Ohio MEP supports Ohio’s small and medium-sized manufacturers by providing products, services and assistance to help drive their productivity, growth, innovation and global competitiveness. Small and medium-sized manufacturing companies are critical to Ohio, representing 90% of job growth for high-paying jobs. For every new manufacturing job that is created or retained, three to five supporting jobs are also created. Managed by the Ohio Development Services Agency’s Office of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Ohio MEP is a State and Federal initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). To serve the diversity of Ohio’s industrial base, Ohio MEP manages a network of regional partner organizations that are competitively selected and coordinated to serve as a statewide resource to meet the needs of key industry sectors and small manufacturers. Those manufacturers have access to a broad base of services, including training, coaching and implementation of operation improvement, Lean and Six Sigma, automation, engineering, process and planning for bottom line enhancements. Ohio MEP client-based activities support job creation, increased sales, cost savings, and new business investment. Ohio MEP has 6 regional partners to support statewide assistance. 1. Center for Innovative Food Technology (CIFT, Toledo), 2. Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network (MAGNET, Cleveland), 3. Center for Design and Manufacturing Excellence at the Ohio State University (OSU-CDME, Columbus), 4. PolymerOhio (Westerville), 5. TechSolve (Cincinnati), 6. FASTLANE at the University of Dayton Research Institute (FASTLANE, Dayton)
EXPANSION SOLUTIONS POSITION COMPANY FOR GROWTH

ABOUT PRIME CONTROLS INC., Prime Controls is an award-winning original equipment manufacturer of metal sensors and controls for the can-making, automotive, appliance, and metal-forming industries. Established in 1992, the company is located in Kettering, Ohio (a suburb of Dayton), and has close to 10 employees. Prime Controls is the world’s supplier of double end and missing tab detectors for high-speed, easy-open end presses for food and beverage cans, and specializes in double metal sheet detection.

THE CHALLENGE. The new president of Prime Controls, Beth Graves, had a vision for growing the company. However, she faced numerous hurdles, including getting up to speed on technology, implementing new strategies, expanding production space, and retiring key technical resources. In addition, Graves sought guidance in managing her own leadership transition. She reached out to her advisory board, and a member suggested approaching FASTLANE as a key resource to assist with the growth process. A division of the Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and part of the MEP National Network, FASTLANE agreed to support Graves and the Prime Controls team in their expansion efforts.

MEP CENTER’S ROLE. FASTLANE recommended Lean Six Sigma training for Prime Controls. The company engaged in Yellow Belt and Green Belt projects and participated in a 5S workplace organization event on the shop floor, following the principles of Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain to free up additional production space.

Next, FASTLANE worked with Prime Controls to evaluate product specifications, improve methods for product documentation and control, and apply for a grant for funding support. Their efforts generated cost savings and positioned the company to add much-needed square footage to the facility.

By investing in plant and process improvements, Prime Controls increased sales and secured jobs. Now, with key resources in place to support the existing business, the company is poised for future growth.

"Without FASTLANE I wouldn’t have access to the resources and solutions I need to be competitive as a small manufacturer in a global market. FASTLANE’s Manufacturing Growth Specialists understand what it’s like to be in my shoes. They have been there, done that—multiple times—and bring this experience to the table. The best part is they can truly be unbiased advisers because they are measured by our growth."

-Beth Graves, President