

FROM THREE BUILDINGS TO ONE

ABOUT MINIMIZER (SPRAY CONTROL SYSTEMS). Minimizer is a nationally-distributed aftermarket solution for the heavy truck industry and employs a staff of 83. Currently based in Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, Minimizer has over 30 years of experience in making aftermarket fenders, floor mats, slick plates, mobile work benches, seats, mattresses and more for long-haul semi and trailer trucks.

THE CHALLENGE. The Minimizer leadership team was looking to reengage their organization in continuous improvement methodology based on their minimizer advanced production process (MAPP) program, which had fallen out of sustainment as the organization grew. The company had also recognized several physical and psychological barriers staff had to work through every day during normal production. Minimizer's current operation in Blooming Prairie placed staff in three different addresses, spread throughout seven different buildings.

In this setup, it is very difficult for an organization to build a lean and collaborative culture because of the walls and distance between work cells, leading to an "us and them" mentality between departments. In addition, the Minimizer production process flow required that the product travel outdoors between buildings no less than four times and move approximately 1,500 feet from raw material to finished product.

Minimizer sought the advice of Enterprise Minnesota, part of the MEP National Network™, in order to help assess internal readiness for the next levels of lean and to find ways to optimize product flows throughout the facility.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Enterprise Minnesota was brought in to perform a lean assessment which provided the Minimizer leadership team with visibility into the operation's current state. From the assessment, a complete document with future state recommendations was delivered to the client, which contained recommendations that covered key business components including reviewing and refining their mission, communications, waste elimination in their current production processes, management systems for knowledge retention and employee skill development.

The Minimizer leadership team used the results of this assessment as part of their decision to purchase and build a new facility in Owatonna, Minnesota. At the new facility, all production will be fully indoors under one roof and their production path will be reduced to 400 feet. This move will yield significant savings and value in several key areas of their operation. They were also provided with information and guidance on how to reengage their staff using the MAPP continuous improvement program as part of their continued growth.

"The evaluation gave us some good insight on our internal 'readiness' for the next levels of lean, some relative feedback to our current facility restrictions, and some insight on what the new facility may gain us, besides square footage."

-Jim Richards, Vice President

RESULTS



4 created or retained jobs



\$10,000,000 in new investment



\$100,000 in cost savings



\$50,000 in new or retained sales



\$35,000 in new products

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