

SUMMER 2004

powerline™

connecting Thomas & Betts employees worldwide

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Climbing to the Top Using Lean Six Sigma

Thomas&Betts



Being the Best We Can Be: The Skinny on Lean Six Sigma

Program Puts Employees In the Driver's Seat to Ensure Future Success

Striving for operational excellence is one of the T&B's guiding principles. In everyday terms, that means being the best we can be – in everything we do.

The pursuit of perfection is a lofty – but achievable – goal, thanks to T&B employees around the world enthusiastically embracing the lean and Six Sigma operating philosophies.

Lean and Six Sigma are complementary philosophies that address inefficiencies in production and service. Although it sounds like the name of a college fraternity, Six Sigma is actually a statistical approach that increases profitability by reducing defects. Lean identifies and eliminates waste in a process. Combining the two approaches may sound complicated, but it's working on the factory floor.

“Fundamentally, lean and Six Sigma are about improving processes in order to maximize performance and improve customer service. Understanding your customer is critical to making lean Six Sigma work,” said Tim Coates, who heads up U.S. electrical operations.

“Lean Six Sigma is a journey, not a destination,”

Coates added. “Our goal is to make continuous improvement second nature to everyone on the T&B team.”

According to Coates, he could write a book filled with positive examples of lean and Six Sigma that have been implemented at T&B.

T&B's Portland, Tennessee facility rebuilt the entire Union® box manufacturing line to create a more continuous flow system. In doing so, they cut the number of machines from 50 to 20 and installed state-of-the-art machinery.

“We'll save approximately \$1 million per year as a result of the changes we made so far,” said Matt Fadule, Portland plant manager.



Tubs eliminated at Mercer as a result of the lean initiatives.

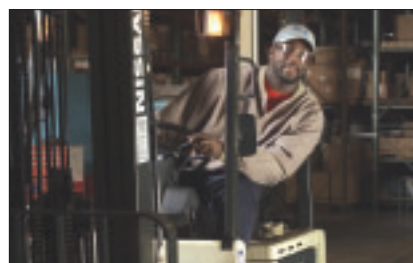
At T&B's HVAC facility in Mercer, Pennsylvania, components are delivered to the production line more frequently, allowing 850 holding tubs used in the assembly of Reznor heaters to be eliminated.

“We freed up 15,000 square feet of floor space with the elimination of the tubs,” said Mike Sheridan, Mercer plant manager. “This has contributed to a greatly improved material flow and a cleaner, safer work environment.”

Lean teaches speed and efficiency; Six Sigma is about consistency.

“By using lean tools, we shifted the momentum of change from the hands of a few into the hands of the entire workforce,” said Dan Otten, head of operations for the HVAC business. “This magnifies the speed and frequency of the improvements we can make.”

T&B has invested approximately \$20 million to upgrade equipment and to train employees as part of the lean Six Sigma journey. “We made a significant investment in training so that lean Six Sigma would become part of the fabric of our culture,” said Imad Hajj, who initially led the lean Six Sigma rollout



in the electrical business, and now serves as president of the HVAC segment. “After all, employees are the ones who understand the ins and outs of our processes the best.”

The effort to drive lean Six Sigma throughout T&B’s manufacturing operations has been successful because employee teams have been responsible for both analyzing and implementing changes.

At T&B’s Blackburn® connectors facility in Mexico, a team of engineers and operators has cut the time needed to prepare the presses from 45 to 10 minutes. This has improved production efficiencies and service levels.

Cross-geographic work teams have also used lean Six Sigma to improve the flow of communication and materials between facilities. Telecom and CATV connectors are manufactured in Horseheads, New York and assembled in

A little creative thinking and relatively simple changes can make everyone’s life so much easier.

