

## ALL HANDS ON DECKED: TECHHELP ALUMNI MAKE AN IMPACT

**ABOUT DECKED, L.L.C.** Headquartered in Ketchum, Idaho, DECKED designs and manufactures a storage system that attaches to the tie-downs in the bed of full-sized pickup trucks. The system requires no drilling and provides secure, weatherproof storage for gear while improving the utility and functionality of the pickup truck bed. DECKED products are sold online through their website and at selected strategic dealers located throughout the United States.

The concept for DECKED came from Lance Meller, who worked out of his truck for years as an outdoor product salesman. He quickly learned he needed a better way to organize and protect his gear while still retaining the functionality of the truck bed. For three years, Lance and Jake Peters, DECKED's General Manager, teamed up to create a company, and in 2013 they brought their highly engineered and innovative product to market.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Based in a relatively rural part of Idaho, DECKED was anticipating a critical shortage of engineering and product development talent. A long-term design resource was planning to retire at the same time DECKED was looking to bring new products to the market. To maintain its rapid growth and market expansion, the company needed to innovate on new products, features, and functionality and to expand its product line. Company leadership realized the only way to innovate quickly would be to increase its design and prototyping capabilities to enhance and expand its portfolio of pickup truck storage systems.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** DECKED leadership found capable design talent in Calvin Allan, an alumnus of TechHelp, a representative of the MEP National Network™. In his new position at DECKED, Allan quickly engaged TechHelp's NPD Lab to support the company's rapid prototyping needs. Engineering judgments and design iterations were determined remotely in collaboration with TechHelp NPD Manager Grey Beaudry without DECKED staff ever having the prototype parts in their hands. The trust that the client had in the NPD Lab contributed to accelerated decision-making on design changes to their products. This engagement also led to investment in their own in-house prototyping capabilities with decision assistance from Beaudry. Soon thereafter DECKED hired two additional product development engineers, both with connections to the NPD Lab talent pipeline, one as an NPD student designer, and the other as an engineering services partner. The combined team is now working in a highly coordinated way to innovate rapidly on the company's new product line expansion.

**"As rapid prototyping continues to mature and services become a commodity, continue to look for areas of differentiation. TechHelp's size and focus on client relationships sets you apart from the "Big Box" service providers. A great example of this is how your NPD team helped us make rapid engineering design decisions from prototypes without even shipping them to our location!"**

-Calvin Allan, Engineering Director

## RESULTS



\$200,000 in increased or retained sales



\$1,241,000 in new investment



\$800,000 in cost savings



6 created or retained jobs

## CONTACT US



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