

INDIANA MANUFACTURER OVERCOMES TURNOVER ISSUES WHILE IMPROVING COMPANY CULTURE

ABOUT ROBERT WEED CORPORATION. Robert Weed was established in 1966 as a wholesale distributor of plywood. Years of growth led Robert Weed to become a value-added manufacturer in the laminated and wood products markets. Their corporate headquarters in Bristol, Indiana, has grown over the years and coupled with the West Division in Twin Falls, Idaho, the company employs approximately 275 people.

THE CHALLENGE. Robert Weed was experiencing significant and lengthy turnover issues. The high turnover rates created an increase in costs for recruitment and training of new hires and created a disconnect among employees, as well as poor morale and culture. Long-term employees were tired of seeing the high number of new employees come and go and were getting burned out on frequent onboarding and training.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Purdue MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, conducted several days of focused discovery and skills coaching sessions at the Bristol plant with an emphasis on re-hauling their onboarding process and creating a better company culture. The employee onboarding project included five days of onsite training for 30 people with a curriculum focused on several modules including Effective Employee Onboarding, IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access), HR for Non-HR Managers, Team Building in Manufacturing, Error Proofing and Problem Solving. Recognizing the company's investment in the overall well-being and happiness of its employees inspired employees to speak up and help provide process improvement ideas. They are now involved in the changes and improvements in their areas.

Productivity has also increased throughout the plant. At the highest peaks of turnover, Robert Weed saw equipment sitting idle without staff to run it. Now with higher retention rates, employee engagement has increased significantly, and the culture continues to grow in a positive direction. Company-wide, the mindset has shifted to focus on employees as the greatest asset, and the difference in culture, happiness and attitude can be felt throughout Robert Weed as the organization continues toward the goal of becoming an employer of choice.

"Working to create a training plan with Purdue MEP was a pleasure. We collaborated to understand our opportunities for improvement, goals, and what training would help us accomplish them. Focusing on one of our strategic pillars, Winning Culture, was key. If we invest and focus on our employees, they focus and take care of the business. Because of this, we have experienced great change in our employees through a cultural transformation. Our employees are more engaged, seeking to make improvements, and our turnover has improved. Engaged employees was our ROI."

-Jeanne Fulks, Manager, Operations Excellence

RESULTS



Retained **45** jobs based on reduction of turnover from 66% to 48%



\$598,477.50 in cost savings due to turnover reduction



Improved employee morale



Coached **30** employees over a six-month period

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