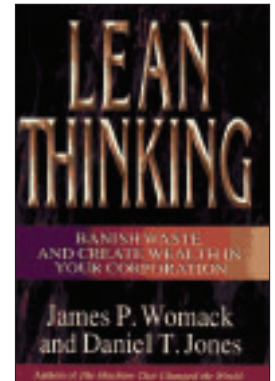
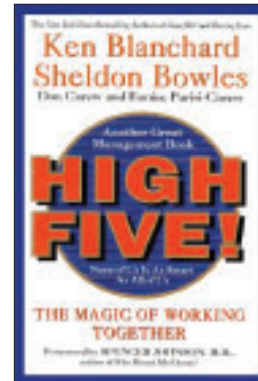
Monterrey, Mexico. Working together, teams from the plants used lean Six Sigma to develop a system for more accurately and efficiently delivering required materials to Mexico. As a result, work-in-process inventory has been cut in half and the Mexican plant has increased output while reducing manufacturing space by 40 percent.

It doesn’t always require capital investment to use lean Six Sigma successfully. In Southaven, Mississippi, the plant’s Six Sigma black belt champion, Marcq Harris, lead the effort to revise the layout of the Russellstol®, machine area. Efficiency improved by over a third and lead times went from 19 to 3 days. The plant will also save more than \$400,000 each year.

“We actually look forward to finding problems now so we can use our knowledge of lean and Six Sigma to solve them,” said Harris.

The philosophy of lean Six Sigma is now moving beyond the plants and distribution centers. In the U.S., the electrical products group’s customer service team used a value stream map, or VSM, to identify steps in their processes that waste time and resources. They found that something as simple as moving customer service reps closer to their dedicated order entry professional led to improved communication and quicker, more flexible resolution of customer issues.

“It’s amazing how a little creative thinking and relatively simple changes can make everyone’s life so much easier,” said Henrietta Elliott, customer service manager. “We are a more productive team now.” ■



Want more information on lean manufacturing and Six Sigma? Check out [Lean Thinking](#) by James Womack and Daniel Jones, or [High Five!](#) by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles.

GETTING LEAN BY SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

The Lean journey began in plants in July 2001 when managers of customer service, engineering, distribution and the factories were introduced to lean thinking with books and training. They were then asked to be a “Lean Champion” and lead a value stream mapping, or VSM, project. The results – and lessons learned -- were reviewed with the group.

The five key steps to achieving lean are: 1) identify value from the customer perspective; 2) map the processes; 3) direct value-creating steps towards the customer; 4) let customers get value from the next upstream activity; and 5) don’t settle for anything less than perfection.

After receiving additional “train the trainer” training, managers were let loose to train their own groups. Within a few months, the lean philosophy was taking root on the frontline and the plants were beginning to see the payoff – shortened lead times and quicker response to customers.

Focus and Execution Are Foundation of Success, Says Pileggi

Earlier this year, Dominic Pileggi, T&B's chief executive officer, introduced a set of guiding principles and spoke about the type of culture that will help T&B deliver exceptional, sustainable performance. Here, he expands on how the culture can influence success.

Q: T&B has a long history of success and leadership in the electrical industry and 2004 has started out strong. Why emphasize corporate culture now?

A: T&B *does* have a great history – one filled with lots of “industry firsts” and impressive success stories. And, like any great company, our culture has adapted over time to changes in the competitive environment and our strategic imperatives.

For the past three years, we've been focused on fixing the company in order to survive. We had big problems and we had to fix them fast. This required what I call a “command and control” culture, where strategic problem solving resided at the top level of the organization.

Today, the fix-it stage is over; we're profitable and stable. In other words, we've rebuilt T&B from the inside out and, as a result, are basically a new company with an emerging culture.

Our markets are growing and we're ready to grow too. This requires a different set of skills, a different attitude, a different culture.

Q: What kind of culture do we need to grow?

A: We need a culture of execution. A culture where we – individually and collectively – set milestones, track our progress and deliver on our commitments. It means communicating and working together to solve problems or gain an advantage. It means being accountable to our team, our stakeholders and to ourselves.

What I'm really talking about is “raising the bar”. To be a market leader and to grow faster than the market, we have to work smarter and spend smarter. We may not increase the total amount of dollars we spend to run our business, but we'll spend it differently – more for growth-oriented initiatives and less on administration.





