

PEER COUNCIL ASSISTS IN OVERCOMING LEADERSHIP
CHALLENGES

ABOUT FALLS FABRICATING INC. Falls Fabricating is a private, locally owned metal manufacturing and fabrication company based in Little Falls, Minnesota. For over 50 years, Falls has been providing excellent customer service and now offers a variety of services and specialties, including sheet metal and structural steel welding, fabricating, forming, and cutting, as well as finishing and assembly. This 84-person company has in-house engineering and quality control services and is a one-stop shop for industrial and consumer metal fabrication.

THE CHALLENGE. Dan Ortloff had been serving as General Manager and Chief Financial Officer of Falls Fabricating when the company's president unexpectedly passed away. With the sudden loss of the previous president, Dan found himself in a leadership role without a mentor and had to quickly learn the ropes. He had previous experience working with Enterprise Minnesota, and after meeting with his local business advisor, Dawn Loberg, he learned about the Peer Council and how the group could help him navigate his new leadership responsibilities and provide insight into solving business challenges.

Then, in 2020, Dan was offered the opportunity to purchase the business from the private equity firm that owned it. Dan, along with five management team members, bought the business in January 2021, which once again brought new challenges. The new ownership team turned to Enterprise Minnesota for additional support through their ownership of the business.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. In a leadership role, it's often challenging to discuss business issues with others in the company. Now that Dan has moved from being an employee to an owner and leader, he found the Peer Council group to be an invaluable resource for navigating complexity through this new perspective. The council he joined is made up of other presidents and owners, and the group has become a trusted resource for discussing decisions and understanding how others are managing their own leadership challenges. Financial questions, banking, people, business, human resources, and employee policies—anything is fair game. The council members hold each other accountable and work together to solve problems.

When he joined, the country was just emerging from COVID, and in such a dynamic environment, the experience and insight from the group were extremely valuable. By working together, members knew where to focus and found support in navigating constantly changing state and federal policies while keeping employees safe and their businesses running. A key lesson he's learned is that, as president, you can't focus only on working in the business, but you must also dedicate time to working on the business.

"If you're looking for solid advice and guidance to support you for a fair price, Enterprise Minnesota is an excellent resource. As a small business, we've received exceptional expertise from them and the vast knowledge of manufacturing they bring is extremely beneficial. They've helped us learn how to use our resources to make our business better."

-Dan Ortloff, President

RESULTS



\$1,500,000 in retained sales



3 jobs retained



\$200,000 invested in new products or processes



\$2,000,000 invested in new plant or equipment

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