

MESSERSMITH MANUFACTURING: SAVING TIME, SAVING MONEY

ABOUT MESSERSMITH MANUFACTURING INC. Messersmith Manufacturing of Bark River, Michigan, designs, manufactures and installs biomass boiler systems. Messersmith was incorporated in 1982 by Gailyn and Valerie Messersmith and is celebrating its 40th anniversary of manufacturing in the upper peninsula this year. Messersmith has installed industrial biomass boiler systems in schools and universities, hospitals, greenhouses and forest products sawmills throughout 30 states and provinces from Maine to Alaska. In 2016, the Messersmiths sold the company to two employees, Math Colburn and Jeremy Mortl. In 2017, they acquired a competitor company, Biomass Combustions Systems of Massachusetts, and brought all the manufacturing of BCS equipment to the Bark River facility. There are currently 16 employees.

THE CHALLENGE. Messersmith Manufacturing wanted to focus on its office processes, primarily the order-to-delivery processes. They hoped to find ways to cut waste, find new opportunities and improve costs by 20%. Many of their processes required several steps between multiple people, which was not an effective use of time or resources. They had recently implemented JobBOSS shop management software and wanted to optimize its capabilities along with other resources to their greatest efficiency.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Messersmith reached out to the experts at the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (The Center), part of the Michigan MEP and the MEP National Network™, for help. One of the first steps was to generate an office process map that showed 10 distinct functions, 50 processes and 63 identified dependencies or hand-offs.

An operational lean assessment helped establish a baseline, measuring the number of functions, the number of process steps and the number of hand-offs. That baseline product (31,500) represents the magnitude of the complexity. It would never be zero, but even a 10% reduction would be significant. Because Messersmith is working hard on streamlining its processes, The Center's experts were quickly able to offer several recommendations, from adding tools to JobBOSS to adding visuals and time frames to standard procedures.

"The operational lean assessment was very beneficial to streamlining our office processes at Messersmith Manufacturing. The lean assessment helped identify the areas where the most significant time and cost savings could be found and gave us a guide to improve those processes. Throughout the year following the assessment, we were able to continue improving our processes which yielded significant cost savings and improved productivity. This allowed us to reinvest those savings into new marketing and product development, which led to increased sales revenue. Overall, this was a very beneficial process and a great learning tool for everybody involved."

-Jeremy Mortl, President

RESULTS



\$300,000 in new sales



\$50,000 in retained sales



\$5,200 in new investment



\$5,000 in cost savings



\$2,500 in improved productivity

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