Q: What's most critical in creating a culture of execution?

A: A culture is comprised of many tangible and intangible factors, but the most critical is employee involvement. Fundamentally, it's pretty simple – if we encourage – and help – our employees to know as much about the business as possible, this knowledge will drive their enthusiasm for winning.

We also need to be focused and have a clear understanding of our goals and priorities. Every individual, every department and every business has its own goals. But these goals are interrelated and co-dependent. Collectively, they become our corporate goals.

Q: What role do the guiding principles play in creating a culture of execution?

A: The T&B principles are meant to be “guides” that define the type of behavior we value as an organization, the type of behavior that will be rewarded. We put them down on paper to help our employees and external stakeholders – such as customers, suppliers and investors – know what kind of company we are.

Now, it's up to each and every employee to bring the principles to life.

Our Steel Structures group does a great job of bringing the principle of treating suppliers as partners (see story on page 7) to life. As we continue to move forward, I'll be on the look out for examples of all of our guiding principles in action.

Q: You've used the analogy of climbing a mountain to describe T&B's journey to excellence. How will a culture of execution help us reach the summit?

A: Getting to the summit is all about execution and determination. When the terrain is steeper, the weather more severe and the air thinner, missteps are more costly. If you're not focused on the task at hand every minute, you risk the team's success. In the marketplace, this means focusing on the right details at the right time as we move along our continuum. The worst thing that can happen to us is that we become complacent or believe we have climbed high enough. We can't be relaxing while our competitors are still climbing.

One of the tools that climbers depend upon are carabiners, small aluminum D-shaped devices that have multiple uses. They can be used as anchors, as links between the rope and protection, as rappel brakes, or as clips for carrying items. In other words, they are “links” that provide strength, security and reliability between the climbing team and the mountain. As we climb our mountain, we all need to be “caribiners” – we need to support and value one another, be flexible in the tasks we are asked to perform, and be a reliable link for meeting our customers' needs. This will take us a long way in becoming the brand of choice for our end-user customers and the supplier of choice to our distributor partners. ■

Thomas & Betts

T&B GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We Treat Each Other With Respect
- We Understand Customers' Needs
- We Are Committed to Operational Excellence
- We Are Committed to Continuous Improvement
- We Treat Customers & Suppliers Like Partners
- We Adhere to Sound Financial Strategies
- We Value Creativity & Innovation
- We Are Passionate About Winning
- We Support Risk... But Never Recklessness
- We Encourage Trust & Open Communication



guiding principles *in action*

Treating Suppliers Like Partners Strengthens Supply Chain for Steel Structures

Typically, one would think that having multiple suppliers would be the best strategic approach for a business. Pitting one supplier against another can lead to more competitive pricing and not “putting all your eggs in one basket” helps ensure access to multiple sources of material in times of shortages. However, experience has proven that, for T&B’s Steel Structures group, just the opposite is true.

“Over the past several years, we’ve consciously moved from having multiple supply arrangements to single source partnerships with a select group of suppliers,” said Aubrey Jackson, director of operations for Steel Structures. “Today, about 70 percent of our material comes from our single-source partners – and I stress the word partners.”

According to Jackson, Steel Structures has lowered the potential risk of having only one supplier – such as fewer options that could limit service and supply disruption – by working hard to choose the right partners. “We partner with companies that have a vested interest in keeping us competitive,” said Jackson. “When we succeed, they succeed. We both enjoy the benefits that loyalty and close collaboration can bring.”

Jackson noted that a successful partnership requires that both parties understand their own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of the partner.

“If you understand your partner’s needs and the financial implications for both parties of certain decisions, you can react quickly to changing circumstances



without either partner getting hurt unnecessarily,” continued Jackson.

Brad Blacketer of North American Galvanizing, and a supplier to the Steel Structures group, shared a supplier’s viewpoint of our partnership.

