



manufacturing improvement specialists

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2013 Impacts

867 value-added services and projects

471

companies assisted

\$297,000 new and retained sales per project

\$92k cost savings per project

1,955 jobs created and retained

\$176k investment spending per client

\$8,700
average project cost

\$199,000,000 aggregate impact

2013 Featured Projects



GFX International

Grayslake, IL • 180 Employees • www.gfxi.com
A design and execution firm for retail communications

SITUATION

Hire certified Black Belts or train an internal quality team? That was the question facing leaders at GFX International, who were looking to improve employees' knowledge of quality. A long-time local partner, the College of Lake County, suggested that the company participate in a Lean Leadership public workshop put on by IMEC, which led to GFX's decision to embark on a Lean Six Sigma training.



IMEC SOLUTION

IMEC first led GFX's Six Sigma "champions" - employees committed to sponsoring projects and supporting Green Belts - through a half-day of training, then worked with the company's Green Belts to define projects to put through the Lean Six Sigma methodology. Next, IMEC conducted eight interactive eight-hour training sessions with the Green Belts focused on lean thinking and problem-solving. Once this training was complete, IMEC helped the Green Belts prepare to present final reports to the GFX executive team. The initiative was so successful the company is moving ahead with larger projects in 2013 as well as an additional round of IMEC training - a customized four-day session for Yellow Belts.

"We weren't just another client to IMEC. They took the time to understand not just our company but also the people they were training. You could tell that they cared about our team and bought into our success."

- Greg Hilderbrand, Director of Digital Operations

Results

- Employee growth and development, including increased cross-functional teamwork
- Initial cost savings of \$20,000
- Six new jobs created
- Aggregate impact of \$300,000

Beall Manufacturing

East Alton, IL • 90 Employees • www.supertuf.com
Manufacturer of forged and hot-formed parts for agricultural, railroad and industrial customers

SITUATION

With two inefficient natural gas furnaces driving up energy costs but lacking a solution that met corporate ROI requirements, Beall decided to apply for cash incentives through Ameren Illinois ActOnEnergy, a program that provides financial resources to businesses for the installation of energy-efficient equipment. Beall had implemented lighting projects with ActOnEnergy in the past, but embarking on natural gas improvements was more complicated. Completing a detailed feasibility report and satisfying the requirements of a custom project were outside the company's comfort zone.

IMEC SOLUTION

ActOnEnergy recommended Beall pursue a feasibility study program, which provides up to \$10,000 (or 50 percent of the study's costs) so companies can seek outside assistance to analyze extensive energy-efficiency projects. That enabled Beall to bring in IMEC as a facilitator, and IMEC called on experts from Missouri Enterprise and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville to collect data on energy usage, perform engineering and economic analyses, calculate energy-savings potential, estimate break-even and operational costs, and ultimately recommend a more energy-efficient solution. Beall submitted the feasibility study to Ameren and applied for a custom project - which resulted in a financial commitment from Ameren Illinois ActOnEnergy to pay for a portion of the upgrades.



Results

- Financial incentives to install energy-efficient furnace & burners
- Significant reductions in natural gas usage & emissions
- Estimated \$50,000 in cost savings per year
- Identification of future energy-efficiency projects & savings

Drawing Technology Inc.

Rockford, IL • 22 Employees • www.drawingtechnology.com
Manufacturer of machinery for wire goods, fasteners, bearings and other wire-based products

SITUATION

When Drawing Technology got its start in 2000, the company's customer base was located within 300 miles of its Rockford headquarters. Today, 60 percent of products are sold outside the United States. As the company grew, its operations became more and more complex - with the sales, engineering, purchasing, accounting and manufacturing departments all running separate systems. Orders were hand-carried from one department to another, creating redundancy and inefficiency.

IMEC SOLUTION

After exploring various options, Drawing Technology selected an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system from Global Shop Solutions. IMEC helped the company secure the grant funding that paid for the critical training portion of the project. The system was implemented in 2012, and with employees trained on its use, Drawing Technology quickly began to see significant improvements in efficiency and expects to add sales with both existing and new customers.



Results

- 10-15% reduction in overtime company-wide
- Three straight months of on-time shipments
- Anticipated 30% increase in production capacity