

## PURDUE MEP TRAINING LEADS TO PRODUCTION INCREASE AND CAPACITY EXPANSION

**ABOUT FLEXAUST.** For over 85 years, Flexaust, located in Warsaw, IN, has manufactured flexible hose, ducting, and accessories used in industrial and commercial applications involving air, fume, dust, and lightweight material handling.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Flexaust was looking to increase the use of Advanced Manufacturing tools and techniques within their production departments to improve operational efficiency. Most of their products are unique to customer specifications, so a lot of focus is on the end product, and there is less emphasis on eliminating waste during production.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Subsidized by grant funding, Flexaust worked with Purdue MEP to develop a custom training plan focused on advanced manufacturing tools and techniques. Purdue MEP conducted courses on Value Stream Mapping, Problem Solving, 5S, Set-Up Reduction & Quick Changeover, and Total Productive Maintenance. In addition to the training, extra time was allocated for on-site implementation assistance. The training and implementation aimed to help Flexaust employees understand the available Advanced Manufacturing tools and to enhance their mindset for rooting out waste. Over eight months, Purdue MEP trained a cross-section of 22 employees representing the entire value stream of the company in over 120 hours of training on waste-reduction management and implementation techniques and tools.

In all four main production areas, team members implemented the 5S workplace organization method to improve efficiency by sorting items and eliminating unnecessary tools that were cluttering the space. The process was well received, and other production areas have requested 5S implementation in their respective areas.

Due to the incorporation of 5S techniques on their mandrel line, production has doubled from 100 feet per shift to 200 feet per shift. With the team demonstrating it can accommodate increased capacity, corporate leaders have committed \$120,000 in capital expenditures for new machining, which will open avenues to pursue an additional line of business, thereby expanding capacity and production.

"It has been so satisfying to see our team become involved and engaged in the process of learning Advanced Manufacturing. They are utilizing the tools we've learned with Purdue MEP and are finding ways to increase efficient production practices throughout the company and in many areas to implement change. These trainings will have a lasting impact on our operations and the mindset of our team. I will continue to challenge our team to make process improvement adjustments as they discover ways to improve."

-Leigh Elliott, Operations Manager

## RESULTS



25% reduction in set-up times



Commitment to \$120,000 in capital expenditures



Doubled production on the mandrel line



Offset \$22,500 in training costs, fostered relationships cross-departmentally



In 8 months, completed 120 hours of training for 22 different employees

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Manufacturing Extension Partnership