North American Galvanizing has been a supplier to T&B since the 1980s but made a strategic commitment to

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

- Be aware of strengths and weaknesses.
- Understand that issues and opportunities are dynamic - react quickly.
- Understand financial implications of decisions and changes.
- Be open-minded and creative in solving problems.
- Set short and long-term goals.
- Provide honest evaluations.
- Remain committed.

become a single-source supplier about five years ago. “We have a very strong relationship with Thomas & Betts,” said Blacketer. “We both share technical and application resources with one another. This helps our joint projects move along at an expedited pace and ensures the highest quality possible.”

Blacketer also pointed out that an open communications policy and open plant access policy are two cornerstones of ensuring the relationship remains strong.

“Because we work so closely with T&B, we are able to offer what we believe is the best pricing in the industry as well as guaranteed access to our facilities when needed,” continued Blacketer.

Blacketer and Jackson agree that remaining committed is critical as is understanding that issues and opportunities are always dynamic. ■



(Left) ABN AMRO Plaza is a spectacular addition to the Chicago skyline. T&B engineered a new floor box to fit the building's unique needs. Photograph ©2004 Ashley Beatty

(Above) New T&B floor box designed especially for the ABN AMRO building.

T&B Rises to the Challenge of Supplying Unique High-Rise Building Needs

Good things happen when we listen to our customers and truly understand their needs so we can effectively respond. One of the most recent and compelling examples of T&B employees living this guiding principle is the successful design, development and delivery of the FTD (floor termination device) for the ABN AMRO Plaza in Chicago, Ill., a high rise building designed in a style known as “structural expressionism.” The building is five-sided, with a sharp corner at the south end. The crown on top is a parallelogram, with a second point at the north end. Also called "high-tech modernism", structural expressionism is a specific branch of advanced modernism in which buildings display their structural elements visibly inside and out.

Given the building design, no standard floor box was suitable. To compound the challenge, the City of Chicago has very rigorous requirements for products installed in these types of spaces. From the beginning, time was critical to getting the 5,000 - 6,000 floor box order. Meeting directly with contractors and city building officials, T&B employees: Dan Michaelis (product manager), Mark Drane (product design engineer), Bob Fuller

(manufacturing engineer), Lori Johnson (purchasing), responded with an innovative design concept within two weeks. Using the latest in technology resources, T&B engineers met very demanding deadlines including creating design prototypes that led to final concept approval within two months – start to finish.

Based on the design elements, which included many labor-saving features, the contractor won the contract, and with it, T&B became the exclusive supplier of FTD's. ■



The construction demands of the ABN AMRO Plaza in Chicago provided an opportunity for T&B to develop a specialized floor termination device.



marketplace



T&B Printer Makes Labeling Wires E-Z

Electricians have a powerful new handheld tool in T&B's new E-Z-Code[®] thermal label printer. Designed specifically for electricians, the EZL-100 printer offers exclusive features such as one-touch hotkeys that create labels instantly for wire wrapping, terminal blocks, device covers, patch panels and labels in a series. The EZL uses durable non-smearing thermal transfer technology, ensuring that labels are easy to read, won't peel off and stand the test of time.

New Fast-Lock E-Klip[®] Introduced in Europe

A new "fast-lock" product was introduced as part of T&B's E-Klips product line in Europe. Fast-lock, which is used in wire suspension applications in electrical, mechanical services

and HVAC installations, made its debut at the Fastener Fair in Telford, United Kingdom.

Fast-lock provides numerous benefits to end-users, according to Gary Baker, product manager, including typically reducing installation time by up to 85 percent, and installation costs by 30 percent.

"Fast-lock is a versatile, easy-to-use solution that can deliver tangible savings to customers. Because it can be used with both 1mm and 2mm wire, which accounts for 80 percent of requirement, it also can reduce inventories," said Baker.

From One Extreme to the Other – New Liquidtight Fittings System Introduced

T&B has introduced a new ATX flexible metal conduit designed to withstand excessive temperature ranges such as those found in industrial ovens, boilers and furnaces, kilns, heavy machinery for sub-zero environments.

