

TANK TECHNOLOGY GOES WITH THE FLOW TO BOOST EFFICIENCY

ABOUT TANK TECHNOLOGY INC. Tank Technology Inc.'s history dates back nearly 60 years and features employee-owners who provide water heating products and service. Tank Technology manufactures high-quality tanks, porcelain-enameled components, pressure vessels and heat exchangers. The company also provides complete tank assemblies with foam insulation and outer steel jackets powder coated in custom colors. Tank Technology has about 50 employees at its facility in Princeton, Wisconsin.

THE CHALLENGE. Tank Technology is continuing to grow with a potential new product line set to be introduced. The company wants to improve the flow of product through three steps of the operation: shell, flue assembly and full tank assembly. Currently, Tank Technology is producing six to seven units on average per day and wants to improve that rate to a consistent eight units per day to meet the demands of its customer. Tank Technology would also like to incorporate a new product into this existing manufacturing cell.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. WMEP Manufacturing Solutions, part of the MEP National Network™, consulted with the company on cellular/flow manufacturing, which links manual and machine operations in the most efficient combination to maximize value-added content and minimize waste. A training session was presented that simulates typical manufacturing processes and focuses on increasing the efficiency of the entire organization. As part of the cellular flow project, WMEP utilized value stream mapping and plant layout techniques. Value stream mapping assists in identifying the current flow of material and information in processes for a family of products, highlighting the opportunities for improvement that will most significantly impact overall production. Also, rearranging the plant, equipment and workstations into a cellular configuration better supports product streams, reduces work-in-process and allows the company more flexibility to address fluctuating demand.

"With the help of WMEP we are positioned to be more competitive and able to support forecasted growth."

-Adam Roehl, Plant Manager

RESULTS



60% reduction in backlog



Lead time reduced to 4 days from 14 days



Safer work environment



Positioned for growth



Consistently and predictably meets customer demand

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