



MONTANA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION CENTER (MMEC)

The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) is a statewide manufacturing outreach and assistance center focused on growing Montana's economy by helping manufacturers succeed in a nationally and globally competitive environment. Part of the NIST MEP National Network, we have access to an extensive network of resources throughout Montana and the U.S.

In today's rapidly changing business environment, MMEC provides Montana manufacturers with hands-on assistance plus the knowledge and resources needed for growth, innovation and profit enhancement. Staffed by proven professionals with extensive manufacturing and business experience in a variety of industries, our team can help you achieve positive, measurable, and sustainable growth for your top and bottom line. Our areas of expertise include product and market development, strategic and exit planning, workforce/talent development, business financials, food safety and processes, quality management, lean manufacturing, supply chain optimization, and many others.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2023



\$53.3 Million

Total Increased/Retained Sales



399

Total Increased/Retained Jobs



\$35.5 Million

New Client Investments



\$12.8 Million

Cost Savings

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MMEC HELPS CONTRACT MANUFACTURER UPSKILL WORKFORCE TO PREPARE FOR MARKET GROWTH

ABOUT SUCH GROUP INTERNATIONAL. When small manufacturers in central Montana have more product or demand than they can handle, they can turn to Such Group International (SGI) to fill in the gaps. Based in Great Falls, SGI has found success offering customized manufacturing solutions for contract clients. While providing a range of services that span production, processing, sales, marketing and administration, SGI specializes in filling and packaging commercial products. Over the last decade, the business has grown to include more than 30 employees and 90,000 square feet of facility space to meet client needs.

THE CHALLENGE. To better manage its growth and prepare for future opportunities, SGI has recognized a need to upgrade its own operations. In 2019, working with MMEC, the company began the process to implement an ISO 9001:2015 Quality System and eventually receive certification in order to standardize business practices, improve quality systems, and aid in pursuing additional business opportunities. After laying the groundwork, however, the next step was to ensure that the company workforce had training and buy in to help SGI move toward full implementation. SGI turned to MMEC, part of the MEP National Network™, for help.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. SGI embarked on several efforts to engage more employees in these operational improvements. The company partnered with MMEC Senior Business Advisor Doug Roberts to create and lead a training plan that would ensure foundational understanding across the workforce in key areas: lean manufacturing, ISO implementation, and ERP use. Using Smart Talent tools for employee skills and standard work development, there were eight job modules created to enhance essential training for positions that support the operational changes.

Over the course of the project, Roberts led more than 100 hours of training, and more than 24 people in the 30-person company participated. SGI employees have implemented an effective training and performance management system based on the Smart Talent system structure. The company has completed the documentation of an ISO compliant quality system and trained numerous individuals for implementation. A new customer prerequisite was the requirement to utilize and interface with their ERP. Training staff on inventory management through ERP will support customer requirements and improve business systems.

The long-term goal of a certified QMS will provide SGI additional credentials that will allow them to bid on products and projects requiring ISO 9001 certifications. Over time, this will open opportunities for new customers and markets.

"The Center [MMEC] has given us confidence to pursue the development of our business. We utilize the center as a consultant in helping with input and direction."

-Todd Such, President, Such Group International



RESULTS



5 created or retained jobs



\$500,000 in new or retained sales



\$585,000 in new investment



\$60,000 in cost savings