The new fittings are suitable for working

temperatures from -60°C to 150°C (-76°F to 302°F), which compares to typical liquidtight being rated from -20°C to 80°C (-4°F to 176°F). Coupled with T&B's 52 and 53 Series of liquidtight fittings, T&B is the only manufacturer offering such a system of fittings for extreme environments.



Wendy's Hamburgers Are Hot After Reznor

T&B's HVAC business has won approval for its Reznor MAPS® II units as a preferred supplier for Wendy's International, Inc., one of the world's largest restaurant operators with more than 9,300 restaurants. Best known for its "Old Fashioned Hamburgers" and red-headed, pig-tailed mascot, Wendy's builds approximately 300 new stores per year in the United States.

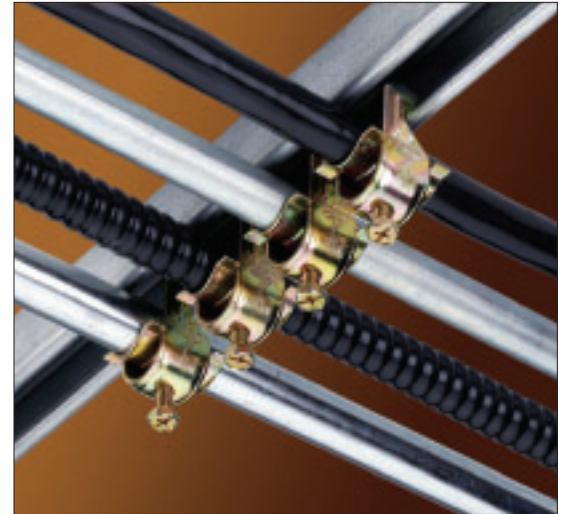
A critical part of winning the account was T&B's ability to shorten lead times for product delivery. Thanks to the successful implementation of lean manufacturing at T&B's Mercer, Penn. facility, T&B is able to meet the four to five week timetable required by Wendy's.



The first order of Reznor units leaves T&B's snowy Mercer, Penn. facility for delivery to a Wendy's construction site in Florida.

Get the Grip of Silver From T&B

The new Silver Grip™ Tray/Cord Fitting from T&B offers increased safety for hazardous locations. Constructed from aluminum, the Silver Grip is ideal for areas where corrosion, weight and "spark hazards" are a concern such as refineries, oil platforms, and chemical processing facilities.



Cobra™ Clamps Sink Their Teeth Into the Job

T&B engineers in Canada set out to design a better clamp for the North American market. The results are the Cobra™ and the King Cobra™ one-piece cable and pipe clamps.

Designed for use in the commercial market where lowest installed cost and ease of installation are prime considerations, the Cobra clamp features a true one-piece design and comes ready to install, right out of the box – no need to break apart and re-assemble, no screws or bolts to drop.

The King Cobra clamp – released in Canada this summer – was designed for use in heavy-duty industrial applications where superior loading capabilities and durability are primary specification criteria.

Industry-Exclusive Wrap-Mount Boxes Install in Seconds

T&B's new Steel City Wrap-Mount Boxes help electrical contractors save their workers time on commercial and industrial job sites. The innovative mounting bracket wraps around a steel stud and eliminates box-mounting hardware, saving valuable labor time and resulting in an overall reduced installation cost. Four-square boxes are available in deep and shallow versions; a switch box version also is available.



Clockwise from top left: Position box against stud. Wrap pliable brackets around stud. Clamp brackets with pliers for secure application. Rock-solid connection won't move as construction process continues.

