ASHLAND TECHNOLOGIES DRAWS BENEFIT FROM WITHIN WITH MRC ONBOARDING STANDARDIZATION

ABOUT ASHLAND TECHNOLOGIES, INC. From the world's leading roller coasters and virtual reality experiences, to vending machines and food equipment in nearly every country, Ashland Technologies, Inc., of Hegins, Pennsylvania, turns metal into thrills! Offering multiple services - all in-house - Ashland Technologies is the rare company that can oversee an entire project from prototype to production.

THE CHALLENGE. Despite more than a quarter century in business, Ashland Technologies found themselves struggling with the persistent human resources challenges: in particular, missed review periods and a lack of job function awareness, especially on the shop floor. In response, Ashland Technologies engaged MRC, part of the Pennsylvania MEP and the MEP National Network™, for a comprehensive onboarding standardization program.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. MRC created a seamless onboarding process, beginning with recruiting and intake methods that resulted in providing a structure for job classifications and clarified job descriptions. This was complimented by a robust orientation and introduction to Ashland's culture that ensures all candidates are made to feel welcomed and valued, thereby reducing initial period turnover. Lastly, a complete revitalization of the human performance management system allows the company to strategically manage their goals and objectives.

One change was to accelerate the pace of companywide meetings from "every few months" to a weekly occurrence. "Through our Thursday 'happy hour' meetings, we have improved the quality and relevance of ideas coming from the front lines since the ideas are fresh from the challenges of the week," Wydra says. "Those ideas flow up from the people who really understand. Wendy [Beltzner, Director, Leadership Development and Training Strategy] and the MRC guided us and that made it possible. These meetings have also greatly improved inter-departmental collaboration, yielding incredible improvements in throughput."

Ashland Technologies is a true one-stop shop delivering both single component parts and total turnkey solutions to customers. With such a wide range of departments—CNC machining, laser cutting, bending, robotic (welding/loading), powder coating, carbon fiber 3-D printing, as well as assembly, testing, engineering. Wydra says it was not uncommon for bottlenecks to form as departments waited for parts from elsewhere within the company, adding that, "…this has all improved greatly with MRC's help." Ashland Technologies' ongoing involvement with MRC programs also includes Quality Management, Leadership development, Training Within Industry (TWI), Job Instruction, CFO Forum/CEO Forum, and Supervisor Bootcamp.

RESULTS

- Over **$200,000** in cost savings through ongoing relationship

- More that **$75,000** in R&D and R&E tax savings

- Improved social structure reinvigorated product and process innovations

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"Our incredible employee teams are rapidly accelerating the rate and quality of innovation in both product and process, yielding faster lead times and exceptional quality for customers as well as greater job satisfaction for existing and newly added teammates who are now better able to apply their talents due to this new onboarding effort."

-Bill Wydra, Jr, President