

## HALF AS MANY TOUCHES

**ABOUT B&D ROLLERS OF MINNESOTA.** B&D Rollers of Minnesota, Inc., is a specialty industrial rubber roller manufacturer based in Glenwood, Minnesota. Founded in 1987, the company got its start by producing rubber rollers for the commercial printing industry. In the early 2000s, as the printing industry began to change with the rise of digital communications, the company decided to diversify its product mix and focus on industrial rubber roller applications. Around that same time, owner Dan Ostrander saw an opportunity in the agricultural industry and developed a product for aftermarket hay conditioner rollers. Their product, called The Crusher, helps farmers harvest their forage faster to bale it sooner and increase the relative feed value. The Crusher is sold domestically and internationally, and demand has increased year over year.

**THE CHALLENGE.** As B&D Rollers made its pivot from printing rollers to industrial and agricultural rollers, Dan Ostrander was facing strong competition for skilled workers and made a strategic decision to automate his processes when possible and invest in the skills and equipment of his workers. Today, B&D Rollers employs eight staff, but each worker operates 1-3 machines. B&D Rollers found themselves in a position where they wanted to bring in several large new pieces of equipment but didn't have the floor space to do it. Without increasing square footage, the company wanted to find a way to improve production flow and incorporate the new machines without losing much production time.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Greg Hunsaker, an Enterprise Minnesota expert in continuous improvement and facility layout and part of the MEP National Network™, was brought in to learn about B&D's production processes and how an improved flow might free up floor space to allow for the incorporation of a new vulcanizer, strip builder extruder, and vacuum system. Greg developed several layout concepts that would improve the flow and reduce the number of touches. Once the floorplan was finalized, he helped the B&D Rollers team figure out the transition process and order of operations for moving equipment to minimize downtime.

At the conclusion of the project, B&D Rollers has experienced a significant reduction in product touches during production, from 30 to about 15. The flow of the facility now follows a general U-shape through the facility floor, and employees find daily production to be significantly less stressful. The new layout has resulted in higher production rates, and they were able to incorporate their new equipment without adding to the building's square footage.

"One of the most important things about the project was the communication, expertise, and experience that Greg brought. We're a smaller company, but working with Greg and his experience with multiple companies of different sizes and being all manufacturers, was extremely valuable. He also fit in well with the staff and company and was great to work with. We've seen a higher production rate, fewer touches, more profit, and way less stress on the floor with our new layout and 5S training."

-Dan Ostrander, Owner & President

## RESULTS



\$2,050,000 in new or retained sales



\$200,000 in new investment



\$150,000 in cost savings



\$15,000 in training

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