

BREAKING DOWN SILOS ENHANCES WORKPLACE CULTURE

ABOUT ST PAUL CORRUGATING CO. St. Paul Corrugating Company is a leading manufacturer of basement area walls, commonly known as window wells, and related accessories used for basement egress. Since 1885, St. Paul Corrugating (SPC) has been producing innovative metalwork for residential applications. Today, SPC employs 20 people at its headquarters and manufacturing facility in Columbia Heights, Minnesota.

THE CHALLENGE. After nearly 140 years in operation, St. Paul Corrugating Company was ready for new growth. However, there were some issues. Different parts of the company worked in isolation, which threatened its ability to pursue new opportunities for its diverse line of residential window well products.

Hugh Burhans, president and owner of SPC, knew it was time to take action. The entire staff, from shipping and assembly to leadership, needed to change to grow the business, and he realized that the company lacked the internal resources to do so. Hugh turned to Enterprise Minnesota, the Minnesota MEP and part of the MEP National Network™, and its team of skilled leadership consultants to help elevate the company.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Enterprise Minnesota's business growth consultants began by implementing a custom leadership development program to enhance effective communication among SPC staff. It was eye-opening for many employees to understand their own and others' unique leadership styles, based on Tracom's Social Styles assessment. Participants also practiced techniques for recognizing and accommodating their co-workers' diverse styles.

When work began in early 2022, several people reported a culture lacking trust, openness, and honesty. Much of the leadership development, focused on front-line supervisors, addressed essential skills and interpersonal communication. Enterprise Minnesota helped employees develop strategies to bring a more professional tone to team interactions. Implementing this program has enhanced the team's professionalism, from how staff communicate with each other to how employees receive feedback from leadership.

"There's no question it's been a good investment of time and dollars spent, which I'm happy to say. You are nothing without your people, and I would add that people aren't much without a good business or a good culture — you need both. We have a really good crew right now. We're here and focused on one goal and realizing that everyone has a role in achieving the goal of getting orders out and satisfying customers."

-Hugh Burhans, Owner & President

RESULTS



\$500,000 in increased investment in new products or processes



\$100,000 invested in workforce practices or employee skills



\$20,000 invested in information systems or software

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