

MACHINE TOOL MANUFACTURER ADOPTS NEW WORKFORCE PROCESSES

ABOUT BOURN & KOCH, INC. Bourn and Koch, Inc., provides precision automated machine tool solutions for manufacturers. They are located in Rockford, Illinois, with 78 employees.

THE CHALLENGE. Institutional knowledge is a risk in any organization. Leadership at Bourn and Koch realized the risks they faced with the lack of well-documented, standardized key steps for their manufacturing build process and an aging workforce. They needed to find a way to continuously transfer knowledge to the next generation of workers. The standard work process they did have in place was not scalable and was limited to only one person managing the application and data. They needed something more robust and budget-friendly and wanted to capture the process digitally.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Director of Operations Todd Wells and his team met with IMEC, part of the MEP National Network™, in August 2020 to explore how Industry 4.0 technologies could make their efforts in standard work more efficient and scalable for the future. IMEC began the process with an analysis of various hardware and software solutions to determine which would best suit the needs of the organization.

After eight months of careful evaluation, the team decided on Tulip as the host platform with three built-in applications, along with customized support from Clear Process Solutions. Working with IMEC on this project, Bourn and Koch was able to qualify for an Advanced Manufacturing Technology Services grant, funded through IMEC and the MEP National Network. Now the team can easily transfer knowledge, upskill current employees, and train new employees. The three applications allow them to capture text, photos, and video to properly explain the steps involved in completing a variety of manufacturing operations, ensuring the build process is standardized and streamlined.

Completing this project also lays the foundation for communicating how work is done for future initiatives while supporting the company's current apprenticeship program. According to Wells, "In the medium to long term, this is a game changer in our industry by being able to provide professional training and development while leveraging current technology and tools. The workforce of tomorrow will be attracted to these tools. Everyone wants to succeed and do well; with proper development and effective training our employees of tomorrow will come up to speed faster and better than ever before."

"With the TWI skills and three computer apps, our expert machine tool builders are able to take advantage of a proven training methodology and Industry 4.0 technology to convert their practices directly into a written rule right on the shop floor. They now generate standard work without the need for support from technical writers or other office staff. Without these advancements, the knowledge would otherwise have to be relearned post-retirement."

-Todd Wells, Director of Operations

RESULTS



2 created or retained jobs



\$1,000,000 in anticipated new and retained sales



\$32,000 in anticipated cost savings



\$12,500 in anticipated new investments

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