

RAPID PLANT ASSESSMENT PROVIDES EXCELLENCE ROADMAP

ABOUT CURTIS MACHINE COMPANY, INC. Curtis Machine Company was founded in 1946 with a lathe, milling machine, and welder in a 20x30 foot chicken house behind the Curtis home in Dodge City, Kansas. Today Curtis Machine Company, a certified woman-owned small business (WOSB), is one of the most progressive manufacturing companies in the Midwest with state-of-the-art machine tools and CMM testing equipment. Curtis Machine Company is proud to be ISO 9001:2015 and AS9100D Quality Certified. Curtis Machine Company dedicates 56,000 square feet exclusively to gear, gearbox, and precision machined parts production. Curtis Machine Company also produces parallel shaft gearboxes with spur or helical gearing. These units are used in hundreds of applications including military equipment, transportation, material handling, vehicle steering featuring low rolling torque and compactness, fan drives, pump drives, the petroleum industry, and food processing.

THE CHALLENGE. As a smart business owner, seeking ways to improve bottom-line performance is always advantageous and is something Curtis Machine Company President, John Curtis, wants to do. Curtis Machine is known for its outstanding quality and has the certifications to prove it, but more focus on this element can provide new efficiencies and ways to cut costs. Also, like many other manufacturers in Kansas and around the country, Curtis Machine is facing challenges with the skilled workforce shortage and increasing labor costs, along with a shortage of raw materials. These challenges will continue to grow as the workforce skills gap widens and knowledgeable and experienced employees retire.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. KMS, part of the MEP National Network™, conducted a rapid plant assessment (RPA) at Curtis Machine Company to uncover insights into the plant's performance strengths and weaknesses relative to lean and operational excellence. The RPA identifies and prioritizes areas of improvement so limited resources can be allocated to realize the most benefits. The RPA is also used as a benchmarking tool to measure the excellence trends internally within the company and externally with direct and indirect competition. The results are consistent even with varying levels of manufacturing experience. The two-day onsite assessment was followed by a presentation with results and a summary workbook. A few of the focus areas were Curtis Machine's quality assurance program, inventory and WIP levels, product flow, scheduling, 5S, and customer satisfaction. A summary workbook of results included visual elements to show comparisons and recommendations for the areas of opportunity to improve the company's performance.

"Curtis Machine appreciated the thorough analysis of the manufacturing operations with the Rapid Plant Assessment. As a leading manufacturer in our community, we want to be sure we are doing everything possible to continue to improve how we do business and the recommendations we received will help guide us to do just that."

-John Curtis, President

RESULTS



10 new and retained jobs



\$300,000 of new plant equipment

CONTACT US



14425 College Blvd
Suite 120
Lenexa, KS 66215



(913)649-4333



www.wearekms.com



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