

## A TRULY “UNIQUE” APPROACH TO EFFICIENCY, CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

**ABOUT UNIQUE LITHO, INC.** Unique Litho is a Colorado-based print and mail company, founded in 1984, with specific and noble standards for service, product, and environmental responsibility. The company provides a wide range of custom print services to customers in the local, state and national markets, demonstrating a commitment to responsible environmental stewardship through its business practices. Located in the city of Englewood, with around 35 employees, Unique Litho was the first printing company to earn the prestigious Gold Level of Colorado’s Environmental Leadership Program.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Unique Litho was experiencing a growth period, but production practices were not as efficient as management would have preferred. Fortuitously, President Jay Hartway had the opportunity to tour another plant, AIA Plastics, before and after their engagement with Manufacturer’s Edge, part of the MEP National Network™. Hartway saw first-hand how Manufacturer’s Edge deployed effective strategies for increased efficiencies and profitability, and he realized that Unique Litho could benefit from a similar engagement. He decided to contact Manufacturer’s Edge for assistance in streamlining production processes.

**MEP CENTER’S ROLE.** Initially, Manufacturer’s Edge worked with Unique Litho to implement 5S workplace organization (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain), as well as prepare the company for ISO Certification. Then, after discovering an additional need to provide management with tangible tools for change leadership and sustainability, Manufacturer’s Edge provided a series of workshops designed to produce a Lean Management System for the company.

Hartway and his team received a far greater level of employee buy-in to the improvements than they had originally anticipated. The 5S and Lean Management System processes meant "workarounds from 20 years ago could be replaced with newer technologies," according to Hartway. The improvements required investments in training and plant upgrades that helped eliminate waste and decrease costs. Additionally, the new systems impacted jobs and enabled a new company-wide vocabulary pertinent to process, service, and change management. Hartway says it’s now common for employees at all levels to simply say, "we need to 5S that!"

**"5S organized and systematized us, while Lean was a new way of evaluating every process. Why are we doing it? Is there a better way? Why are we doing it this way? Is it a 30-yr old bad habit? [Manufacturer’s Edge] removed our blinders."**

-Jay Hartway, President

## RESULTS



Savings of **\$26,000**



Investment: **\$73,000**



**2 new/retained jobs**

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