

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM BUILDS RESULTS FOR BLOX

ABOUT BLOX MEDICAL MODULES. BLOX is a leading modular building manufacturer, established in 2009 and based on its impressive 50-acre campus in Bessemer, Alabama, since 2013, where the company employs over 400 people. Specializing in medical units, BLOX boasts 12 active production lines that come together to form the innovative BLOX System of nested parts, which enables faster and superior building construction. The company leverages cutting-edge manufacturing technologies to swiftly create acute-care medical facilities in various states across the US. Building components are fabricated in Alabama, shipped to job sites, and meticulously assembled in place.

THE CHALLENGE. In the summer of 2021, BLOX collaborated with ATN, part of the MEP National Network™, to participate in the esteemed internship program offered through the Alabama Productivity Center (APC) at The University of Alabama. Handpicked for their expertise, four talented interns joined the company, three of whom were operations management majors and one specializing in finance. BLOX recognized the immense value of this opportunity to partner with APC to address certain challenges and to develop a pipeline for recruiting young and talented professionals.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. During the course of the internship program, the students embarked on a series of crucial projects to enhance BLOX's operational efficiency and organization. Recognizing the significance of an organized warehouse and an improved lineside assembly plumbing process, the interns diligently conducted time studies in the plumbing assembly areas, leading to the development of standardized work processes. Furthermore, they introduced Kanban systems, a highly effective visual management tool that enables efficient tracking and management of work throughout the entire production process.

Recognizing the importance of optimizing plumbing parts storage and transfer within the warehouse, the interns implemented significant improvements. As a result, a state-of-the-art "supermarket" system was set up for plumbing parts, streamlining inventory management and reducing waste. In addition to these tangible improvements, the internship program aimed to prepare young professionals for future employment with BLOX.

"ATN through their partnership with the APC played a critical role in advancing the supply chain organization at BLOX. When one of the interns came on board, we were in the early stages of deploying a pull system that connected our line side consumption to our external supply base. Our bills of material were largely unknown, our daily consumption was a best guess, we did not have a good grasp on real product lead times, and we did not have a robust part numbering system in place to uniquely identify the specific parts we needed. The intern meticulously documented all our needs, worked to establish Kanban planning parameters, helped establish standard bin sizes and standard rack locations, labeled hundreds of bins and pallet locations, and began providing feedback to our design team that helped improve the accuracy of our bills of material."

-Duncan McMillan, Director of Supply Chain

RESULTS



6 created or retained jobs



\$1,800,000 in total cost savings



\$1,500,000 in new or retained sales

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