

ETHICON - ELEVATING SUPERVISORS TO ELEVATE ALL

ABOUT ETHICON INC. Ethicon, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson Co., develops, manufactures and markets sutures, ligatures, staplers, and other wound-closing products. In 1964, Johnson & Johnson tabbed San Angelo, Texas, as the ideal location for an Ethicon plant meant to spearhead the company's efforts on the western front. The plant's start was rooted in the manual process of manufacturing sutures. Over the decades, Ethicon and its employees have evolved to meet new global manufacturing demands.

THE CHALLENGE. With over 650 employees and working a 24/7 schedule, Ethicon had a wide variety of supervisors - some experienced, some brand new, some with outside experience and some with only Ethicon experience. Understanding that the key to maintaining and improving efficiencies, productivity and quality is to have outstanding supervisors who can motivate and lead employees, Ethicon was searching for an external supervisor training program to augment existing internal training. It was also desired that all supervisors, regardless of their supervisory experience, would receive this training to ensure consistency in solving conflicts, training employees and deploying process improvements. For help the company contacted TMAC, part of the MEP National Network™.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. TMAC South Central's Manufacturing Supervisor Certification series, which targets front-line supervisors at manufacturing facilities, addressed Ethicon's needs. With a strong emphasis on continuous improvement, job instruction, employee relations, problem solving, and effective communication, the course teaches students the interpersonal strategies to become a productive and respected supervisor. In partnership with the San Angelo Regional Manufacturers Alliance, TMAC initially delivered this course through an open enrollment offering. Ethicon's local training officer attended this first sold out 40-hour manufacturing supervisor certification offering.

Additional classes were then taught in a direct partnership between TMAC and Ethicon to train the remaining supervisors. This course was attractive to Ethicon because it complimented their existing TWI Job Instruction implementation program (TWI is Training Within Industry, a method of hands-on training, learning and coaching for supervisors, team leaders, and workers). Additionally, the course's TWI Job Relations module was the sought-after solution for an identified skills gap in their front-line supervisors being insufficiently equipped to consistently address employee relations issues without them resulting in escalation.

"The course surpassed our expectations. The instructors did a superb job facilitating the training, incorporating their expertise and kept a relatively mature and 'seasoned' audience engaged. Feedback from the participants was great. In fact, one of the more experienced attendees, who has been with the company for 30+ years, expressed to me that we have done a lot of different leadership trainings over the years, but that this is the one we should have started 30 years ago!"

-Michael Berry, Senior Training Leader

RESULTS



23 front-line supervisors trained, improving morale



13.49% decrease in grievances



\$11,000 in cost avoidance per training session from an external provider

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