



Five Things You Should Know About the MMEC

"Looking toward your own local manufacturing support system may represent a key competitive advantage," according to Ken Voytek, Chief Economist at the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership, in a recent blog about consulting trends. "Keeping abreast of best practices and seeking expertise beyond the walls of a company is becoming important."



Whether your employee numbers are fewer than six, peak at 60 or reach more than six hundred, the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) is one of those critical manufacturing support resources here in Montana. In order to be more than a point solution for you and serve as your strategic business partner, here are five things you should know about us:

1. MMEC professionals bring a fresh set of eyes to company operations and management. Since 1996 the Center has offered expertise in solving problems on the manufacturing floor, setting up costing and financial models for managers, designing effective plant layouts, and providing other practical day to day guidance. We drive right to your door, and we've worked with more than 850 Montana companies in 54 of Montana's 56 counties to date.
2. More recently B2B business development services were added through a collaboration with the Montana Department of Commerce. And a 21st Century focus on Next Generation Strategies for manufacturing has the Center expanding its offerings to business in areas of planning, accelerated innovation, and performance.
3. MMEC now offers a fast and effective strategic planning technique, "The 1 Hour 2 Plan for Growth (1H2P)" to you on strategies and actions that help you focus "on" the business rather than in day-to-day operations. One client who recently completed a session in just over an hour said, "I came away totally fired up; I worked until 3 a.m. on historic performance data to start meeting with my team."

MMEC is typically known across the region for teaching and implementation of Lean Manufacturing concepts and quality systems for certifying to a variety of international quality standards.

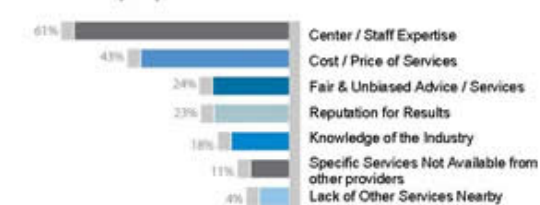
4. Today several advanced Lean Enterprise services can help align Lean on the production floor with Lean for office and administrative areas and Lean Product Development for streamlining the development and roll out of new products and services. Lean for Office uses today's technology to demonstrate areas for improvement. For those interested in preparing the internal capacity of their workforce for rapid deployment and implementation of LEAN initiatives, a 10-session Lean Enterprise Certification Program is also available through MMEC.
5. Most importantly, MMEC has staff across the state to work with you and has built strong partnerships with other manufacturing support services such as the business resources of the Montana Department of Commerce which includes the Small Business Development Centers, the Montana Technology Innovation Partnership, and the Office of International Trade; regional Economic Development Centers and related SBA 504 loan connectors; Montana's two-year technical colleges; the Montana Food and Agriculture Centers; private service providers; and other important resources.



The Center is tied to Montana State University in Bozeman where it helps fulfill the Land Grant outreach mission to support businesses and communities, thus improving the state economy. MMEC offices are located in Missoula, Kalispell, Helena, and Bozeman. MMEC is also an affiliate of the NIST MEP, enabling it to tap into a nationwide network of resources for improving the productivity, economic competitiveness and technological capabilities of America's manufacturers.

According to Voytek, the most important factors that led MEP clients to work with their local center, like MMEC, suggest a number of reasons. In particular, 60 percent of the survey respondents, selecting from a list, said they used their local center because of center/staff expertise. Forty-one percent chose to use a local MEP center because the services were cost-effective and nearly one quarter of all respondents said they used a local center because of their local center's reputation for fair and unbiased services or because of its reputation for results. For many the services needed were not available from other providers. The accompanying chart below provides the detail from these surveys. The surveys done over the last year, based on responses from nearly 6,000 clients.

MEP Clients: Why They Chose MEP



For more information about MMEC go to <http://www.mtmanufacturingcenter.com> or call us at 406-994-3812.

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