Falcon Footwear Employees Achieve Significant Savings with Lean Initiative

Auburn, Maine: Falcon Performance Foot announced today that its employees have achieved significant cost savings as a result of a lean training initiative. Led by the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP), the initiative worked with all 55 company employees to identify ways of improving production efficiency. The initiative succeeded in cutting the company’s production time by 40 percent.

Falcon Performance President Carl Spang hailed the remarkable results of the lean initiative.

“This initiative demonstrates the value of empowering our employees with knowledge of lean manufacturing practices. With Maine MEP’s assistance, we cut our production time from 14 days to 7 days, a substantial performance improvement. We are now able to provide more finished goods and also accommodate specialty orders at a faster rate with time efficiency for less cost. Our cost savings in raw material and work-in-progress are a direct result of this initiative,” said Spang.

The employees received instruction in a variety of lean tools and techniques including value stream mapping, 5S and kaizen events. Employee teams learned from MEP project managers how to apply these techniques and tools on their own throughout the plant.

According to the Falcon Performance President, one of the most valuable aspects of the initiative was its impact on employee morale.

“Falcon is a community, and this project gave our teams a sense of accomplishment,” Spang stated. “We focus on personal productivity. By employing lean techniques, the employees contribute to the revenue in a positive way and, in return, their benefits and wages are raised.”

Maine MEP Project Manager Wayne Messer praised the company for its focus on continuous improvement.

“Falcon Performance Footwear is an example of a company that is committed to innovation and continuous improvement. The nature of the life-critical products it manufacturers for firefighters requires the highest degree of attention to quality and performance. Lean initiatives have helped the company maintain its focus on quality, while streamlining production processes and improving its bottom line. The company’s achievements are an impressive testament to the value of lean,” said Messer.

Maine MEP’s involvement with the company dates back to 2001 and has included production efficiency projects, workforce training and strategic planning. Last year, when the firm decided to relocate its facility from Lewiston to Auburn, Falcon called upon Maine MEP to assist it with the new plant layout.

Falcon Footwear was founded in Lewiston in 1963 and over its history made work boots and traditional footwear for L.L. Bean, Dunham, Timberland and Cabella’s among others. In 2006 Falcon was selected by Globe Firefighter
Suits to manufacture a revolutionary new boot for firefighters. The company has expanded into other markets by adapting its boot for industrial and mining usage and has earned an international reputation for the rapid customization of its products.

About Maine MEP

Maine MEP is an affiliate of the NIST under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP 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 2000 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 on the Maine MEP program call 1-800-637-4634 or visit www.mainer MEP.org.