

# ENTERPRISE MINNESOTA



\$124.6 million in new and retained sales  
\$38 million in new investments  
1,796 jobs created or retained

**Enterprise Minnesota** helps small and mid sized manufacturers develop and implement strategies to grow business. Whether walking through the lean manufacturing process or advising on the latest management strategies, we help your business compete and grow profitably. Our industry experts are located across Minnesota to help you achieve your goals and become a world-class manufacturer.

Thanks to our partnership with NIST/MEP, we have access to industry-wide benchmarks and proven, results-based tools. The national MEP network is funded through the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and assists small and medium-sized manufacturing companies by providing products and services designed to help them succeed. Enterprise Minnesota has successfully leveraged this federal support for more than thirteen years by administering the cooperative agreement that provides for the MEP center in Minnesota. MEP nationwide network of resources transforms manufacturers to compete globally, supports greater supply chain integration, and provides access to technology for improved productivity.



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\* Impacts are based on clients receiving service in FY2010

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# CLIENT SUCCESS: ATLAS MANUFACTURING

*“It takes a lot of energy and a lot of work to keep communicating, but that not only keeps people on the same page, it keeps them motivated and we get better results. [Lean] is really an evolution, and I don’t think there’s really an end point.”*

John Peterson, President

## Atlas Manufacturing Improves Productivity with Lean

Atlas Manufacturing, based in Minneapolis, Minnesota has been serving customers for more than 50 years. The precision sheet metal manufacturer engineers and builds custom metal products for a variety of original equipment manufacturer clients across the telecommunications, retail, medical and industrial markets. Products include computer enclosures, retail displays, and industrial products. Atlas employs 75 people.

### *Situation:*

Atlas Manufacturing, based in Minneapolis, Minnesota has been serving customers for more than 50 years. The precision sheet metal manufacturer engineers and builds custom metal products for a variety of original equipment manufacturer clients across the telecommunications, retail, medical and industrial markets. Products include computer enclosures, retail displays, and industrial products. Atlas employs 75 people.

### *Solution:*

Enterprise Minnesota worked with Atlas on a Value Stream Mapping (VSM) process that tracks work flow and total costs. A VSM looks at how the flow of work impacts the total costs, and helps develop methods to improve processes. Several Atlas employees participated and learned how minimal waste and maximized efficiency paired with best-in-class equipment would bring the most value to the customer and, over time, the best profit margin to the company. From the findings, Atlas is addressing specific areas throughout the facility through Kaizen events - or rapid improvement projects. Through its VSM, Atlas targeted projects for implementing Lean into the company’s facility. Atlas identified wastes in its processes and eliminated non-value added processes, materials, and activities. As a result of Enterprise Minnesota’s assistance, Atlas is accommodating shorter lead times, retaining customers, adding new business, and hiring new employees to keep up with orders. Employees are cutting down production time by making the exact number of parts specified, versus the traditional protocol of manufacturing more parts than an order calls for in case the customer orders more product at a later date. Reduced inventory has allowed the company to sell its additional 10,000 square foot storage building and free up cash.

### *Results:*

- \* Realized \$20,000 in cost savings.
- \* Invested \$2 million in automation equipment.
- \* Reduced lead time by 3-4 days.
- \* Projected reduction of non-value added time by 40 percent.

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