

SMITHCRAFT SIGNS LAUNCHES CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WITH ARIZONA MEP

ABOUT F & N ENTERPRISES, INC. SmithCraft Signs, a leading custom architectural signage company based in Phoenix, Arizona, designs, fabricates and installs for customers in medical, retail, government and hospitality.

THE CHALLENGE. Nicole Bergstrom took over as President at SmithCraft a few years ago and while she was familiar with the business through a family connection, she did not come from a manufacturing background. When she joined the organization, she observed that mid-level management was frequently preoccupied with solving day-to-day production and customer issues. In contrast, production staff was underutilized and did not feel empowered to make decisions. Driven by her interest in lean principles and desire to improve the working environment, Bergstrom enlisted the Arizona MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, to train the entire staff on lean basics.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. The workshop teaches the basics of lean, providing a baseline understanding of concepts and how you can apply them throughout the company. SmithCraft is still in the early stages of implementing lean, but Bergstrom sees improvement in the production team's use of structured problem-solving to vet solutions to problems rather than passing the problem off to managers.

Following the success of the company-wide lean training, Bergstrom and four other leadership team members participated in the Lean Green Belt certification course. This five-day course teaches company leaders how to support improvement efforts and become advocates for change. Attendees apply what they've learned in breakout sessions to real-world company improvement projects. For example, SmithCraft developed a routine vehicle maintenance program during the class to ensure timely oil changes and other critical vehicle and equipment maintenance tasks. The company estimates cost avoidance of over \$300,000 by extending the lifespan of company vehicles and reducing the need for expensive new equipment.

"Arizona MEP's work with SmithCraft has been instrumental in driving the company's transformation. By embracing continuous improvement, investing in employee development, and focusing on operational efficiency, SmithCraft is poised to harness the full potential of its hardworking team, ensuring that every effort contributes to meaningful progress and continued growth. The Arizona MEP has been a blessing for our company. In every interaction with them, I have been impressed with their professionalism, follow-through and commitment to helping our business succeed. I can't say enough good things about how the Arizona MEP has improved our business."

-Nicole Bergstrom, CEO

RESULTS



46 jobs retained



Over **\$300,000** in increased sales



\$300,000 in cost savings



\$75,000 invested in new equipment

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