

LEAN INNOVATION PROGRAM INCREASES EFFICIENCIES AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

ABOUT ATLANTIC AWNING. Established in 1888, Atlantic Awning was one of the first awning companies to service the Boston area and today has installed more than 100,000 awnings in New England. A family-owned and -operated business in Melrose, Massachusetts, Atlantic Awning's company's custom solutions provide shade and weather protection to customers' entrances, decks and outdoor living areas.

A provider of contemporary custom awning solutions, Atlantic Awning's offerings now extend far beyond traditional fixed-frame awnings. Customers can select from a line of standing seam awnings, copper awnings, aluminum, retractable and many new styles of welded frames. Their product line includes walkway awnings, entrance awnings, canopies, door hoods, window awnings and aluminum structural roofs. Atlantic Awning's commercial line also includes back-lit awnings and shade sails for both commercial and residential markets.

THE CHALLENGE. An Ohio awning company recommended MassMEP, also part of the MEP National Network™, to Atlantic Awning, based on that company's experience with Ohio MEP, also part of the MEP National Network™. Atlantic Awning contacted MassMEP and President Cheryl Yennaco happily agreed to accept MassMEP's assistance implementing the solutions recommended by MassMEP staff after a site visit and walk-through.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. MassMEP recommended a lean innovation program to Atlantic Awning, including: value stream mapping; total shop kaizen; establishing a Kanban system; 5S of the office as well as the install trucks; visual scheduling; and shop layout changes. Training took place over a six-month period and resulted in improved overall efficiencies. For example, value stream mapping opened up the employees' eyes to the entire process, improving their understanding of their part in the process. Setting up the Kanban system helped staff understand and improve their demand cycle and ordering process. Visual scheduling removed duplicate information from shop folders, enabled employees to understand work for the following day and allowed for clearer communication to their customer without management intervention. Fabrication tables were revamped for cutting and stitching. President Cheryl Yennaco remarked that, in addition to the noted changes made, the inclusiveness of the training had a big impact. This resulted in all employees taking ownership of organizing the training and the outcomes. Though MassMEP was at Atlantic Awning for six months, changes continued to be made for over a year. Overall the employees are happier, Kanbans continue to be maintained, and communication is improved through daily shop meetings and weekly production meetings.

"We will bring MassMEP in again. They were fantastic and able to communicate with all personalities. They were available for questions even when not here on site."

-Cheryl Yennaco, President

RESULTS



\$45,000 saved in training costs



\$10-15,000 invested in improving work stations



Sewing productivity increased 50%, wrapping 30%, jobsites 20%, welding **10%** and office 10%



Started a new company to offset efficiency gains; needed new products for cutters and stitchers



Employees are happier and have their own area to work in and take pride in

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