

LEADER STARTER KATA PROVIDES METHOD AND FRAMEWORK
TO SUCCESS

ABOUT ALWELD COMMERCIAL BOATS, INC. Alweld Boats is a small, family-owned aluminum boat manufacturing company with 36 employees in Lonsdale, Arkansas. The company has been successful in the industry for 40 years. Alweld strives to continuously upgrade their facilities to provide quality products for their customers. The Alweld team uses the latest CAD software to ensure a high degree of accuracy, consistency and repeatability. Each boat is individually programmed and laid out to ensure every component fits just right.

THE CHALLENGE. According to Vice President Doug Vick, "To be honest, we were quite happy with our operation. We only began exploring the Toyota Kata model out of curiosity and to maybe pick the brains of observers outside of our paradigm." For guidance Alweld's leadership turned to the experts at AEDC AMS, part of the MEP National Network™.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Accord to Alweld's leadership, when the company began the process of implementing Kata principles of continuous improvement they did not have a full understanding of what they were getting into. The team believed it would involve consultants coming in and reviewing things like equipment and plant layout, and then Alweld would receive recommendations on how to improve their current processes. After a few sessions with an AEDC AMS Kata coach, the company's leadership began to understand Kata could be so much more than that; according to the Alweld team it was a true representation of the old adage, "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime." The project has been a great success for Alweld. By utilizing the weekly coaching calls associated with Leader Starter Kata, the company was able to exceed their one-year challenges in the 9 KPIs (key performance indicators) of quality, cost, delivery, safety, environment, morale and accurate, complete, and timely communication.

"We believed Leader Starter Kata would involve consultants coming in and making recommendations on how to improve. Instead, we learned it was a method and framework to organize and implement ideas we were always dreaming up, but never found time to put into practice. The program has enabled us to draft and execute steps to constantly improve and track results. It has given us a completely new way of viewing our company and what we think of as success and has greatly improved our communication, organization, productivity, and morale. We are looking forward to what we will be able to accomplish in the coming years thanks to this program."

-Doug Vick, Vice President

RESULTS



36 created or retained jobs



\$8,000,000 in new or retained sales



\$6,000,000 in cost savings

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