VERMONT MANUFACTURING EXTENSION CENTER (VMEC)

The Vermont representative of the MEP National Network™, the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC) has been operating statewide as a not-for-profit Center hosted by Vermont Technical College since 1995. VMEC’s primary mission is, “To strengthen and empower Vermont manufacturers.” VMEC routinely collaborates with partners in business, government and education to bring world-class assistance and resources to Vermont manufacturers, helping them overcome ever-changing challenges, become more competitive, and grow their profitability. A local Resource and Trusted Advisor, VMEC has a long track record of achieving measured results and quantified impacts for its clients, with a high average Return on Investment (ROI) reported by clients as a direct result of VMEC assistance. The VMEC Team brings expertise in consulting, coaching, hands-on implementation, continuing support, and training and education for leaders and workers – helping them to innovate, plan, perform and accelerate profitable growth in ways that drive increasing enterprise value. The VMEC Team provides proven systems and solutions focused on Strategies, Processes, Products, Technologies and People.

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ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2017

- $75.1 Million Total Increased/Retained Sales
- 391 Total Increased/Retained Jobs
- $25.2 Million New Client Investments
- $24.9 Million Cost Savings
LEARN TRAINING AND COACHING SUPPORTS GROWTH, TEAMWORK

ABOUT NEW ENGLAND PRECISION INC. New England Precision, Inc. (NEP) is a precision metal stamping company based in Randolph, Vermont. The company specializes in brass and copper stampings, but also works with a variety of other metals. Founded in 1988, NEP has grown to 70 full-time employees serving the medical, building, and automotive industries with custom designed precision tooling.

THE CHALLENGE. After experiencing some organizational turnover, NEP was looking to support new hires with skills training and tactical improvement projects. The company had previously engaged the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC), part of the MEP National Network™, on several Lean Manufacturing projects, including 5S workplace organization, Set-Up Reduction, Statistical Process Control training, and TS 16949 Internal Auditor training. VMEC proposed to build on NEP’s Lean foundation with additional trainings and projects to support the company’s plans for growth and productivity.

MEP CENTER’S ROLE. VMEC used a waved approach in training NEP employees, focusing on small, in-tact work teams over a period of three to four months each, with up to two teams participating in each wave. This approach ensured that teams could implement short-term changes right away, and sustain continuous improvements over time. VMEC blended classroom-style and simulation training with structured pilot projects in the factory and front-office operations. The goal was to accelerate change within the “zone of control,” or value stream, of each team.

VMEC also provided leadership and team coaching to support project implementation, as well as tactical support to improve the company’s information technology, enterprise resource planning system, quality management system, and metrics and reporting. The investment in plant upgrades and employee skills paid off, bringing cost-savings, better sales, and more effective teamwork to NEP.

“It can be difficult to find outside training for our employees, from basic necessities to larger projects. VMEC helps to fill that gap, providing anything from ISO 9001 training for a small group of internal auditors, to plant-wide training on Lean Manufacturing concepts. These training sessions help to get everyone in the facility working together towards a common goal, and make having an educated, highly functioning workforce in Vermont attainable.”

-Doreen Audette, Director of Quality

RESULTS

- Sales impact: $2,000,000
- Cost-savings: $10,000
- Investment in plant/equipment: $30,000
- Savings on investments: $5,000