

## LEAN TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION HELPS TRANSFORM NORTHLAND TRUSS SYSTEMS

**ABOUT NORTHLAND TRUSS SYSTEMS, INC.** Northland Truss Systems, founded by Rick Pierce in 1992, began with a small team of truss workers, designers, a truck driver, and an office manager. Initially based in Abercrombie, North Dakota, the company expanded to Fargo in 1993 to better serve its largest sales base, including contractors and lumberyards in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Over the years, Northland Truss has grown to become one of the largest truss manufacturers in the region, supplying projects from Grand Forks, ND, to Watertown, South Dakota, and from Bismarck, ND, to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Northland Truss Systems provides a range of products, including roof and floor trusses, microlams, I-joist hangers, and structural posts and columns. Their mission is to exceed customer expectations in pride, quality, reliability, service, and creativity.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Northland Truss Systems was experiencing significant communication issues and high employee turnover, often struggling to maintain a full roster and running shifts with insufficient staff. These problems were compounded by communication roadblocks between their two sites. Northland Truss Systems turned to Impact Dakota, part of the MEP National Network™, for help.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Impact Dakota provided Northland Truss Systems with a comprehensive perspective on their operational challenges and areas for improvement. Center staff conducted a thorough business excellence assessment, which highlighted significant communication issues and high employee turnover. This assessment helped Northland Truss identify specific areas needing attention, such as enhancing internal communication, improving employee engagement, and optimizing production processes. Impact Dakota's recommendations included implementing huddle boards to facilitate better communication among staff, establishing a rewards and recognition program, organizing company events to boost morale, and improving employee benefits and pay scales. Center staff also suggested running a shuttle bus service to attract employees from Wahpeton to the Abercrombie site.

Additionally, Impact Dakota provided Lean 101 training to Northland Truss team members, helping them improve their production processes and layout their new assembly line more effectively. This training, combined with the other improvements, led to a significant enhancement in company culture, employee engagement, and retention.

**"Partnering with Impact Dakota has been transformative for Northland Truss Systems. Their BizX and Lean training programs, along with the support from the AutomateND award, have significantly enhanced our productivity and efficiency. The implementation of a straight-line assembly process and the integration of our new saw into the truss assembly line have streamlined our operations. We are particularly excited about the upcoming full system jiggling and laser system, which will further elevate our capabilities. Impact Dakota's expertise and guidance have been invaluable in driving our growth and success."**

-Chris Lange, President

## RESULTS



3 employees trained in Lean 101 and 1 in Lean Enterprise High Performance Manufacturing



20% improvement in productivity



New investments allowed plant expansion and new equipment purchase.

## CONTACT US



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