

A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION HELPS MID STAR LAB STAND ON THEIR FEET AGAIN

ABOUT MID STAR LAB, INC. In 1998 Ron and Kari Wagner recognized a need for manufacturing custom orthotics. For years the Wagner's sold wholesale to podiatrists and other foot care providers throughout the Midwest. In the fall of 2011, Mid Star Lab began expanding their services first to include shoes and then added certified clinicians to their staff, allowing Mid Star Lab to service patients directly.

Today Mid Star Lab assesses and creates custom arch supports primarily for diabetics, children, athletes, the elderly, walking professionals and veterans. Their team includes board certified pedorthists, orthotic fitters, shoe fitters and technicians. All arch supports and orthotics are custom made and their experience ensures their customers will receive an excellent product to satisfy their needs. The company operates five clinics in the Midwest but produces all product at their Tonganoxie, Kansas, location.

THE CHALLENGE. Sadly, Ron Wagner passed away unexpectedly in 2017. He led operations and production and his loss left Kari in a very challenging position. Ultimately the business began suffering with the pandemic, a bad management hire and no one to oversee production and processes. Mid Star Lab was experiencing significant inefficiencies in its operation and production area. There was wasted transportation and excess motion in the production processes, a lack of standard work instructions and inventory management challenges caused by the growth of the company. Company leaders desired to reduce waste, increase productivity, improve communication, and standardize processes through the implementation of a continuous improvement system. They lacked the internal expertise to start this transformation on their own. For help Mid Star Lab turned to KMS, part of the MEP National Network™.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. KMS worked with Mid Star Lab management to deliver lean training with hands-on simulations, develop standard work instructions and create an IT project plan for their custom orthotic system enhancement that will allow them to track individual orthotics through the manufacturing process.

"We have gone from 40 to 23 employees but increased productivity 300%. Better evaluation of employees and improved processes are allowing better more empowered employees to be more productive. The right people doing the right things. Things are going so well, we need to continue to generate more business because we can handle our existing business so efficiently and effectively. KMS reset the foundation of our business and helped us get back on our feet. "

-Kari Wagner, CEO

RESULTS



300% increase in productivity



\$750,000 in new or retained sales

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