



manufacturing improvement specialists

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2015 Impacts

865 value-added services and projects

540

companies assisted

\$317,000 new and retained sales per project

\$87k cost savings per project

1,082 jobs created and retained

\$179k investment spending per client

\$11,346
average project cost

\$147,870,000 aggregate impact

2015 Featured Projects



Ace Sign Co.

Springfield, IL • 48 Employees • www.acesignco.com
In-house design, manufacturing, graphics production, permitting, installation, and maintenance of signs and advertising specialties

SITUATION

Ace Sign Co. had experienced strong growth in their core markets and had begun developing plans for expansion of their product and service set nationwide. With a vision in mind, but an unclear path to success, the Ace Sign Co. leadership met with IMEC to begin mapping the journey. The Promoting Business Excellence (PROBE) benchmark assessment gave them a chance to dig into the strategic areas of the business and identify key opportunities for improvement.

IMEC SOLUTION

The team identified four areas of concentration: develop and share a vision and strategy for the entire business, emphasize results for customers through quality and measurement, standardize approaches for developing people, and manage knowledge to release innovation and improve execution. By focusing on the new initiatives the team felt they had an opportunity to embark on a pace-setting project. The company has begun the three-year strategic planning project and leveraged their initial PROBE assessment results as a way to bring more clarity to the overall plan.

"The IMEC staff was extremely helpful in moving things forward for us. They challenged what we are undertaking internally and gave us direction to progress through improvements. The third party integration as well as the ability to buffer and provide non-biased opinions has been most beneficial."

- Todd Bringuet, Continuous Improvement Manager

Results

- Increased capital spending
- Created 3 new jobs
- Developed an organizational mission statement, vision, and core values
- Provided better documentation and team understanding of the company's strategy

CoreCentric Solutions

Glendale Heights, IL • 226 Employees • www.corecentricsolutions.com
Customized product and part life cycle management and remanufacturing solutions for retailers and appliance manufacturers

SITUATION

Managing returns and remanufacturing of products is a highly labor-intensive business. Unlike manufacturing operations, which often rely on automated machines and processes to boost efficiency, CoreCentric must depend on its people to work as productively as possible. After participating in IMEC's Lean Manufacturing Overview and Simulation training, company leaders decided to explore if Training Within Industry (TWI) could help get them even more out of their human resources.

IMEC SOLUTION

TWI, which got its start as a way to boost U.S. industrial production during World War II, creates work environments where jobs are performed the same way by all team members and problem-solving occurs at the operator level. With IMEC's help, CoreCentric implemented two of TWI's standardized modules: Job Instruction, which helped leaders train employees to do their jobs correctly, safely and conscientiously, and Job Relations, which helped supervisors develop and maintain positive employee relations, preventing problems from happening and effectively resolving any conflicts that do arise. CoreCentric is now using TWI for all on-the-job training in its facilities.

"IMEC brings lots of knowledge to the table from their experience with other companies. I would encourage any heavy labor-based manufacturer to take a look at TWI because it will help you reduce costs and keep jobs here in the U.S. IMEC is a great, cost-effective resource to get it done."

- Badal Wadia, CEO

Results

- Improved trust and teamwork among leaders and employees
- Enhanced implementation of lean and Kaizen
- Reduced time and increased efficiency for some processes
- Significant productivity gains expected

Frey & Weiss Precision Machining

Wood Dale, IL • 18 Employees • www.freyweiss.com
Precision machining, turning, milling, and laser marking



SITUATION

While practice and performance have kept quality on target for Frey & Weiss, it wasn't until the threat of a lost customer thrust them into making it official. Frey & Weiss knew that their nearly 50 year history would not be able to salvage customer relations without the commitment to a quality management system. "To a certain extent, we were already practicing a lot of the principles," said Pabon. "But a better process, better identification, and better components of what we were building would enhance the customer base and allow us to pursue new business and opportunities."

IMEC SOLUTION

Breaking the process down into twelve manageable segments of work and on site support from IMEC technical specialists, the Frey & Weiss team was able to address the updates required while still managing to operate the business as usual. By also assigning a key member of his team to the project, they were able to keep the improvements on task. Through the QMS implementation, they were able to take a closer look at the documentation of their systems, or lack thereof. The quality assessment forced them to create specific processes and work instructions, ultimately streamlining the process at assembly and resulting in new capacity and new opportunities.



"Working with IMEC was really a key to the project and keeping the team on task. It was always very pleasant, productive and professional. As we move forward and experience new challenges, we will definitely consider IMEC first."

- Ernie Pabon, President

Results

- Capital equipment investment of \$165,000
- Retained sales of \$500,000
- \$20-60k in new sales
- Reduction in production cycle times, inventory levels