

TAP SUCCESS STORIES

Manufacturing Extension Partnership Millennium Tool Inc., Madison, Ind.

"Our goal in partnering with Purdue was to outline ways to diversify our business during a sluggish economy so we were less reliant on the automotive industry and its cyclical nature. We also needed to position ourselves for winning federal government contracts. Today we have a team of 13 employees working on our first contract with a major appliance manufacturer. Without the ISO 9000:2008 certification and the training and assistance that the Purdue partnership provided, we would not have won that three-year contract, competing against seven other bidders. It helped us get our foot in the door. Now our customers know they are dealing with a company that truly cares about quality and customer service."

— Kyle Lyon,
President and Founder, Millennium Tool Inc.



Purdue's Technical Assistance Program/Manufacturing Extension Partnership (TAP/MEP) served more than 350 Indiana companies with workforce training and production needs from July 2009 to June 2010. TAP/MEP programs assist Indiana companies with advanced manufacturing efforts by combining Training Within Industry (TWI) with Lean Manufacturing, Six Sigma, ISO 9000 and other continuous improvement methods as core workforce training and production strategies.

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Officials at Millennium Tool, a family-owned tool and die company, knew they had to streamline operations and create a quality control system to compete locally and globally. A key tool in that effort was to become certified in ISO 9000:2008, a global standard for implementing system approaches to manage production, control costs and consistently deliver quality to the customer.

Millennium Tool, through a collaboration with Purdue's Technical Assistance Program/Manufacturing Extension Partnership, has since undergone a cultural revolution. Sales are up, customer activity has increased, product quality has improved and operating costs have fallen. Importantly for this region of Indiana, employment at the 11-year-old company has grown to 21 toolmakers, machinists and support staff, stemming largely from a contract with a major Midwest appliance manufacturer.

A team led by owners Kyle and Cheryl Lyon and their son Sean Alderman, a management representative for the company, collaborated with the Purdue team to implement a quality control system, a retooled production process, improved safety procedures and a stronger employee training program. The impact has been significant and immediate. As a result of that partnership, Millennium Tool:

- Was awarded a three-year contract by a major appliance manufacturer under the supervision of project engineer Jeremy Dykes, and other longer-term contract proposals are in the pipeline.
- Saw productivity and sales rise significantly from the new streamlined processes and received an added benefit when insurance premiums decreased.
- Watched the returns/scrap rate fall to below 5 percent in the first six months, significantly improving operating and labor costs and customer satisfaction.
- Has a new marketing tool with the ISO 9000:2008 certification, setting the company apart from many competitors.

— Purdue's Technical Assistance Program
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