

MARKETING DIVERSIFICATION PAYS OFF

ABOUT BLACK CAT BLADES LTD. Black Cat Blades is a manufacturer of replacement wear parts for the construction and mining industries. The company is located in DeWitt, Iowa, with a staff of 42.

THE CHALLENGE. In 2018, their DeWitt, Iowa, location identified a market that would allow them to grow using existing assets. "There were several OEM producers of snow removal equipment in the Midwest region," said Josh Daniel, plant manager at Black Cat Wear Parts. "So, while our location was originally established to better serve our single largest customer in the construction industry, there were local opportunities to gain market share in a different segment of the business."

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Daniel reached out to CIRAS, part of the MEP National Network™, for assistance in understanding whether the market adjacency made sense for Black Cat Wear Parts. CIRAS Project Manager C.J. Osborn researched the contractor-sized snowplow market and provided a snapshot of his findings to Daniel. That led to Daniel's participation in a strategic marketing boot camp sponsored by CIRAS and the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce in 2019.

CIRAS project manager Paul Gormley led the boot camp Daniel attended. Now available on-demand and online, the camp helps participants understand marketing best practices and offers step-by-step instruction in developing and documenting a strategic marketing plan. Daniel also received personal coaching from Osborn, who helped Daniel follow up on leads as well.

"The team at CIRAS has been great to work with, going back to our first project in 2016. Whether it's just lending an ear or helping me find solutions, they're always quick to respond and have been a pleasure to work with."

-Josh Daniels, Plant Manager

RESULTS



2 job created



Approximately **\$440,000** in new sales in 2021

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