

## FREUDENBERG-NOK SEALS COMMUNICATIONS FLOW AND INCREASES RESPONSIVENESS WITH DAILY TIERED MEETINGS

**ABOUT FREUDENBERG NOK.** In 1989, two well-known companies, one from Germany, Freudenberg, and one from Japan, NOK Corporation, came together to form Freudenberg NOK, a sealing technology manufacturer serving such industries as automotive, aerospace, medical devices, bottling equipment, and more. The company, with multiple locations across the globe, opened a facility in Cleveland, a small town in Northeast Georgia, thirty years ago. Today the location employs more than 500 people from the community and surrounding towns.

**THE CHALLENGE.** A couple of years ago, Bill Nusbaum, Northeast region manager for the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP) at Georgia Tech, part of the MEP National Network™, reached out to Wyman Hare, production partner manager of Freudenberg NOK, looking to set-up benchmarking tours for the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium, which allows manufacturers to learn best practices in lean tools. Hare agreed to invite the consortium members into their plant, but also requested to join GaMEP's Advanced Manufacturing Consortium.

During the initial plant tour GaMEP connected Hare to one of the plant tour attendees, who was from a local hospital and far along in their lean journey. Nusbaum and Hare arranged for twenty Freudenberg NOK team members to tour the hospital, where they witnessed a communication method that made them rethink the way they were sharing information within their own plant.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Working with Nusbaum, the team sketched out a plan for their daily communication, which started with every department within Freudenberg-NOK, from the plant floor to HR and all departments in between, gather for 20 minutes within their respective teams. From there the plan involved three more tiers of meetings, with each layer pulling up information from the prior meeting, until a final meeting takes place amongst Hare and his direct reports, informing them of the activities within their production floor and non-production areas of the company. As a result of this communication plan, within two hours, the entire organization understands what the priorities are for the day and helps the teams resolve any issues that come have come up, solving them in a more timely and organized manner. Over time, this method proved to be influential in breaking down siloes, earning trust, and increasing plant-wide transparency.

Since the success at the Cleveland plant, Hare and Jennifer Watson, GROWTTH manager, have taken their learnings and what worked from the plan GaMEP helped them create and have implemented this system division wide, getting all 15,000 employees on the same communication flow. Hare said, "This has been instrumental, especially right now, as the world is facing Coronavirus. "

"Our experience with the GaMEP and the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium has been extremely positive. It's been a great sounding board, allowing us to make these connections and learn from others."

-Wyman Hare, CI Leader

## RESULTS



Improved culture by increasing communication, trust, and transparency



Developed a Lean Production Management System that was applied to **500** employees in Cleveland



Uncovered trends and common problems, allowing the company to be more responsive to their employees



Key information is conveyed to the top level of the company, via 20-minute meetings.

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