NORTH CAROLINA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (NCMEP)

The North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NCMEP) provides manufacturing extension services that enhance the productivity, innovative capacity and technological performance of US-based manufacturing firms. It also works to strengthen the global competitiveness of small- and medium-sized manufacturers. NCMEP’s team of professional regional extension agents and experienced technical specialists engaging and provide solutions to hundreds of manufacturers across the state. NCMEP links its manufacturing partners to a network of national expertise and suppliers, creating an innovation hub and knowledge base for the state of North Carolina. NCMEP is administered by the NC State University Industrial Extension Service (IES) as a National Institute of Standards and Technology Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership center for the state.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2018

- **$238.7 Million**
  - Total Increased/Retained Sales
- **3,356**
  - Total Increased/Retained Jobs
- **$84.3 Million**
  - New Client Investments
- **$21 Million**
  - Cost Savings

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The MEP National Network™ is a unique public-private partnership that delivers comprehensive, proven solutions to U.S. manufacturers, fueling growth and advancing U.S. manufacturing.
ABOUT GESIPA FASTENERS AND TOOLING, GESIPA® Fasteners USA, Inc. is a Mocksville, NC-based manufacturer of blind rivets for a variety of industries. The company employs approximately 22 people.

THE CHALLENGE. GESIPA® was already certified to ISO 9001, the foundational quality standard, but ISO/TS 16949 incorporates many complex additional steps and components to ensure the parts used in automobile manufacturing are of the very highest quality and ensure safety on the roads. GM, with whom the company had acquired business, gave GESIPA® one year to achieve the necessary certification—a tight timeline for such a rigorous standard. GESIPA®’s Quality Manager quickly identified ISO/TS 16949’s stringent documentation requirements as the part of the process that would give the company the most trouble.

MEP CENTER’S ROLE. GESIPA®’s Quality Manager, an NC State graduate, discovered NCMEP (NIST MEP affiliate) partner Industry Expansion Solutions (IES). An IES Regional Manager proposed several solutions that he believed could help GESIPA® meet its deadline. The one that offered the most flexibility and the best value for GESIPA®’s specific needs was Student-On-Demand, in which an NC State student would work onsite at GESIPA®’s facility, applying the knowledge learned through his or her course of study, while IES provided oversight. IES pre-screened students who were qualified to assist the company with work documentation. The selected student shadowed workers as they did their jobs, taking detailed notes at every step of the process. He then verified each step for correctness before entering the data into an interactive worksheet to share with management. With the documentation aspect of the process well in hand, the team was able to concentrate their efforts on other details, like error-proofing and statistical data, that were needed to gain certification. The end result equaled over $1 million in economic impact.

"We’re already looking at doubling the size of our facility to keep up with business. The future is nothing but bright."

-Tim Harris, Quality Manager