

TWO SECOND LEAN BRINGS BENEFITS FOR CUSTOMERS AND  
EMPLOYEES

**ABOUT ELECTRIC MATERIALS CO (THE).** The Electric Materials Company (EM) is a manufacturer of non-ferrous metal products for industrial electrical applications located in North East, Pennsylvania. They provide custom engineered and manufactured products and services for the transportation, oil and gas, steel mill, power generation and distribution, mining, military, and nuclear industries. The EM plant covers approximately 420,000 square-feet with over 140 employees manufacturing products and services to meet customer specifications.

**THE CHALLENGE.** EM was planning to jumpstart efforts for improving their company culture with a focus on a lean environment, supported by corporate owners, United Stars Inc. of Beloit, Wisconsin. The company had previous programs come and go, including 'Quality Circles', and others that had fizzled out. EM Leadership was looking for greater understanding of the basics of lean, as well as guidance for "initiating a culture change." They were starting a department redesign, mill EDM cell, and thought this area would be a good starting point for integrating the lean mindset.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Lean Together™ is an ongoing collaborative learning program focused on developing true and lasting cultural changes, where everyone's job is making small incremental improvements everyday. The program, created by NWIRC, a NIST MEP affiliate, includes nine monthly sessions of classroom education, facility tours, 2 Second Lean book discussions, and assignments. EM management saw the benefits of being involved with the group, starting to apply 2 second improvements of their own, and listening to and seeing what others have tried.

"The timing was epic," said Patti Schwarz, Continuous Improvement and IT Manager. "I had recently been promoted to the position and was searching for local training resources to assist me in my new role." EM also enrolled Rick Ramsdell, Production Manager and Tony Zimmerman, Engineering Supervisor. This team tailored what they learned to fit immediate needs within their departments. Eventually they initiated a plan for a company-wide lean initiative involving specific departments and individuals as their 'seeds' of lean growth. "One of the first things EM's team did was to share the employee input and feedback with the core EM management team. It did not fall on deaf ears," said President Becky Ramsdell.

**"Just get going with 2 second improvements and the numbers will improve and speak for all the hard work the team is putting into the initiative. Along with that, the overall work environment and employee satisfaction will only get better."**

-Patti Schwarz, Continuous Improvement and IT Manager

## RESULTS



**\$500,000** in new or retained sales



**\$1,000,000** in cost savings



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## CONTACT US



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