software has provided the powerful tools they needed to analyze quality data. But the company's many improvement projects were being performed at multiple locations, using a variety of tools. That made it hard for management to assess the total benefit of their efforts. Now, using Quality Companion by Minitab, Gold'n Plump teams rely on one application to manage projects from start to finish. And the Quality Companion Dashboard utility makes it simple for management to monitor their progress and results, collectively and at the project level. "With Quality Companion, there's no question how much our projects help Gold'n Plump's bottom line," says Dean Kirkeby, continuous improvement manager. "You can see it right on the Dashboard!"

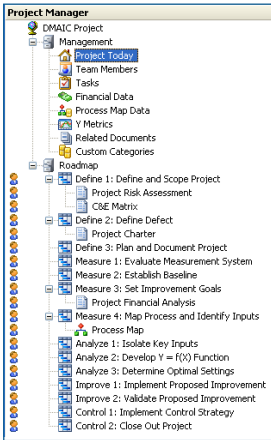
## The Challenge

Based in St. Cloud, Minnesota, Gold'n Plump has become the upper Midwest's largest fully integrated broiler producer. This family-owned business also seeks to become the benchmark of manufacturing excellence for the poultry industry. To meet that goal, Gold'n Plump integrates two quality improvement strategies: Six Sigma to address process quality, eliminate defects and reduce product variation, and Lean to boost process speed and flow and eliminate waste. Gold'n Plump's commitment yields real dividends—in 2009, it achieved \$5.2 million in company-wide savings from improvement projects.

Getting a comprehensive understanding of the impact of all these projects was their challenge. "Projects were making a difference across the company, at all of our facilities, but there was no easy way to share all of the information," Kirkeby says. "There were a lot of questions, information was missing, and there was a lack of consistency across projects. It was a challenge for managers to provide feedback to teams, and to demonstrate their successes to our executives."

*Learn how Minitab software can help you improve quality at [www.minitab.com](http://www.minitab.com).*

## How Quality Companion Helped



The Project Roadmap™ gives teams a clear path.

Minitab designed Quality Companion to solve such problems by providing all the tools needed to manage improvement projects in one application. Companion's Project Roadmap™ helps teams create a detailed plan for an entire project, while built-in "soft" tools, such as process mapping, brainstorming, and reporting, provide the means to complete each step.

Kirkeby discovered Quality Companion when he was searching for a tool to do value stream mapping (VSM), a primary technique in Lean initiatives. Companion's VSM tool makes it easy to track key variables such as inventory, Takt time, and cycle time. "It's very powerful, but has almost no learning curve," Kirkeby says. "It's extremely easy to use."

That was just the beginning. As he began using many of Companion's more than 100 built-in forms, including C&E Matrix, FMEA, and Project Charter, Kirkeby saw how Companion saves time by centralizing project data and eliminating needless re-entry. "Quality Companion uses the data you enter in one tool throughout the project," he says. "So, for instance, you can brainstorm in the fishbone tool, then share the information you've created with the next phase of the project."

Using Companion obviously could benefit Gold'n Plump's project teams. But the company also needed a way to better capture and demonstrate the overall impact of its quality efforts. The Quality Companion Dashboard utility, which aggregates and displays details of all a company's Quality Companion projects, provided the solution.

"When my boss realized how easy it would be to view the status of our CQI efforts with the Dashboard, he quickly went from a skeptic to a believer," Kirkeby says. "The Dashboard really proved itself to our executives. We even use information we gather from the Dashboard to demonstrate results to bankers and financiers."

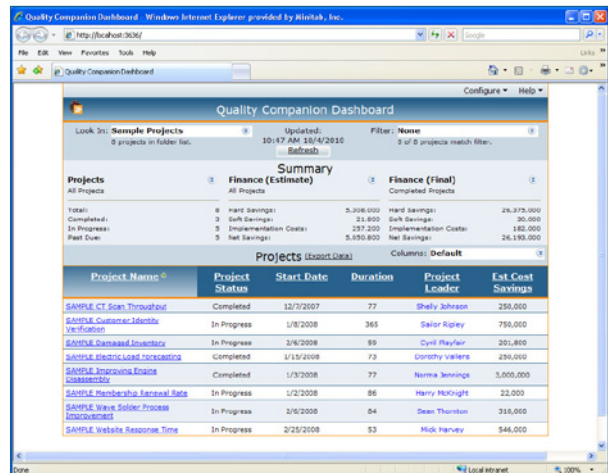
## Results

A year after Gold'n Plump began using Quality Companion to manage improvement projects, the benefits are clear. Project quality has improved, and teams complete their projects more quickly. "Quality Companion helps us finish projects more efficiently," Kirkeby says. "And if someone wants more details, it's all right there in your project file. It gives you great confidence when you're presenting your results."

Quality Companion's built-in Coaches, which give expert advice from experienced Lean Six Sigma professionals, also have been helpful. "The Coaches are great for green belts who are still learning, because they can find most of the answers they need right in the software."

But it may be the Dashboard's powerful project tracking and reporting capabilities that have provided the biggest benefits. "We used to track projects on a spreadsheet," Kirkeby notes. "Gathering information about each project, entering it, then creating reports took 20% to 40% of our time. Now, since the project information and data is already stored in Companion, we don't spend time doing non-value-added tasks. That frees us to focus on the projects themselves."

"Quality Companion furthers our CQI efforts," Kirkeby says. "And that helps Gold'n Plump meet our ultimate goal: supporting and delighting our customers."



Summary		Finance (Estimate)		Finance (Final)	
Total:	8	Hard Savings:	5,308,000	Hard Savings:	24,975,000
Completed:	3	Soft Savings:	21,800	Soft Savings:	30,000
In Progress:	5	Implementation Costs:	237,200	Implementation Costs:	182,000
Heat Due:	5	Net Savings:	5,050,800	Net Savings:	24,823,000

Project Name	Project Status	Start Date	Duration	Project Leader	Est. Cost Savings
SAMPLE CT Scan Threshold	Completed	12/7/2007	77	Shelly Johnson	250,000
SAMPLE Customer Identity Verification	In Progress	1/8/2008	365	Sador Ripley	750,000
SAMPLE Damaged Inventory	In Progress	3/6/2008	89	Cybil Ravlin	201,800
SAMPLE Electric Load Forecasting	Completed	3/15/2008	73	Gonny Vallery	290,000
SAMPLE Insurance Expense Classification	Completed	1/3/2008	77	Norma Jennings	3,000,000
SAMPLE Membership Renewal Rate	In Progress	1/2/2008	86	Harry McKnight	22,000
SAMPLE Wave Solder Process Improvement	In Progress	3/6/2008	84	Sean Thornton	310,000
SAMPLE Website Response Time	In Progress	2/25/2008	53	Mark Harvey	546,000

With the Quality Companion Dashboard, executives can instantly see the progress of an entire quality program.



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