

Success Story: Northway Industries, Inc., Implements Web-Based Solution with IMC's Assistance

written by admin | September 18, 2013

Northway Industries, Inc. is a privately held company employing 120 people that provides quality contract manufacturing services to a variety of clients.

The company was founded in 1966 and utilizes high-pressure laminates, melamine, vinyl, paper, and wood veneer products to produce cabinets, countertops, work surfaces, fixtures, and more. Operations consist of CNC controlled machining, milling, routing, and banding. Primary markets served include OEM suppliers, retailers, schools, and institutions.

SITUATION

Beginning in 2005, Northway partnered with IMC, a NIST MEP affiliate, to engage in lean and cellular manufacturing consultation and implementation. **The company was re-engineered from a mass-production shop to a mass-customization shop, allowing Northway to be more responsive to its market which needed more small-batch custom orders.**

As a result of the implementation, the company saw an increase in small batch orders and single piece flow orders. This significantly boosted the volume of information necessary to initiate and complete work. It became apparent that Northway's legacy systems were becoming less effective and less accurate with this changing business model.

While the changes implemented during the first IMC project allowed Northway to expand capabilities and machine and fabricate at faster rates, the delays caused by managing an increased volume of critical information were hampering true growth. Northway continued to work with IMC to tackle the new problem and develop an information system that would allow project data to be managed more effectively.

The robust, scalable information system that was developed with IMCs assistance is capable of pulling together details about a wide range of business operations.

SOLUTION

The project began with an objective of creating a web-based project scheduling system. **The initiative soon grew to be a complete information system that linked all aspects of the project and client relationship into one centralized, online location.**

The system includes a project-based scheduling system, contract documents, customer purchase orders, production documents, a materials database, RFID (radio-frequency identification) order tracking, company policy and procedure documents, quality control information, and sales-related communications. The new system allows both employees and customers to log in and see relevant project-specific data.

RESULTS

- \$2 million in increased sales
 - \$100,000 in cost savings
 - \$75,000 in new investment
-

Success Story: IMC Enables Railroad Company to Lay Tracks for Continued Success

written by admin | September 18, 2013

ORX Railway Corp. is a manufacturer of rail wheel sets. The roots of ORX are buried deeply in the railroad industry, planted over a century ago by co-founder and president Glenn Brandimarte's grandfather - an Italian immigrant who found employment quickly on the tracks and dedicated his life to his work.

The tracks for ORX's success were set by nearly a century of experience, dedication, and innovation which still drives the company today.

SITUATION

ORX was required to carry out internal quality audits to verify compliance with the Association of American Railroads, Specification M-1003, and their own current quality assurance practices. IMC, a NIST MEP affiliate, was contacted to perform the audit. IMC contracted with a third-party consultant and former employee who performed previous audits in order to help with the latest one.

The company was able to use the audit process and results to develop an action plan to strengthen their processes and make the entire system more efficient and effective.

SOLUTION

IMC and its third party consultant conducted a two-day internal audit of ORX's quality management system to verify compliance with stated requirements. The Quality Assurance System Evaluation Checklist provided by the Association of American Railroads (AAR) was used to conduct this audit. Afterwards, a written report was prepared with any non-conformances identified and the findings reviewed with the company.

ORX was able to identify and implement corrective action for nonconformances and successfully pass the AAR audit of their system. The IMC provided additional continuous improvement coaching as well.

RESULTS

- \$500,000 capital investment
- \$10 million in retained sales
- \$10,000 in cost savings

Success Story: Pik Rite Prepares for New Leadership Roles and Increased Production with IMC's Guidance

written by admin | September 18, 2013

Pik Rite Inc. designs and manufactures innovative, quality-built vegetable harvesting equipment, agricultural manure spreaders, commercial waste-handling equipment and hydroseeding units for a growing national and international market.

The company and its 50 employees are located in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

SITUATION

Pik Rite was in challenging, yet highly positive circumstances — production was in the process of doubling. That situation meant that the company needed to fill several production leadership roles quickly. General Manager Randy Beiler turned to the IMC, a NIST MEP affiliate, for their experience and expertise.

I often recommend IMC to other manufacturers as an innovative source in solving problems and eliminating bottlenecks. - Randy Beiler

SOLUTION

Training current employees for their new leadership roles became a top priority, along with executive coaching. IMC developed a project to work with management on strategic topics and train supervisors on the fundamentals of being an effective manufacturing floor leader. The training program for those in new supervisor roles was held over a 10-week period, consisting of weekly three-hour sessions.

Training covered a spectrum of leadership fundamentals, including topics such as : introduction to supervision; managing and measuring team performance; basic communication skills; teamwork for supervisors and group leaders. The sessions were split between two separate groups of employees taking classes on different days of the week.

Beiler deems the initiative a complete success. “The project improved leadership capabilities of existing management, helped to build more leaders, and educated employees on the basics of economics and expanded their business sense.”

The project fulfilled the main objective of preparing employees for new leadership roles in order to manage increasing production requirements. According to Beiler, “We promoted from within, gave our employees an opportunity to grow, and doubled our production in a two year period.”

RESULTS

- \$2M in increased sales
- 20 jobs created
- Cost savings of \$250,000
- More than \$700,000 in new capital and workforce investments