NWIRC Welcomes New President/CEO

Robert Zaruta has joined the Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC) as President/CEO after serving for sixteen years with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (NEPIRC). Throughout his tenure with NEPIRC, Bob was a key member of the management team helping in the development and implementation of the Center’s strategic plans, business models, sales processes, internal client engagement management processes, marketing strategies and special initiatives. Additionally, he developed, implemented and managed a national program providing sales training and licensed sales methodology to Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) locations and their clients across the country. He also participated in numerous Industrial Resource Center (IRC) and MEP special initiatives, provided working sessions at National MEP Conferences and seminars, and has been an advocate for NEPIRC, the IRC network of Centers, and MEP in Harrisburg and Washington, DC. Most recently, as the Director of Business Development, he managed NEPIRC’s staff of Strategic Business Advisors along with developing and managing key accounts, directly delivering a suite of Growth Services and managing third-party service engagements.

In addition to his IRC/MEP experience, Bob has held leadership and management positions within Fortune 500, regional and small enterprises. As an entrepreneur, he founded and led a startup telecommunications company to dynamic growth. Bob has a B.S. Degree in Business Administration from King’s College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Some of his relevant industry training and certifications include Lean Specialist, Innovation Engineering Management System, Solution Selling, and Project Management from Penn State. Bob and his wife Debbie have three sons Jeff, Bob, and Doug, and one grandson, Maddax. The couple are in the process of moving to Erie where their son Bob and his wife Laura also reside.

Deploying a Lean Champion: Their Role and Success Factors

by Craig Corsi, Lead Consultant Vie Associates, LLC

Companies who usually have a thriving lean program are often driven internally by a dedicated champion. This is someone who exemplifies the drive, leadership, training, and commitment to lead a company to improve the organization’s operational performance, as well as increase total customer satisfaction. Lean champions are often the most critical part of a lean initiative, providing the knowledge, vision and dedicated focus required to maintain a continuous improvement environment. Lean champions typically have varied responsibilities and can come from different areas of the organization. Often times the individuals have a role within the company that represent the operational side of the business.

(Continued on Page 1)
Deploying a Lean Champion (Continued from page 1)

It's not uncommon to find a vice-president or general manager spearheading the organization's lean efforts but often times champions come from the middle management to supervisory levels of the business. Some may contend that it may be harder to affect change from these positions but what I've found to be most crucial is the person's ability to relate to those he or she is leading. Successful lean leaders are people who have gained the respect from both upper management and the front line workers.

Champions are certainly more than process improvement leaders. They're often effective project managers who understand the underlying business issues that lean needs to address. Additionally, they set and maintain the goals of the improvement projects, making sure that they are aligned with the overall business objectives. They act as teachers, educating the entire organization on the importance of lean. They are also facilitators, helping to address organizational issues and keep lean initiatives on schedule.

An important element of being a lean champion is the ability to motivate others. Above all, successful lean champions seem to work well with all levels of employees and navigate through the organizational roadblocks. An effective lean champion is someone who has a clear vision, good communication skills, and a relentless drive to implement change that will improve everyday work life. Teaching the lean concepts and tools are simple, driving organizational change is nearly impossible without a lean champion.

Companies who are in their infancy of their lean efforts have the most need for a champion to help them through the process. Seeking outside consultant assistance for training, coaching, and guidance in the development of the lean champion is a common approach to get started. Engaging with a lean expert will provide the classroom knowledge-base and also allow them to teach the champion how to successfully facilitate improvement projects. The most effective way this is accomplished is by hosting an organized event(s) under the guidance of a lean coach to allow the champion to gain practical lean experience within their own work environment.

One very important point that is often overlooked by companies, who commit to the lean initiative and dedicate resources to spearhead their efforts, is that the champion alone cannot be successful by themselves. Success is accomplished through strong organizational commitment and unwavering support.

Craig Corsi is a Lean Specialist for Vie Associates, LLC. He is a manufacturing professional with more than 20 years of experience in the areas of Operational Excellence, Supply Chain and Inventory Management, and Continuous Improvement Initiatives.

Side Note: NWIRC will offer Lean Champion Certification in Titusville on September 7, 14, 21, & 28. This program is eligible for the Make It In America Grant.

