

Success in **Leadership**

Fourth gen manufacturer focuses on business processes to meet changing demands in a unique space

GREENWOOD PLASTICS INC

 75 Employees  Danville, Illinois  www.gpi-plastics.com

SITUATION

A unique manufacturer servicing the death care industry through multiple product offerings, Greenwood Plastics Industries was experiencing a quickly changing marketplace. With cremation on the rise at a rate of nearly 50% nationwide, the company's sales forecasts for burial products were quickly becoming outdated. As the new, fourth generation approached the leadership position the family business knew they needed to align their operational, administrative, sales, and marketing goals under one set of strategies to be successful and adjust to meet the changing demands.

SOLUTION

Through a relationship with IMEC, the leadership at Greenwood Plastics began to focus on streamlining their business processes with actual business strategies and developing a plan to ensure an efficient implementation. "It became clear that we needed to break down our company into business segments to more effectively understand our future opportunities for growth and the strategies to get us there," said Ethan Darby, Director of Sales for Greenwood Plastics Industries. "Historically our business came to us; but here we were trying to be proactive and understand the clearer picture of our potential." Exploring new product capabilities and growth in non-death care plastics held the greatest potential for new customers, but Ethan and the team also wanted to more deeply engage their existing markets. By developing a "product of the quarter" program to align sales and marketing, and eventually manufacturing, the company is now working together to collectively move the needle; an improvement from the silo mentality they had employed previously.

Additionally, the team at Greenwood Plastics focused on the improvement and engagement of their people. Many team members, and specifically including the management team, had been in the organization for 10+ years and were used to a routine and holding data close to chest. But by educating the staff on the importance of the visibility of metrics planning and goals, the workforce began to think more strategically from the office to the shop floor. "It's been a great culture shift for our people," said Ethan. "Everyone now knows where they are heading and have the opportunity to participate. Staff are submitting their own improvement ideas and buying in to the ideas and improvements of others." As the team continues to make progress they are now focusing on the refinement of goals and the incremental improvements to be made in operations including aspects of lean manufacturing.

RESULTS

- Increased margins from 2-3% to 8-9%
- Doubled penetration in the aerospace market in year one

“IMEC has been terrific at moving us forward while still respecting our company heritage and culture. They never pressured us to move too much, too fast and adjusted their approach to help cater to our company's unique structure.”

- Ethan Darby, Director of Sales



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