

## MRC ENABLES INNOVATIVE OFFICE PRODUCTS TO PROMOTE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND ESTABLISH STANDARD BUSINESS PRACTICES

**ABOUT INNOVATIVE OFFICE PRODUCTS.** Innovative Office Products based in Easton, Pennsylvania, is a leader in the design and manufacture of ergonomic, space-saving mounts for monitors, notebooks, and tablets. What began as a family-owned operation in 1986 has grown into a global company that serves buyers in the corporate office, retail, hospitality, healthcare, government, and broadcasting industries.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Innovative engaged MRC, part of the Pennsylvania MEP and the MEP National Network™, for simultaneous Kata and soft skills training to elevate the team's collective skills, encourage autonomy, and empower individuals to take action without going up the chain of command.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** "MRC helped us build responsibility among these key players and make sure they could handle new tasks as they were delegated," says Shane Gross, Innovative's Human Resource Manager. "The problem-solving piece within the Kata training created a foundation with existing team leaders and enabled these individuals to step into new leadership roles."

Although the parallel Kata and soft skills training entailed the use of two instructors, the programs were related-- they involved the same group of people, and the timing was the same, with attendees alternating between Kata one day and soft skills the next.

"Soft skills are the other side of the supervisory role," Gross says. "We needed these leaders to build the right management and supervisory skills to handle people, not just production. Kata helps trainees establish a goal, identify challenges, and develop effective solutions. The soft skills, meanwhile, build the 'people' side of the equation, enhancing their awareness of conflict management, effective ways to provide feedback, etc."

This year Innovative also sent a number of participants to MRC's Manufacturing Leadership Institute (MLI) program. Gross says over the years the company has sent numerous salaried/office roles through the program, and they have found it to be an effective way to emphasize the use of Innovative-specific business processes. "We use it to expand people's awareness from a business standpoint," Gross says. "The program involves people from different companies, and it gives everyone a chance to hear other companies' perspective not just lectures. It's an opportunity to learn what others are doing and see how they address similar problems."

**"MRC's training is the backbone of our manufacturing processes—from a product and people standpoint."**

-Shane Gross, Human Resources Manager

## RESULTS



**\$50,000+** in annual production cost savings



Kata and soft skills training improved problem solving and continuous improvement



MRC executive leadership course prompted improved business practices in corporate culture

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