MEP National Network™

ARIZONA SUCCESS STORY

AMPHENOL AEROSPACE REDUCES SCRAP THROUGH ARIZONA MEP LEAN GREEN BELT COURSE

ABOUT AMPHENOL CORPORATION. Amphenol Aerospace, a division of Amphenol Corporation, designs, manufactures, and markets connectors and interconnect systems for military, commercial aerospace, and industrial markets. In 2020, it opened a facility in Mesa, Arizona, to support operations and distributors. Interested in organizational improvements and building a strong foundation in Lean principles, Plant Manager Sean Zimmer partnered with the Arizona Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Arizona MEP) to foster a culture of continuous improvement. Together, they launched a two-part strategy: training on Lean Basics and Lean Green Belt while preparing future leaders through Arizona MEP's Leadership Development program.

THE CHALLENGE. Since the facility and staff were new and the company was planning for growth, there were many opportunities to refine processes, and new staff needed skill development for supervisory roles. The company tracks key performance indicators, and based on the data, Assembly Operations Manager Steven Johnson identified an area–specifically the marking station–that was producing high scrap levels and impacting the company's bottom line. He required a systematic, data-driven approach to reduce the scrap and enhance efficiency.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Arizona MEP equipped the team with the tools and resources necessary to drive these changes, from Lean Basics training to the more comprehensive Lean Green Belt Certification course, which covers various lean methodologies as students work on a company-sponsored project. Johnson enrolled in the course and selected the scrap issue as his project. He focused on two major causes of scrap: misplated connector shells and workmanship defects. He introduced a screening gate at the marking station, where all connector shells passed through before assembly. Johnson created detailed work instructions for this step and trained operators to recognize and reject defects based on the same standards used by the upstream processes. The new inspection gate was implemented across all part numbers and integrated into production routers to ensure consistent application. Over a 60-day period, Johnson tracked all defects caught at the screening step, categorized them by defect code and originating facility, and calculated the cost savings. The result: $60,000 in documented savings and a model for early-stage quality control that could be replicated across other sites. "If we can save $60,000 at a small site like ours, there are millions in potential savings across the company," Johnson said.

Given the success of the initial Lean Green Belt project and leadership development training, Amphenol Aerospace plans to continue providing these opportunities as the company expands its Mesa team. Arizona MEP's workshops have been essential in supporting the facility's growth by equipping employees with the skills and mindset necessary for driving continuous improvement. The structured training approach of Arizona MEP has enabled the team to solve problems more efficiently and cultivate a culture of accountability.

RESULTS

- $932,000 total cost savings based on 8 Lean Green Belt Projects
- 24 jobs retained due to onsite lean training and the Lean Green Belt Course
- Enhanced team building with Lego Airplane competition, 16 people participated

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ARIZONA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

"“Partnering with Arizona MEP gave us the tools and structure we needed to drive real change,” said Johnson. “Their guidance helped us focus on the right areas and empowered our team to take ownership of improvements.”"

-Steve Johnson, Assembly Operations Manager