

## SEWING SIX SIGMA: TEXTILE MANUFACTURER EMPLOYEES OBTAIN YELLOW BELT DESIGNATIONS

**ABOUT MILCO INDUSTRIES INC.** In 2022, Milco celebrated its 100th anniversary. The company still maintains its factory in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania; the company is now owned and operated by Leonard Comerchero, the great-nephew of founder Marco Mitrani. After the company's founding in 1922 by Solomon and Marco Mitrani, a pair of immigrant Jewish brothers, Milco produced women's lingerie products six days a week in the 1920s and 30s and sold the garments to the pushcart retailers in the lower west side of Manhattan on Sundays. As the business prospered, sales expanded into regular retail outlets and a larger factory was needed. During the Great Depression, rural areas advertised in the New York newspapers that tax break incentives were available with a large available work force with a good work ethic. Most of these workers were owners of small family farms. As a result, Milco moved to Bloomsburg, PA, in the mid-1930s - at first renting factory space and eventually buying the property where the factory is currently located.

During World War II, the lingerie production was converted to manufacturing parachutes for American bombers. These parachutes were quick to open and allowed American planes to get out of harm's way during low-flying missions. Milco is credited with the success of these parachutes. Following the war, the Mitrani brothers decided to start manufacturing fabric with the invention of the tricot machine and a new yarn that was developed called Nylon. In the 1950s, Milco built a dyehouse and became a vertical manufacturer by making fabric, thread, elastic, embroidery, boxes, cartons and expanding the sewing capability.

**THE CHALLENGE.** In fall 2021, Milco contacted NEPIRC, part of the Pennsylvania MEP and the MEP National Network, because the company was interested in having some of its employees obtain their Six Sigma Yellow Belt designation. Since the yellow belt is the first step in a Six Sigma journey, this meant these employees were making the commitment to begin learning and advancing in Six Sigma methodologies. Ultimately, these employees would use the Six Sigma concepts learned during the training to help bring Lean Six Sigma to Milco and its manufacturing processes.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** NEPIRC's Six Sigma Yellow Belt is taught by NEPIRC's certified Master Black Belt and offers practical application exercises for each step in the Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control (DMAIC) process. Coursework included Lean in Lean Six Sigma, Six Sigma in Lean Six Sigma, Integration of Lean and Six Sigma, and Team Basics. Participants also learned about process mapping, project charters, value stream mapping, measurement systems analysis, root cause, FMEA, generating potential solutions, evaluating improvement aids and value and more.

## RESULTS



6 created or retained jobs



\$1,275,000 in new or retained sales



\$75,000 in new investment



\$55,000 in cost savings

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"Keep up the good work! Milco always enjoys working with NEPIRC on projects."

-Travis Carr, COO