

FALCON ENGINEERING SCALES SEAMLESSLY TO MEET DEMAND FOR PPE

ABOUT FALCON ENGINEERING. Falcon Engineering Corporation designs and manufactures best-in-class parachutes and high-tech textiles used by the military and other organizations to deliver personnel and cargo, drop rescue and survival equipment, recover air vehicles, and decelerate high-performance aircraft. Headquartered in Mesa, Arizona, Falcon produces textiles, riggings and slings and provides CNC machining and metal fabrication. The company's expertise in textile manufacturing made it an ideal partner in Arizona's COVID-19 response to provide hospitals personal protective equipment amid global shortages.

THE CHALLENGE. Arizona MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, learned about Falcon's textile manufacturing expertise a few years ago. When the state began ramping up the response to PPE shortages, Falcon was top on the list of possible contract manufacturers. When Arizona MEP asked Falcon's President, Shauna Fantasia, if the company was interested in helping fulfill orders from Arizona hospitals for reusable isolation gowns, the answer was "Yes, absolutely." Fantasia added, "Falcon works with a lot of high-end products for the military. We know different seam constructions and production, so we were easily able to get on board to help with these efforts."

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. While Falcon's expertise in textiles was an asset, they did not have prior gown manufacturing experience. Arizona MEP used its prior experience in gown manufacturing to help Falcon ramp up production quickly. To keep improving as Falcon added more lines, Arizona MEP and Falcon ran time studies to find the most efficient process and layout. As a team, they reduced WIP time from 25 to 13 minutes, increased the number of lines from two to five, and increased the daily production from 300 to 1,800 gowns a day. "We have individuals who have expertise in lean manufacturing, technical sewing, pattern making and supply chain. Coming together as a team is how we were able to get this project set up quickly and running efficiently," said Fantasia. Now with expertise in gown manufacturing, Falcon has developed and will be offering a new surgical gown, as well as continuing to supply isolation gowns.

As part of Arizona's Manufacturing Month celebration in 2020, Arizona MEP and Falcon teamed up to showcase the diversity of Arizona manufacturers and careers in manufacturing. Since in-person tours were not feasible, Arizona MEP filmed a video of Falcon's facilities, and Fantasia hosted a virtual tour.

"The video we did for the Manufacturing Day celebration has come in handy during this time as new customers have not been able to visit us in person. We have sent this video tour of our facility and capabilities to prospects that we have known for many years but have not gotten traction with, and immediately we are getting positive responses. It's been a real game-changer."

-Shauna Fantasia, Owner

RESULTS



Supplying isolation gowns to Arizona hospitals created **\$2** million of new business for Falcon



Increased the daily production from **300** to 1,800 gowns a day



Hired an additional **73** employees to meet demand



Pivoted business to manufacturer PPE in response to COVID-19 pandemic

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