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Basketball and Blitzes Lead to Innovations at Boyd Converting *MassMEP Helps Company Increase Productivity and Gain Competitive Edge*

SOUTH LEE, MA - Boyd Converting Inc, a South Lee, Massachusetts manufacturer of non-woven and specialty papers for products like coffee filters and bandages is a growing company. One reason for the company's success is its commitment to continuous improvement and innovation and you might say another reason is basketball legend Walt Frazier.

Always looking for new methods to make quality upgrades, Andy Diamond, an executive from Boyd had talked with several manufacturing resource and training organizations but had not found one he felt fit his company's needs. Diamond intended to talk with the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP) and even had the business card of Susan Janus a MassMEP Project Manager, but had not had a chance to meet with her.

It wasn't until a manufacturing industry event at the Basketball Hall of Fame that the two finally met and the result of the conversation has been a highly successful collaboration.

"I walked over to the Walt Frazier display and Andy was standing there and as we looked at the display I mentioned that I met Walt when I was younger," said Janus. "We introduced ourselves and continued talking about basketball and then the conversation turned to manufacturing. I had heard good things about Boyd and mentioned that I had been meaning to contact the company because I thought some of our programs might make a good fit for them. Andy laughed and pulled my business card from his pocket, so we took it as a sign that maybe we should set up a meeting."

The MassMEP is a public-private organization providing business and technical assistance to smaller manufacturers. As a project manager, one of Janus' jobs is to help manufacturers like Boyd innovate production steps and hone their competitive edge.

After talking with Boyd's senior management, Janus implemented a Lean Manufacturing pilot project at the facility. Lean Manufacturing is a technique that utilizes simple but effective methods to identify and reduce waste and excess inventory, clear shop floors and streamline production processes all with a goal of decreasing costs and increasing productivity.

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"Boyd is growing and they realized that there was a need to make changes to meet the increasing demands," said Janus. "Lean helps them make these changes while engaging employees in the process. Everyone in the company really grabbed a hold of the project and ran with it."

As part of the Lean implementation, Janus and her team conducted several different projects including mapping the flow of production work, time spent on projects and Kaizen blitzes, short bursts of activity designed to make small improvements.

The results of the project have been impressive. Production processes have been streamlined and one shop manager reported an hourly product production increase of 62 percent per person in his area. Lean implementation has also resulted in reductions in the travel time of products from one workstation to the next and has increased capacity.

Boyd is looking into other potential projects with the MassMEP as part of the company's commitment to continuous improvement.

"The MassMEP provided the leadership skills and direction to help our company implement a plan to transition into a Lean facility," said Bronly Boyd, president of Boyd Converting Company, Inc. "We found Susan Janus and the MassMEP team very easy to work with and we hope to bring them back as our plan matures and have them help us get to the next level."

The MassMEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP system is a network of manufacturing extension centers that provide business and technical assistance to smaller manufacturers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Through MEP, manufacturers have access to more than 2,000 manufacturing and business "coaches" whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits and enhanced global competitiveness. For more information, please visit www.massmep.org, or phone 1-800-MEP-4MFG.

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