

## EMPOWERED TEAM PROACTIVELY REFINES A PLANT'S QUALITY CULTURE

**ABOUT BARRETTE OUTDOOR LIVING.** Barrette Outdoor Living is a manufacturer of composite deck board, located in Biddeford, Maine. The company employs 39 people in a 85,000-square-foot facility, one of 14 plants under the Barrette Outdoor Living brand. Barrette Outdoor Living is a leader in the outdoor living product industry, providing a diverse and flexible range of solutions that bring homeowners' dreams to life. Their products are ingeniously designed and meticulously engineered to hold up to family, life and nature while beautifully transforming any outdoor space.

**THE CHALLENGE.** In 2023, Barrette Outdoor Living engaged with Maine MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, to provide a Principles of Lean training and a three-day kaizen event focused on 5S. At the time, the company was wanting to learn more about lean methodologies and tools to implement action-oriented improvements, while empowering employees to emerge as leaders within their respective departments and grow into positions to lead change in the workplace. As a result of this project, the team went on to complete over 150 self-directed and area-specific 5S projects throughout the Biddeford plant.

In 2024, the company contacted Maine MEP to host a second kaizen event around visual management systems and quality tools. Completed in February 2024, the three-day event helped the Barrette team better understand sources of variation, data collection, and visual communication tools in order to more efficiently operate legacy automated systems and lay foundational quality processes in preparation for new technology investments.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Maine MEP's solution was to benchmark quality and visual management systems of other successful Maine MEP clients as well as those of a Barrette sister plant. This approach provided exposure to diverse options around tools and systems that helped the Barrette team envision ideas within their own plant. A Gemba walk documented quality variables throughout the entire plant and allowed for prioritization of key areas. Bringing together people from the production floor through leadership brought comprehensive stakeholders to the conversation which facilitated root cause analysis, strategic decision-making, and decisive action. As a result of the Kaizen and subsequent mini-Kaizens the group ran internally, Barrette Outdoor Living reported waste reduction from 14% down to 6%.

"As a manufacturer of Composite Decking, we recognized the need to enhance safety and efficiency in our production facility. In 2023, we embarked on this journey in collaboration with Maine MEP, initiating a three-day Kaizen event that transformed our organizational culture by involving plant management, production operators, and all staff members. Throughout this process, we have successfully improved our safety protocols, operational efficiency, and consistency in manufacturing. Consequently, we have become a manufacturer of high-quality Composite Decking, minimizing scrap while enhancing product quality."

-Daniel Jean, Plant Manager

## RESULTS



30% increase in manufacturing line speeds



Safety Plant of the Month in March 2024



Incorporated 70% recycled materials into the product



5S contributed to a two-year safety record

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