

\$10.6 million in new and retained sales
\$5.2 million in new investments
73 jobs created or retained

North Dakota MEP is committed to maximizing enterprise performance. They provide companies with services and access to public and private resources that enhance growth, improve productivity, and expand capacity. Dakota MEP works with companies willing to invest in their future, to make improvements in the short term, and to position themselves to be long-term competitors both domestically and internationally.

Dakota MEP is a leadership organization that provides value to those companies dedicated to creating new opportunities for their people and organization¹. They strive to maximize enterprise performance - including growth, innovation, productivity and profitability. Working with partners who share this mission - they specialize in helping companies develop best practices and supporting strategies which enable them to better compete today and tomorrow.



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* Impacts are based on clients receiving service in FY2010

CLIENT SUCCESS: SPECTRUM AEROMED

“We would not be doing this without the very valuable support and training that we have received through the Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Thank you for your support and assistance; it is a relationship that we truly appreciate. We are proponents of Dakota MEP and new committed disciples of Lean.”

Dean Atchison, President and CEO

Lean Breathes New Life into Spectrum Aeromed

Spectrum Aeromed is a leading designer and manufacturer of customized air medical and ambulance equipment. They work closely with air medical and transport crews to equip all types of fixed and rotor wing aircraft with highly specialized and innovative life support solutions. The company's clients and partners include private/VIP and charter operators, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and Search-and-Rescue (SAR) operators, healthcare organizations and hospitals, royal families and heads of state, corporations and executives, government contractors and the military. Spectrum Aeromed employs 15 people at its facility in Fargo, North Dakota.

Situation:

Spectrum's lead time for standard product was 90 to 120 days. This long lead time was a result of employees not having the correct tools or sharing tools, missing components from inventory, assemblers kitting their own assemblies, and inefficient methods of product movement. The company contacted the North Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Dakota MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

Dakota MEP provided Lean Manufacturing training and solutions for all production employees. Shadow boards were created and tools were removed from tool boxes and placed on pegboards or open shelves for clear visibility and easy access. More efficient tools were purchased to make assembly easier. A Kanban system was established in the inventory room to monitor and visually show the status of inventory to support the level of business. Kits for assemblies were collected ahead of time by the inventory control person to save the assembler time. Carts with wheels were purchased to be used for kits and for moving product from one area to another. As a result of Dakota MEP's assistance, Spectrum Aeromed's current lead time has been reduced by 15 days. This improved lead time has given the company a positive and reputable position in the air medical industry. Recently, 22 crates of life saving helicopter EMS equipment for a \$2.5 million project was completed and ready for shipment to Saudi Arabia in 85 days. A short lead time is important for customers to receive their equipment as soon as possible so they can begin servicing the community for patient transport.

Results:

- * Reduced lead time from 90-120 days to 30-45 days.
- * Achieved a more competitive and profitable position.

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