

IRON UNIVERSITY

ABOUT ALLIANT CASTINGS METAL TECHNOLOGIES. Alliant Castings, based in Winona, Minnesota, is a foundry manufacturing abrasion and impact resistant castings for a variety of heavy duty industries including mining, road construction, recycling, power generation and more. Utilizing the latest technologies, they create custom, proprietary materials to meet their clients' needs for demanding and extreme performance. In addition to providing high quality products and service, Alliant Castings is focused on giving back to and being involved in the local community, with executive participation in several nonprofit organizations, area schools and other community groups.

THE CHALLENGE. Alliant Castings President Tom Renk wanted to develop a roadmap for employee progression and saw an opportunity to produce not just better employees, but better people by providing educational and personal enrichment opportunities. The leadership team needed guidance on developing training materials, curriculum and how to assess employee competencies to ensure company success.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Like any industry, a foundry operation is comprised of employees with various duties and skillsets. Higher skilled employees command a higher hourly wage. Part of what Alliant Castings was trying to accomplish was the creation of an intentional system mapping out a plan to climb the company ladder, whether that meant cross training and learning a different skill or taking advantage of education opportunities. By demonstrating a path for progression, Alliant Castings hoped to increase employee retention and reduce turnover, especially at the lower-skill positions. Enterprise Minnesota consultant Abbey Hellickson, part of the MEP National Network™, worked with Alliant Castings' leadership team to define employee progression in the company and the training components that accompany it. In order to be self-sufficient in keeping the program running, Alliant Castings' staff needed to be trained on how to work with staff and conduct their own trainings.

"For the foundry industry and for the size of their organization, it's extremely unique," said Enterprise Minnesota consultant Abbey Hellickson. "Tom values growth, and he really values elevating his employees to be their best here and at home. So, there's a foundation to this Iron U that's really all about just being better people. I would say his approach and passion is something I don't see every place. And when I look at the foundry industry especially, he is really trying to create those pathways and development opportunities for not only the employees to be successful but to also increase retention."

"I think it's an opportunity to help better the people that we have here with a focus on the shop floor. There's a certain yearning, I think, with some of the guys to latch onto this. We're in the final stages of developing our curriculum with Enterprise Minnesota's help, and I think we'll get some really cool results from it."

-Tom Renk, President

RESULTS



\$350,000 in new investment



\$50,000 in cost savings



\$35,000 in training

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