



# MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

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▶ **Winning the award for “Manufacturer of the Year” at the 2018 MX Manufacturer Awards, Accolade Wines is recognised as the number one wine company in the UK and Australia. The organisation has a heritage dating all the way back to 1853; yet, unlike many of its more traditional competitors,**

**Accolade Wines has come to be known for its strikingly advanced approach to operations and the embracing of modern technology plus thinking.**

Over the years, Accolade Wines has been incredibly successful in snapping up awards, both for its wines and also for the manufacturing processes that make everything possible. Much

of this success has been driven by a ten year process of transforming its green field site in Bristol into a role model for how lean manufacturing techniques can be applied to revolutionise modern business. Much of this process has been led by current General Manager, Richard Lloyd, a pioneer in modernising the philosophy of managing the supply chain.

Much of the last few years have incorporated heavy investment back into Accolade Wines, with its facilities consequently being recognised amongst the best in the country for manufacturing. Heavy emphasis has understandably been placed on autonomous technologies and digitalisation for this, but how the company has successfully



strategy seeing individuals who once filled those positions then being able to assume far more fulfilling and innovative roles in the business.

So has automation filled some of the more traditional roles in Accolade Wines? The answer is yes, but it hasn't taken people out of the process. Through the incorporation of robotics and autonomous technology, the company has looked to direct a greater proportion of its skilled labour towards new ways of adding value to the service or to the production process so that the greatest benefit can be brought forth from the resources available. It's about people and tech-

brought everything together is strikingly unique for a business pushing technological revolution – that being, people first, in all things. To learn more about this unique approach to modernisation, we spoke with Richard Lloyd himself.

He explained: “We have a framework of how we operate within Accolade. If someone were to ask us what being ‘lean’ is about, we would say its about creating the Freedom to Think for all our people. Where we’re staying ahead is through the empowering of our people to stay on top of the challenges and the demands of the customer. It always comes down to the people. Anyone can go out there and buy the latest bit of technology, but it’s about how you apply it. We’ve managed to differentiate ourselves in terms of applica-

tion, and one big thing there has been about the data – how can we make all that data available to our people? We want to make sure that they have the right working environment, thinking space, and the right data.

He continued: “A lot of what Industry 4.0 is to me, is that it’s enabling us to get information in a timely fashion. In the years gone by, all the information was about things that had already happened. But now we’re in a facility where we instantaneous feedback and its easy to use. So it’s about how our people can make decisions from that process. Therefore a lot of that process is about making that data accessible, and we have done some bits such as collaborative robots which have enabled us to redeploy our people to more value-added activities.”

**THE TEAM AT ACCOLADE WINES HAS BEEN ABLE TO ENJOY A FAR MORE PROFOUND SENSE OF ENJOYMENT AND FULFILMENT IN EMERGING ROLES, WITH EMPLOYEES RELISHING THE CHANCE TO ASSUME MORE CREATIVE OR INNOVATIVE POSITIONS IN SUCH A FORWARD-THINKING COMPANY.**



Indeed, redeployment is perhaps the most important phrase used by Richard. People are the heart of Accolade Wines, and in accordance with this, the organisation has not been incorporating autonomous technologies and processes to replace the human factor, but to enhance it. Areas of increased automation have typically been those areas pertaining to mundane and repetitive tasks, with a creative redeployment

nology working in unison, in the most effective and productive way possible increasing our productivity.

Perhaps due to this approach, the organisation has also enjoyed a rather seamless transition throughout the modernisation process. Stepping away from the usual conflict which can be seen between labour and autonomy, the team at Accolade Wines has been able to enjoy a far more





profound sense of enjoyment and fulfilment in emerging roles, with employees relishing the chance to assume more creative or innovative positions in such a forward-thinking company.

The human factor has also proven to be a primary catalyst for change in Accolade Wines too. Through regular communication between directors, managers, and ground floor operatives, the organisation has worked collaboratively to try and identify challenges or opportunities for changes in process and new methodologies. This has incorporated the development of a workplace philosophy revolving around the “whirlwind” of any team member’s primary role and the importance of routinely stepping out of the role to observe and identify better ways of doing things.

Richard Lloyd provided more information on this philosophy, explaining: “The whirlwind

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is your job. Everyone spends X amount of their job in this whirlwind, but we expect every employee to take time out and step out of the whirlwind to look at what they’re doing and how to improve it. If you don’t take that time out then you will not improve. This isn’t limited to internal processes, however, and also runs into a theme whereby the organisation itself pursues a similar approach of stepping back to identify change. He added: “As the market changes and evolves,

you need to change your offering and therefore what might have been the right data, information, frequency to take activity a year ago might not be the right choice now. The data and the market, as well as the consumer that we supply now is vastly different to two years ago and therefore we’ve had to evolve as a facility. You also have to be confident enough to stop generating certain reports or doing certain activities that you used to do, and not just continuously add more on top.”

Operating on a philosophy of “nothing is perfect”, the company is continuously looking towards how it can take the next step and improve upon the processes of today, for the market of tomorrow. This includes everything from production efficiencies to offer a better cost-per-unit or productivity through to identifying the changing demands of the customer above and beyond pricing – elements such as changing consumption trends and having appropriate products for certain habits or uses.

Looking forward, Accolade Wines naturally has an eye on the future and how it can further bring technology and people together to further revolutionise its business. This will incorporate increased focus on AI, as well as on-site renewable energy generation and working with academia to ensure cutting-edge processes across every aspect of the business.

From the S A Partners Team,  
congratulations to Accolade Wines for winning manufacturer of the year.



**Accolade Wines**  
Manufacturer of the year 2018

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