T&B Grows Presence in China's 'Hot' Market With Reznor® Heaters

T&B's HVAC group recently co-hosted a booth showing Reznor heaters at a trade show in Shanghai, China. T&B co-hosted the booth with Shanghai Han-Dragon, Reznor's sales agency for the booming Chinese market. China's economy grew at its fastest pace for six years in 2003, adding 9.1 percent to its gross domestic product according to official statistics. The Chinese economy is estimated to grow seven percent in 2004, well above the average for North American and European economies.





empowered people

Van der Stap Leads T&B European Electrical Team

Ben van der Stap holds the title of managing director for T&B's Europe and Asia operations for electrical products. Van der Stap joined T&B when the company acquired Kaufel emergency lighting products in 1998 and was named managing director in 2003. He holds a mechanical engineering and business degree and has worked in the manufacturing industry his entire career. Based in the company's European headquarters in Brussels, Van der Stap's management team includes Fabrice van Belle (finance), John Sidaway (operations), Mike Bodington (marketing and sales), Karen Edwards (human resources) and Alec van Havre (legal). The business employs approximately 1,100 people in 13 countries.



T&B's European management team (right to left): Fabrice Van Belle, Mike Bodington, Ben van der Stap, Karen Edwards, Alec van Havre.

Shepard Named Manager at Steel Structures Houston Facility

T&B's Houston, Texas steel structures facility recently got a new leader: Steve Shepard. Shepard has been part of the Houston management team since early 1999, when he came on board as the production manager for the plant.

Raised in Oklahoma, Shepard graduated from Southeast Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering Technology. Prior to T&B, he was plant manager for Stahl Division in Oklahoma.



Steve Shepard, Houston plant manager.

Murphy Retires; Fluke Named CFO

On April 30, John Murphy retired from T&B as chief financial officer and Ken Fluke was named to succeed him.

“Ken is an extremely talented executive with broad-based financial expertise and global operational experience,” said Dominic Pileggi, president and CEO. “He knows our business inside and out and is the ideal person to lead our financial team as we move forward with our plans to grow and improve profitability.”

Fluke joined T&B in 2000 as corporate controller after spending 17 years with the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in various finance and managerial positions.

“John was instrumental in restoring a culture based on control and accountability to Thomas & Betts. As a result of his hard work and leadership, Thomas & Betts is financially strong, has excellent liquidity and is positioned for growth,” said Pileggi.



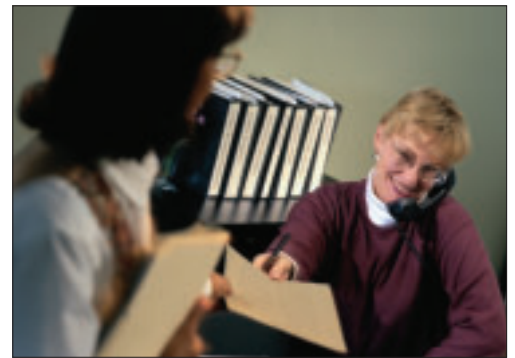
Ken Fluke, T&B's new CFO.

New Records Retention Policy Makes Everybody Accountable

Thomas & Betts recently instituted its first-ever, formal records retention policy, replacing the guidelines that previously existed. The new policy makes it clear that records retention is everybody's responsibility. While the company's legal department administers the program, managers are required to annually certify that their employees have complied with the retention schedule. Employees are responsible for records in their possession or under their control, including inherited records.

An effective retention program is a “business insurance policy” in the sense that it takes into account the potential risks if vital records should be lost or destroyed. It also fulfills the company's legal obligation under local, state and federal laws and simplifies life for employees by taking the guesswork out of disposing of records.

If everyone works together to implement the program in the way it's designed, a good records retention program will contribute to operational efficiency and helps cut costs by eliminating records within the organization that have no value.



A good records retention program will contribute to operational efficiency and helps cut costs by eliminating records within the organization that have no value.

At the Corporate headquarters alone, T&B spends more than half a million dollars on records retention and destruction annually.

An overview of the policy can be found on the company's intranet under the Finance Department section entitled Standard Control Guidelines. Glendoria Jamison coordinates the program. She can be reached at 901-252-5715 or by e-mail at glendoria.jamison@tnb.com.



tids & bits

T&B's Power Council A Powerful Success

Given central Florida's reputation as the nation's lighting capital, Tampa was the ideal venue for the 2004 Power & Grounding Council, an invitation-only conference focused on power and grounding sponsored by T&B's Communications group. More than 90 representatives from cable TV, telecommunications, power, direct broadcast satellite and regulatory agencies participated in the two-day event. The conference covered a broad range of issues revolving around power and grounding, especially safety and maintaining reliable service.

