

HOW DIVERSE PROJECTS DROVE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

ABOUT CUMBERLAND IRONWORKS. Cumberland Ironworks is a family-owned business in Pownal, Maine, which has grown from one person working part-time to 10 employees, with significant improvements to facilities and equipment. A custom metal and composites fabrication shop, Cumberland Ironworks services marine and architectural clients statewide.

THE CHALLENGE. Cumberland Ironworks needed to grow to meet customer demand. The company turned to Maine MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, for help, and in the intervening years Maine MEP has become the "go-to" for Cumberland Ironworks' needs, assisting with concerns like financial resource build up, staffing, equipment and facilities.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Maine MEP Project Manager John Karp invested time getting to know and understand the entire business, from customer contact through job completion and follow ups. As the company began to scale, Karp worked with the founders to define fundamental goals for the company. This led to defining the optimum roles for the founders and hiring an office/financial manager with Karp's help.

As growth continued, a new facility was purchased, again with Maine MEP assistance in navigating financing options, and then with other Maine MEP engineers performing the layout plans in the new facility. When a major piece of equipment was needed, Maine MEP not only found significant grant funding to assist in this purchase, but also a grant writer to pursue that funding. As the business continues to expand, Maine MEP continues to advise with strategy, funding and other services.

"The first round of getting the business healthy was very helpful. The obvious advice that the owner cannot and should not be doing all of the work is not too obvious when the owner is doing all the work! Breaking this cycle was a breath of fresh air.

The purchasing of the new shop was a step in the right direction to keeping the business healthy with a focus on profitability and an end game. John Karp has been our central point of contact with MINW MEP. He has also introduced us to Wayne Messer and Mariah Cunningham-Knaus, who have been wonderful resources for shop lay out and available grants.

At this stage, John Karp is a nice sounding board to have for cup of coffee and business reviews. It is nice to have someone ask the questions periodically that you may not want to answer (deal with a problem then offer a solution) or ask a question that you are proud to answer. Small business ownership is cyclical!"

-Matt St Cyr, Owner/CEO

RESULTS



3 jobs created, 8 jobs retained



\$1,050,000 on new facility, equipment



Sales nearly doubled



Longer term strategic vision driving specific goals

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