

A PREFERRED PLACE TO WORK

ABOUT SAUDER MANUFACTURING COMPANY. Sauder Manufacturing Company (SMC) is a leading producer of furniture for healthcare, higher education, worship, and human services markets. The company's manufacturing facilities are located in Archbold and Stryker Ohio, Grabill Indiana, and Richmond & Chase City Virginia. The company employs over 550 associates across all locations. SMC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sauder Woodworking and was established in 1945 by Erie Sauder. Sauder Woodworking is a family owned company with a number of 3rd generation family members active in leading the company, and it attributes its growth and success to its commitment to serving customers while remaining true to its core values.

THE CHALLENGE. Workforce Development is one of the key strategies that the SMC Executive Leadership team has identified as a critical component for the company's future success. Retaining and advancing current employees at SMC and attracting new workers will help to achieve the company's targeted growth rates over the next five years.

SMC is committed to becoming the "Preferred Place to Work" in northwest Ohio, and to achieve this goal, the SMC Executive Leadership team approved an investment in a number of Workforce initiatives, including employee training, process improvements, and culture changing exercises. To ensure anonymity and obtain the most accurate and meaningful feedback, SMC needed an independent, trust worthy and competent organization to assist, and they selected Northwest State Community College (NSCC), a partner of the Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Ohio MEP). The Ohio MEP is part of the MEP National Network.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Last year, the SMC Executive Leadership team chose an "Employee Net Promoter Score" survey as the tool to assist with workforce development by obtaining employee feedback. The survey is built around two questions - would the respondent recommend the company as a place to work, and why or why not? Survey anonymity was critical, so a third party needed to be enlisted by SMC to assist with the process. NSCC was selected. The results of the survey, which had a 50 percent employee completion rate, provided benchmarks for areas of improvement and identified areas of strength that could be built upon.

"We found the individuals from NSCC and the Ohio MEP to be very professional, extremely engaged in the work that needed to be accomplished, and helpful in providing open dialogue that strengthened the desired outcomes from this activity. SMC invested in employee training, process improvements, and culture changing exercises to improve the customer experience. This effort helped support a \$2 million dollar increase in sales this fiscal year. SMC has recently re-engaged the NSCC and its partner the Ohio MEP to help complete the 2nd NPS survey, and I am looking forward to working with them again."

-Luther Gautsche, Vice President, Human Resources

RESULTS



\$2,000,000 increased sales



\$1,000,000 new products and processes



\$200,000 investment in workforce practices, including culture changing

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**Manufacturing
Extension Partnership**