

## LEAN IMPLEMENTATION, SUPERVISOR TRAINING & SOFTWARE UPGRADES PRODUCE BOTTOM LINE SAVINGS

**ABOUT APPLIED SEPARATIONS, INC.** Applied Separations manufactures supercritical fluid, water-free dye systems, solid phase extraction consumables, and DNA-free devices. Based in Allentown, Pennsylvania, with around 30 employees, the company also provides contract filling of filters, packings, and sorbents.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Applied Separations was looking for assistance in implementing Lean Manufacturing, developing newly promoted supervisors, and selecting a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. The company also hoped to migrate its equipment from a software-based platform to a Programmable Logic Control (PLC-based) platform. This change would enable the integration of larger equipment in the future, and Applied Separations wanted to simplify communications with third-party contractors during the integration discussions. The company decided to reach out to the Manufacturers Resource Center (MRC), a division of the Pennsylvania Manufacturing Extension Partnership (PA MEP) and part of the MEP National Network. In addition to the Lean training and software implementation, Applied Separations was interested in MRC's CFO Forum, which offered continuing education credits for the company's controller, a CPA.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** MRC led a Lean implementation project for Applied Separations, helping the company to red-tag unnecessary items, streamline the manufacturing environment for its consumable business, and uncover opportunities for cost savings. MRC also assisted in engaging a third-party consultant for the ERP effort, and Applied Separations went on to select Epicor as their new system. "Their expertise proved to be an effective supplement to our own," said Alfonso Liu, COO. "Their coaches are helping us section by section. From customer service to accounts payable and accounts receivable, we now rely on Epicor for invoicing, inventory control, and more." Once implemented, the ERP efficiencies will result in measurable savings for Applied Separations.

With regard to the supervisor training, MRC coordinated a number of sessions to expand on best practices and help the new supervisors increase their awareness of appropriate employee interactions. The CFO Forum, meanwhile, gave the controller—a veteran of the service sector—an improved understanding of the ways manufacturing companies approach CFO duties. "She took the opportunity to talk to other CPAs and CFOs and bring that experience back to us," Liu said. The company also received funding from WEDnet to begin the PLC training. With half of the training under their belts so far, Applied Separations technical staff is eager to resume PLC instruction when they are eligible for funding once again.

"MRC's assistance has been a critical part of our growth in process efficiency, skills enhancement, technical abilities, and other administrative and operational areas."

-Alfonso Liu, COO

## RESULTS



Lean implementation produced over **\$50,000** in cost savings



Invested in new ERP system and PLC platform



CFO Forum and supervisor training improved management efficiencies

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