

SMALL COLORADO CHAIR MANUFACTURER SEES BIG IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH COMMITMENT TO LEAN AND A DECADES-LONG PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL MEP CENTER

ABOUT CROWN SEATING LLC. Located in Centennial, CO, Crown Seating is a small, niche manufacturing company that offers a wide variety of ergonomic stools and chairs catering mainly to the medical and dental industries. When Steven Knight purchased Crown Seating in 2003, they were on the brink of bankruptcy. Knight was up for the challenge as he had been performing large-scale turnarounds for a variety of organizations since the 1980s and knew he could do the same for Crown Seating.

THE CHALLENGE. Knight's first step with any turnaround job had typically been to start implementing lean manufacturing processes, which at that time were simply known as "The Toyota Way." With Crown Seating, however, demand was increasing so rapidly that they barely had time to keep up, let alone adopt new strategies and methods. When he started running into major bottlenecks requiring choices between meeting demand and maintaining quality, Knight knew it was time to implement lean.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Knight found Manufacturer's Edge (MAMTC at that time), part of the MEP National Network™, and was excited to work with an organization who "not only tells you, they help you set up the systems and manage them. It's not theory, it's actual practice." As Knight says, "It makes Manufacturer's Edge much more effective than the other guys." Crown Seating was able to double output from 20 or 21 stools per day to 40+ with no drop off in quality. Knight eventually turned the company over to his CFO and relocated to Nashville to manage one of his other organizations. Much to his surprise, he discovered that the new president did not fully understand the Lean concept and had let the practices slip. By teaming up with Manufacturer's Edge consultants, who taught him the importance of lean and its systems, the president quickly embraced lean and turned the manufacturing operations around in record time. This time when he called in Manufacturer's Edge, he was able to increase production to upwards of 150 stools or more per day. Additionally, he received assistance through the Manufacturer's Edge Leader Standard Work program and has now achieved successful alignment between himself and the rest of the leadership team through monthly, weekly, and daily check-ins to set priorities and establish strategy and execution. Thanks to Knight's commitment to continuous improvement and the training he and his staff have received through this process, he is now able to travel back and forth between his new home in Tennessee and the place he called home for 40 years in Colorado without dreading what he will discover when he arrives. These days things are running so smoothly and cleanly at Crown Seating he says, "you can literally eat off the floor!"

"If it wasn't for Manufacturer's Edge, my companies would not be successful. It's just a simple fact. I am forever indebted to Manufacturer's Edge."

-Steven Knight, Owner

RESULTS



\$700,000 in increased or retained sales



\$495,000 in new investment



11 new or retained jobs

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