

COSMETIC SPECIALTY LABS WORKS TO OPTIMIZE PRODUCTION

ABOUT COSMETIC SPECIALTY LABS, INC. Cosmetic Specialty Labs (CSL) is a 50-year-old custom turnkey private-label cosmetic and over-the-counter drug manufacturer with distribution in stores like Target, Walgreens, Sephora and Ulta. It also enjoys significant international sales, exporting to more than 40 countries. With about 100 employees, CSL operates from a 300,000 square-foot factory in Lawton, Oklahoma.

THE CHALLENGE. For more than 20 years, Jennifer Ellis has led the company her grandmother founded in 1973. In that time, Cosmetic Specialty Labs has enjoyed solid growth and business success, but Ellis knew her operations, which involve thousands of formulations, could be more efficient and that various areas of the business could be better aligned with each other. The constraints diminished CSL's ability to fully tap its unique expertise. For advice, Ellis turned to Kyle Robison, a regional business consultant with the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, part of the MEP National Network™. He has worked with CSL on numerous projects and is considered a trusted advisor.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Robison met with Ellis and other company leaders to discuss their corporate goals. Robison conducted a "Business Excellence Assessment," which is a proprietary tool of the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance. The assessment helps determine ways the business can be more efficient effective and profitable while accurately identifying concerns, pain points and barriers to growth. Ultimately it creates a company-wide improvement plan that aligns critical areas of operations like worker skills, processes, and production benchmarks. "To manufacture our products, employees have to problem-solve and be self-starters," Ellis notes. Robison introduced a phased plan that included a series of workshops for managers and leaders. In one, the group reexamined its operating model to verify it directly aligned to the organization's strategy. It helped create a clearly defined operating model that has direct alignment to the objectives and deliverables of the organization. In another, Robison mapped out a visual management system, which is a communication and collaboration process that aligns all employee roles to the company's objectives of production, quality, and on-time delivery. Ultimately, a fully-aligned strategic plan was developed that incorporated short and long-term benchmarks. New efficiencies are driving sales growth and market expansion while reducing production costs.

"Thanks to the help of the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, not only do we see development in our employees, but we also see big improvements in the way our business operates and aligns."

-Jennifer Ellis, President

RESULTS



5 jobs created



\$300,000 in new annual sales



\$180,000 invested in new equipment



\$100,000 in cost savings annually



New, fully-aligned strategic operating plan

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