

ARIZONA MEP AND ARIZONA WESTERN FIXTURE AND DISPLAY BUILD NEW PROCESSES FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

ABOUT ARIZONA WESTERN FIXTURE AND DISPLAY, INC. Arizona Western Fixture and Display, Inc. designs and manufactures custom fixtures and displays for a wide variety of customers. In 1984 the founder, Bernard Narcy, started the company out of his garage. Today, the company's products can be found in La-Z-Boy Inc. stores, LCG Everbrook Academies, UnitedHealthcare, One AZ Credit Union, and Vantage West. The company's growth and success are due to a well-refined and dedicated manufacturing process and a team that now operates out of a 30,000 square-foot facility in Phoenix, Arizona.

THE CHALLENGE. Arizona Western's objective is steady and sustainable growth, but the company was unsure if it had the right processes in place. In 2021, after being contacted by Arizona MEP senior client advisor Michael Jimmerson, the company applied for the Arizona MEP's emergency assistance program (EAP), which provided funds to manufacturers that were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Arizona MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, first focused on improvements to the organization of the production team. In May 2021, Arizona MEP conducted a Lean 101 workshop with the leadership team to introduce the basic concepts and followed up with two workshops advancing the team's knowledge. One of the concepts, tiered management teams, would organize production teams to improve workflow and accountability and to provide opportunities for advancement. Arizona MEP's continuous improvement expert, Kyle Randels, helped Arizona Western to reorganize the single, large production team, which reported to one plant manager, into smaller three-to-four person teams each with a team leader. Each team was assigned to an area in production, packaging, and shipping. In June 2021, Arizona Western started to feel the disruptions to the supply chain due to the pandemic. Arizona MEP's inventory management expert collaborated with the company to assess its inventory management practices. As a result, the company implemented new safety stock levels on high-volume items essential to production. Arizona Western also increased the amount of inventory it carried for hardware items. Doing so improved its relationship with suppliers, which could then reduce the number of delivery trips to the facility and save delivery costs amidst rising gas prices. Using the funds from the EAP, Arizona Western was also able to update its website using the Arizona MEP's digital marketing expert. The company now has a modern platform to showcase finished projects installed at its clients' locations. The website also helps the company advertise new employment opportunities.

"When we first took the Lean 101 class, we didn't know the direction it would take us. And that was exciting because it took us in a whole new direction. Michael and Kyle at AZ MEP really helped with that decision and how to start successfully. We are still partnering with MEP because it's been such a valuable resource to our company."

-Pamela Narcy, Controller

RESULTS



\$94,000 saved by better utilization of existing talent and resources



\$40,000 in annual cost savings due to implementing root cause analysis of defects and errors



Empowered employees to standardize production process



Long term cost savings by retaining employees

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