According to Mark Rubick, a Communications sales representative and a key force in putting together the meeting, the Power Council took a practical approach to educating participants about the importance and pitfalls of grounding and bonding.

"Our goal was to help conference attendees develop a firm foundation of knowledge from which to design projects or solve problems in existing electrical systems", said Rubick. "The presenters included experts from Verizon, Comcast and Cisco, many of which used case studies to bring their topics alive."

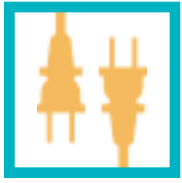


T&B Lock Out Tag Out Featured in NEC Digest

By definition, product managers should be experts about their products and how they are applied in the field. Dan Vega, product manager for Electrical Identification and Insulation Products, proved he knows his stuff in an article about OSHA standards for lock out/tag out published in the Spring 2004 issue of *NEC Digest*, the official magazine of the National Electrical Code published by the National Fire Protection Association. Read it online at www.necdigest.org.



Dan Vega, a T&B product manager, shared his expertise with the public in a recent issue of a major trade publication.



plugged in

Employee Assistance Program Helps Employees Achieve Optimum Quality of Life

Sometimes, the stress of juggling work and family responsibilities can seem overwhelming and get in the way of your enjoying life to the fullest. Recognizing that finding the perfect balance between work and personal life isn't always easy, Thomas & Betts has launched a new, confidential, free-of-charge Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Administered by Cigna Behavioral Health, the EAP is a confidential resource that helps you and members of your household find answers to various kinds of personal concerns, such as childcare and legal services.

EAP benefits include: five sessions with a counselor; free consultation with an attorney; referrals for child care providers, camps, adoption organizations; information on parenting and prenatal care; referrals for elder care, home health agencies, assisted living facilities and long distance care giving; referrals for pet sitting, obedience training and veterinarians; resources on managing credit, budgeting and debt consolidation; and a Healthy Rewards program offering discounts on a wide range of services and products, including massage therapy, chiropractic care, acupuncture, vision and hearing care and cosmetic dentistry.

CIGNA Behavioral Health provides T&B's EAP to employees at no charge. All services are confidential, and the EAP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by calling toll-free 1.877.622.4327 or logging on to www.cignabehavioral.com. When prompted, enter the Employer ID: thomasbetts, PIN: employee.

Reducing the stress can help you be more productive and enjoy life more. Cigna professionals can help.



CIGNA Behavioral Health

Get a Mortgage or Save for College with Help from Wells Fargo

T&B's U.S. employees can now benefit from two free programs offered by Wells Fargo. The Employee Mortgage Program is designed to make your home purchase or refinance experience easier and more affordable, including:

- Streamlined phone application
- Fast approval decision
- Low or no upfront-cash requirement

Please contact 1-800-644-8083, or visit them online at <https://www.employeemortgage.com>.

As an added bonus, once you close your loan, you will receive a complimentary gift of your choice.



You can choose from name brand furnishings, high-tech electronics, special home-delivery gift packages and fabulous 3-day/2-night hotel getaways!

The ConSern Education Program[®] benefit is a complete college-preparatory and education financing package and education resource center available online. You can:

- Find out how to choose the “right” school and find scholarship opportunities
- Learn the ins and outs of the college application and admission process, and
- Get information on college financing options.

More than 525 companies and more than 5.5 million employees are participants in the ConSern Education Loan Program, including Fortune 1000 companies America Online, Toys-R-Us, UPS, AT&T, General Electric and Target. Call today 1-800-SOS-LOAN (800-767-5626) to take advantage of this unique program or go online at <https://www.consern.com>.

PowerLine Online!

We are testing a new online, interactive version of PowerLine magazine. Check it out at www.tnbpowerline.com.

If employee interest in a dynamic online version is sufficient, we will continue to offer an online edition as a companion to the printed magazine.

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