

M R PRODUCTS, INC: TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IMPROVES DATA, CAPACITY & QUALITY

ABOUT M R PRODUCTS INC. M R Products, Inc., home of Mr. Chain, is a manufacturer of plastic barrier chains located in rural Copemish, Michigan. It is a fourth-generation, family-owned company with 85 employees.

THE CHALLENGE. Ryan Schultz, Chief Operations Officer, had worked with the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center's Northern office in Traverse City (The Center), part of the Michigan MEP and the MEP National Network™, on past training and consulting projects, and most recently sought assistance to better understand how the company might use technology. Between rapid sales growth during the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent staffing shortage, it was taking company leadership up to a week to translate written machine records into productivity reports (due to data copying and manipulation).

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Schultz and President Maree Mulvoy decided to take advantage of the Industry 4.0 Technology Opportunity Assessment offered by The Center. This process helped identify opportunities for machine monitoring to improve both capacity and quality. The Center consultants recommended a vendor and helped determine a return on investment for the company. The vendor demonstrated how machine monitoring could provide immediate visibility at the operator level. This allowed for reduction of cycle times from 23 to 19 seconds, as well as quicker response to problems. To date, the company has outfitted 16 machines with real-time monitoring and four more are in the works.

"Machine monitoring has been an amazing success," said Schultz. "The greatest achievement is the morale boost to our employees. They now have ongoing feedback, showing them exactly what is being asked of them and where they currently stand. Employees take pride in their work and continue trying to improve their individual cycle times."

"For the first time, production data is available in 'real time.' The information is more accurate and is gathered automatically, which saves lots of time. Real production data is transparent to everyone - the machine operator, the foremen, and management, and necessary adjustments can be made right away."

-Maree Mulvoy, President

RESULTS



20% annual increase in capacity



\$600,000 in annual labor cost savings



\$72,000 in machine monitoring technology

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