



MAINE MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (MAINE MEP)

The Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) is able to leverage a vast array of public and private resources and services that are available to every manufacturing enterprise in Maine. The nationwide system of MEP centers is linked through the U.S. Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP), with the common goal to strengthen the global competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers.

The challenge for manufacturers today is satisfying escalating customer expectations in an increasingly volatile and competitive global market while also maintaining satisfactory profit margins. With technological change happening so rapidly many small and medium manufacturing enterprises (SMEs) find it difficult to keep pace with those demands. Maine MEP provides affordable, innovative solutions to these problems. Maine MEP will assist your organization in a transformation from traditional to world-class manufacturer. The MEP Center's experienced project managers will work with companies to identify conditions that may impede a company's ability to become more efficient, competitive and prosperous. Maine MEP can assist in providing the resources to help maximize profit. In working side by side with leadership, the Maine MEP becomes a partner for success.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2023



\$90.7 Million

Total Increased/Retained Sales



1,364

Total Increased/Retained Jobs



\$37.3 Million

New Client Investments



\$21.2 Million

Cost Savings

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MAINEMEP 

LEADERSHIP COACHING - VISION, GOALS, KPIS

ABOUT ARTFORMS INC. Artforms is a privately-owned screen-printing company founded in 1988 and located on Maine Street in Brunswick, Maine. The company was originally located in Westbrook and relocated when the owner, Kip Stone, purchased the 31,000 square foot old Grand City Building in 1999. Kip Stone is also co-owner of Cool-As-A-Moose, six retail stores which sell products made by Artforms. Artforms also sells and distributes products throughout the US and Caribbean. Artforms employs 28 people, including production, inventory, internal and external sales and design staff.

THE CHALLENGE. The majority of the products Artforms creates are sold in tourist shops and tourist areas, which means that the sales cycle is highly cyclical. Typically Artforms spends the winter and spring seasons producing product for the upcoming summer tourist season; the fall season sees a sharp decline in orders and production slows down significantly. This has caused an unhealthy annual cycle of hiring, training, long hours and overtime and then layoffs, which is both costly for the company and creates hardships for employees at all levels of the organization. Owner Kip Stone recognized that this inefficiency needed to be corrected. At the same time, he was also looking to step back from day-to-day operations and focus on the company vision and strategic direction.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Maine MEP Project Manager Wayne Messer, part of the MEP National Network™, is a trusted advisor to Artforms and has worked with the company on standardized work documents, sales training, and HR referrals, among other projects. Recently, leadership asked Wayne to assist in finding solutions to the unhealthy production cycle and determine how to best allow Kip to step back from the day-to-day details of running the business. Wayne attended department meetings and observed each area of work to determine opportunities for improvement.

Over the past few years Kip has worked closely with the art department, and inside and external sales to establish processes that have created steady inventory planning while also working to make the accounting processes more visible and streamlined. Production, on the other hand, has struggled with scheduling and keeping up with projected inventory needs. The company uses an industry specific ERP software called Impress, which is not fully being utilized. Better use of the ERP software and stronger planning will improve production scheduling and smooth out the staffing needs. With Wayne's encouragement, Artforms is focusing on improving production planning, staffing the production department for success, developing clear and actionable department goals, job roles and responsibilities and key performance indicators.

"Thank you very much for all the hard work insight and commitment that has gone into our organization. We would not be the company we are today without your help."

-Kip Stone, Owner/CEO



RESULTS



6 jobs created or retained



\$900,000 in new investment



\$100,000 in cost savings

