Pennsylvania Manufacturing Extension Partnership

PA MEP serves small and medium sized manufacturers in the state by enhancing their productivity and technological performance to create a positive and enduring economic impact in their communities and in Pennsylvania. Small and medium-sized manufacturing companies represent 12% of the total gross state product. According to the U.S. Policy Institute, Pennsylvania ranks 5th in the nation among all the states in manufacturing employment. Manufacturing businesses provide over 578,000 jobs in Pennsylvania, representing approximately one out of every 11 jobs in the state.

Managed by the Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center Foundation, the PA MEP is a public-private partnership sponsored by NIST MEP. The PA MEP is also supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and by the manufacturers who receive essential training and consulting services to increase competitiveness and grow their companies.

To serve the regional diversity of the state’s manufacturing base, PA MEP manages a network of seven Industrial Resource Centers who are regional affiliates strategically focused on meeting the needs of the geographic region. Affiliates include: Catalyst Connection (southwest); DVIRC (southeast); IMC (central); MANTEC (south central); MRC (Lehigh Valley); NEPIRC (northeast); and NWIRC (northwest).

ECONOMIC IMPACT

 MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2016

- $753.7 Million Total Increased/Retained Sales
- 5,455 Total Increased/Retained Jobs
- $163.7 Million New Client Investments
- $76.2 Million Cost Savings

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY. MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP
"NWIRC found us a candidate that exactly matched the profile we were looking for, including the programming skills needed for the job. It’s really tough to find a good match like that and the process takes a lot of time. We were able to give a student some real-life experience that, at the same time, resulted in project completion that is useful to our business growth." Ashleigh Walters, Operations Manager

STEM MANUFACTURING INTERN PRODUCES BIG RESULTS

ABOUT. Onex began in 1965 as a supplier to the many foundries in the Erie, PA area, stocking refractory products for a major refractory manufacturer. In the 1980s, they branched out into other heat intensive industries. As the number of foundries in Erie began to decline, they diversified into a broader offering of products and services such as: design and installation of refractory linings, combustion services, and shop fabrication. Onex became a “one stop shopping” source and a solutions provider for its growing and extensive customer base. The company has expanded geographically to Pittsburgh and most recently moved their Erie location just miles away to better serve their future growth. They employee around 30 people.

THE CHALLENGE. Onex was in need of an engineering student intern to work on specific projects for the Company involving programming of controllers that operate the furnaces. The company had projects potentially worth $3 million in revenue, but didn’t have time and resources internally to dedicate to the work. It could have cost the company upwards of $100,000 had they outsourced this work, yet they believe the projects could be accomplished with the talents of a qualified engineering student. Onex had previous success working with the NWIRC (part of PA MEP - a NIST MEP affiliate) on projects such as Lean Value Stream Mapping and implementation of a new accounting system. Having NWIRC help them identify a qualified engineering student through their STEM Internship program was a natural next step.

MEP’S ROLE. Gretchen Reinard, NWIRC Program Coordinator for the STEM Manufacturing Internship Program, began working with the Onex Human Resources Manager to develop a detailed job description and qualifications for finding the perfect candidate to do the work at hand. After the scope of the project and position description were complete, Reinard started by delving into her database of hundreds of students who applied for internships via the NWIRC website and resumes she collected at various college career fairs. Students who closely matched the qualifications were then passed on to Onex for vetting through their typical interview process.

RESULTS

Projected increase in sales of $500,000
Cost Savings of $20,500
Cost Avoidance of $100,000
3 new jobs