ADVANTAGE KENTUCKY ALLIANCE (AKA)

The Advantage Kentucky Alliance (AKA) is a statewide, not-for-profit partnership that provides assistance and training to help manufacturers of all sizes grow, improve their manufacturing and business strategies and processes, adopt advanced technologies, increase productivity, reduce costs, and improve competitiveness. AKA’s cost effective services give companies the tools to be competitive. Whether it is a spot solution or total transformation, all technical assistance and training is customized to fit their objectives.

AKA provides manufacturers with services they need to achieve a 20/20 balance: at least 20% growth to their top line, along with at least 20% decrease in bottom-line costs. These services address top-line growth for clients, specifically focusing on identifying new sales, developing new products, entering new markets, and deploying new business models. With professionals averaging over 20+ years of applicable in-industry experience, AKA can deliver the training and services needed to address the full spectrum of needs faced by businesses and the industry.
TRAINING SUPERVISORS TO BECOME BETTER MANAGERS

ABOUT PLASTIC PRODUCTS COMPANY, INC.. Plastic Products Inc. (PPC) was founded in 1962 in Minnesota, and in the 1980s expanded to two facilities in Kentucky to better serve the appliance customer base. A 100-percent-employee-owned company, PPC covers a broad range of industries, including automotive and consumer products. The company has around 80 team members in Greenville, Kentucky, with the skills to mold and assemble products to customer specification.

THE CHALLENGE. In an area experiencing a below-average unemployment rate, PPC found identifying and retaining skilled employees and supervisors to be increasingly challenging. The company already had experience engaging with Advantage Kentucky Alliance (AKA), part of the MEP National Network, and was committed to maintaining growth while providing strong customer service. This time, PPC decided to reach out to AKA specifically to provide its supervisors with the tools to become better managers.

MEP CENTER’S ROLE. AKA led a cross-section of PPC’s management staff from three facilities through the “Training Within Industry” (TWI) program. TWI is designed to help participants develop the skills to train others, improve employee relations, and lead Kaizen improvement events. The biggest bottom line impacts came from the group’s Job Methods/Kaizen Proposals. By tracking the current state of three key processes, each of the three teams uncovered opportunities for improving current methods. They made changes to reduce machine downtime and increase capacity, impacting sales and generating overhead savings for PPC. With greater capacity, the company also reduced labor costs, including workers’ comp insurance premium costs.

“AKA and their TWI offering enabled our supervisors to learn tools in the classroom through interacting with multiple exercises and case studies. Armed with a Standard Process, Documentation Format and 4 Step Pocket Card, the teams were able to find process waste and formally propose positive change.”

-Bob Griessel, Director of Manufacturing

RESULTS

- Added $228k in sales
- Reduced labor costs by $4k annually, or .02%
- Reduced machine downtime to generate $36k output off of one machine