

Igniting Illinois Manufacturing Excellence and Global Competitiveness.

2025 Client-Reported Impacts



3,742

Companies Assisted



\$905,710,046

Aggregate Impact
to the Illinois Economy



19:1

Return on Investment



6,871

Jobs Created and Retained



\$3,623,107

Average New and Retained Sales
per client/project



\$314,993

Average Cost Savings
per client/project



EMPOWER. ENGAGE. ELEVATE.

Safety Storage, Inc.
Charleston, IL | 50 employees

The Situation: Safety Storage recognized a critical need to strengthen its supervisory team to drive improved communication, accountability, and morale across its operations. Supervisors often faced challenges in addressing performance issues, resolving conflicts, and motivating employees while maintaining productivity and safety standards. Leadership wanted to build a consistent, supportive management culture, one where supervisors were equipped to handle both operational and interpersonal challenges with confidence. To achieve this, Safety Storage turned to IMEC to develop a comprehensive leadership training initiative designed to strengthen people skills, decision-making, and day-to-day problem-solving across all supervisory levels.

The Solution: IMEC partnered with Safety Storage to design and deliver a Leadership Training Program focused on Training Within Industry Job Relations (TWI JR) and Connect Through Conversations Training (CCTC). The customized program featured TWI JR's proven 4-Step Method to help supervisors build positive employee relations, increase cooperation, and resolve conflicts effectively, emphasizing the importance of treating people as individuals to prevent issues before they arise. The CCTC component taught supervisors to lead purposeful, emotionally intelligent conversations that balance business goals with individual needs, fostering engagement and trust. IMEC facilitators also worked closely with Safety Storage's leadership team to align objectives, set expectations, and provide 30-day follow-up coaching to reinforce learning. Through this approach, supervisors gained the tools, structure, and confidence to become stronger leaders, enhancing both performance and the company's culture of respect and collaboration.

- Results**
- Cost Savings: \$120,000
 - 12% Increase in Productivity
 - 15% Improvement in Employee Engagement
 - 8% Reduction in Employee Turnover

MEASURE. OPTIMIZE. SUCCEED.

Carolina Brands dba Rutland
Jacksonville, IL | 24 employees

The Situation: Founded in 1883, Rutland has grown from a small family business in Vermont to a leading U.S. manufacturer of fireplace, chimney, and stove maintenance products, now headquartered in Jacksonville, Illinois. Despite its long history, Rutland had no formal continuous improvement process. To strengthen operations and competitiveness, the company partnered with IMEC to provide Six Sigma Green Belt training for key team members. The goal was to equip employees with the skills to identify waste, reduce costs, and drive profitability, building a team of improvement leaders to support growth and long-term success.

The Solution: Recognizing the need for a structured approach to continuous improvement, Rutland contacted IMEC to help provide specialized Six Sigma Green Belt training. This training, which utilizes the DMAIC (Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control) problem-solving process, results in significant cost savings by reducing waste and improving processes and productivity. The IMEC team soon got to work and coordinated a nine-day schedule that consisted of a train and do process. Participants learned skills that they then applied to actual problems they were experiencing in the facility. Laura Lee Rose, a Six Sigma expert who previously worked with both IMEC and Missouri Enterprise, provided the instruction and mentoring for all the Rutland participants. The Six Sigma Green Belt Training significantly benefited Rutland by improving their manufacturing processes and identifying cost-saving opportunities.

- Results**
- Aggregate Impacts of \$367,813
 - New Sales of \$175,000
 - Total Cost Savings: \$8,000

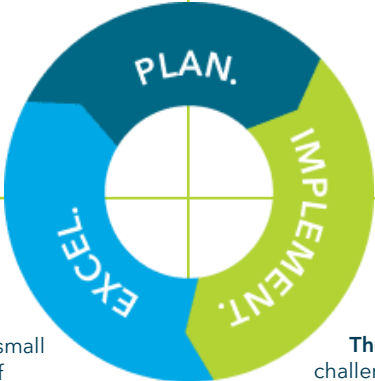
EFFICIENCY. ENGAGEMENT. GROWTH.

Header Die and Tool, Inc.
Rockford, IL | 50 employees

The Situation: As a custom job shop producing specialized, low-volume tools, Header Die and Tool faced unique challenges applying Lean principles often designed for high-volume manufacturing. Recognizing the benefits of Lean in reducing waste and standardizing work, the company began its journey in 2010 with an off-site Lean 101 training led by IMEC, a milestone that shaped its continuous improvement efforts. Over time, every employee participated in Lean simulations and skill development sessions, with training even extended to vendors and customers. However, as the workforce evolved, so did some of the early lessons learned. Knowing the importance of a well-trained team, the company decided to reinvigorate its Lean journey by bringing IMEC back for two educational and skill-building workshops focused on continuous improvement.

The Solution: IMEC delivered two full-day Lean Manufacturing Overview with Simulation workshops for Header Die and Tool employees. Employees developed skills on how to identify improvement opportunities and also learned how to implement the tools needed to help make needed changes. These interactive sessions used a hands-on, simulated production environment to teach and reinforce Lean principles. Each participant went through three simulated production "shifts," applying Lean tools in real time and learning by doing. Beyond the technical lessons, the cultural impact was immense. According to company leadership, the simulation brought employees of all experience levels onto common ground, reinforcing shared understanding and providing a unifying experience that continues to influence operations.

- Results**
- New Sales: \$200,000
 - Cost Savings: \$60,000
 - New Jobs: 4
 - Cost Reductions: \$10,000
 - Total New Investment: \$5,000



SKILLS. SUSTAINABILITY. SUCCESSION.

Giesecke & Devrient
Bolingbrook, IL | 100 employees

The Situation: Giesecke & Devrient identified an increasing challenge in maintaining a consistent and highly skilled maintenance workforce. With experienced technicians nearing retirement and limited access to new talent entering industrial trade, the company needed a structured approach to train and retain skilled employees. Unplanned equipment downtime and reliance on external maintenance vendors further emphasized the need for an internal workforce development solution.

The Solution: Partnering with IMEC, Giesecke & Devrient launched a Department of Labor-registered Industrial Maintenance Mechanic Apprenticeship Program in October 2024. Through the guidance of IMEC, the program was designed to establish a formal structure for both on-the-job and classroom learning. It defined clear competency milestones, wage progression, and mentorship requirements to ensure consistency and accountability. Additionally, the program created a career pathway for maintenance technicians, helping build technical capability across the entire company. IMEC managed the Department of Labor registration process, coordinated training alignment, and provided tools for tracking apprentice progress. The program's first participant, Simon Wu, recently earned his credential, demonstrating the program's success in strengthening individual and organizational skill sets.

- Results**
- Combined projected impact: \$750,000 - \$960,000
 - 6 skilled technicians developed through structured apprenticeship
 - Reduced equipment downtime and increased productivity
 - Registered DOL apprenticeship improving workforce pipeline