

Situation

It's no secret that the truly successful companies know how to focus. They concentrate on their core strengths or products, the things they do really well. Rockford Ball Screw (RBS) certainly subscribes to this philosophy. Even though the company's products are complex, demanding tight tolerances and precise engineering, RBS leaders were wary of becoming commoditized and vulnerable to low-cost foreign competitors. The economic downturn was a wake-up call that perhaps the family-owned company needed to re-focus, not just its products services, but in the way it managed the business.

"We were successful, but may have become a little complacent," said Linda McGary, President of RBS. "There were opportunities to grow and take the company to another level, but our culture needed to be confronted and we had to work together to affect a change."

IMEC Solution

IMEC business growth specialists Mary Hallock and Steve Barnhart led the RBS management team through a strategic planning process to pinpoint their strategic priorities and develop the action steps to execute and re-focus on the things they do well. In one example of an outcome from the planning work with IMEC, the RBS team realized it had a differentiating asset it could exploit to win more market share and compete for new business. Already technologically advanced and aggressive in driving efficiency and quality, RBS' small product portfolio enables the company to be innovative, partnering with customers to develop alternative design solutions that can save its customers time and money.

"We realize it's not about just quoting on a blueprint or a spec, but selling a complete service," said Rick Sonneson, Senior Vice President. "Collaboration increases our value to the customer and reduces the risk that we will lose their business."

Results

- Obtained contract with large mfr of photo voltaic cells for solar market
- Engage in R&D on new products for oil exploration
- Launched internal and external branding campaign
- Swift sales growth anticipate into the future

"There is tremendous value in how IMEC approaches this. They forced us to communicate with each other, in a good way. They gave us assignments and we committed to completing them to stay on track. It's a process that really worked."

Linda McGary, President, Rockford Ball Screw