STRATEGIC PLAN INCITES EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT TO PERFORMANCE & PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

ABOUT FORSTER TOOL AND MANUFACTURING CO. Forster Tool and Manufacturing Company is a woman-owned, 60-year-old family business located in Bensenville, Illinois. With more than 30 employees, the company is committed to clients seeking dependable, precision custom machining services.

THE CHALLENGE. With an ever-growing increase in global competition, Forster Tool and Manufacturing Company was losing high-volume, low-margin work overseas. Clients were developing warehouses and sourcing parts globally. Forster needed a new strategy for higher margin domestic work, and quickly. In addition, company leaders knew that their impending upgrade to the ISO 9001:2015 standard would require a deeper analysis of risks and rewards, creating a perfect opportunity to explore their larger strategic vision for the future.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Forster decided to reach out to experts at the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC), part of the MEP National Network, for strategic planning assistance. IMEC led the Forster team through a multi-phase journey that consisted of a three-day deep dive conversation, held over three months. The exercise simultaneously provided an overview of the strategic planning process and equalized all staff in their understanding of the most common issues and opportunities. The team developed mission, vision, and value statements, along with draft goals for their five-year plan. They also formed strategic charters to serve as annual performance metrics. "This created a system for us to conduct monthly employee meetings to review the plan and our objectives, to know whether or not we were on track," explained Maureen Forster, company president.

The Forster team soon realized the plan could impact profitability very quickly. They bought into the direction of the plan and began to see a dramatic, yet positive, culture change. Individual performance metrics produced an obvious shift in productivity. "The performance metrics and team approach to decision making truly helped increase employee involvement," said Forster. "It was more demanding on our staff, but ultimately the individuals were feeling more fulfilled by their work."

The company successfully upgraded to the ISO 9001:2015 and AS9100 standards, and employees became more actively involved in forming new committees, including 5S workplace organization, safety, and workforce rewards. Forster increased sales, diversified into new markets, and doubled penetration in the aerospace market.

"The strategic planning approach led by IMEC was so simple and straightforward. It made it easy for everyone on our team. I highly recommend it; especially for small companies."

-Maureen Forster, President

RESULTS

- Increased margins by 6%, from 2-3% to 8-9%
- Increased aerospace market penetration by 100%
- Successfully transitioned to ISO 9001:2015 standard
- Achieved registration to AS9100 for the first time
- Decreased reliance on few key clients and increased sales overall

CONTACT US

1501 W. Bradley Ave.
Bradley University
Peoria, IL 61625

(888)806-4632

www.imec.org

Together We Achieve Excellence