New Name. Same Program.

The NWIRC’s Advanced Manufacturing Apprentice program has recently changed its name, but the program details remain the same. The newly coined STEM Manufacturing Internship currently focuses on placing college-level science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) students with project-based experience at regional manufacturers. The decision to change the program name is the result of community and industry feedback to differentiate the NWIRC program from the growing focus and need for registered apprentices.

Many manufacturers lack the resources to cultivate relationships with regional schools and vet qualified students, so NWIRC’s Manufacturing Technology Engineer (Michael Griffith) and Program Coordinator (Gretchen Reinard) assist with the placement process from identifying a project to selecting a candidate.

STEM manufacturing interns offer a great solution to help narrow the growing national skills gap and offer manufacturers opportunities to 1) improve their technology development, 2) improve efficiency and effectiveness, and 3) mentor and evaluate future skilled leaders. Contact us to learn how we can help connect you with regional college STEM interns who can accelerate your technology development.

Susan Williams and Carl Mohney became Lean Champions last year at Abbott Furnace Company.

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E3 Energy Assistance and ISO 50001

Today’s competitive companies know that “going green” is not just beneficial to the environment and their communities; it’s also beneficial to their company’s reputation, value proposition and potentially their bottom line. If a company’s net income as a percentage of sales is 5%, then saving $50,000 per year on energy costs is equivalent to an increase of $1,000,000 in top-line sales. Beginning October 1st, NWIRC will partner with the Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP) to offer grant funded E3 energy efficiency audit reports for a limited number of manufacturers in our region. Our combined service focuses on two areas of high energy utilization in your business, along with lean continuous improvement services to identify energy waste and production area improvements. If you are interested, contact your NWIRC Strategic Business Advisor for more information.

Side Note: NWIRC, in collaboration with Clarion SBDC, will offer an energy management education session presented by PennTAP on November 8th from 1:00-4:00pm in Clarion. The program will include information on ISO 50001 and other tools for reducing energy usage. Save the date and check our website Event Schedule for more details.

Registered Apprenticeships

The Greater Oh-Penn Manufacturing Apprenticeship Network (The Network) was awarded an American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant of $2.9 million which will add 300 apprentices in the region over the next 5 years.

Because Registered Apprenticeship is backed by the Department of Labor, manufacturers gain access to resources and funding that they couldn’t otherwise tap into. Companies that register a new apprenticeship program and sign-up for The Network’s group sponsored model by September 30th are eligible for a $6,000 reimbursement. For more information visit www.industryneedsyou.com/apprenticeships/.

Questions can be sent to Diane Karlin at dkarlin@tpma-inc.com or Megan Wagner Ingram at mingram@tpma-inc.com.

Creating Supply Chain Ambassadors

In a June 2016 news release, APICS (the premier professional association for supply chain management) announced their commitment to raising awareness of supply chain career paths for the next generation. The news release states “manufacturing has become a less popular career path in recent years, particularly for women. In fact, women make up about 47 percent of the United States workforce, but only 27 percent of the manufacturing workforce”. To increase awareness and create ambassadors for manufacturing careers for women, APICS and the Manufacturing Institute have released LEAD: Becoming an Impactful Voice to the Next Generation of Talent.

According to the release, this toolkit outlines ways for women who are currently in manufacturing to become ambassadors for their industry and ways for companies to get involved and increase awareness around supply chain careers. This information can be found at: www.themanufacturinginstitute.org.

Side Note: NWIRC will offer a Basics of Supply Chain Management Course in Erie beginning October 25th. The course will be taught by Scott Holter, a Certification Program Instructor with the APICS - Cleveland Chapter.

Congressman Glenn Thompson to Lead Off Cybersecurity Awareness Program

The Clarion Small Business Development Center, in conjunction with NWIRC, will offer Cybersecurity for Small Business on August 19th from 9:00am-12noon in Dubois. This free education session will focus on identifying and reducing threats, incidence response, and lessons learned. Featured speakers are Congressman Glenn Thompson, Scott Zimmerman of Concurrent Technologies Corporation, and David Peck of David J. Peck and Associates.

Find a link for registering and more information at www.nwirc.org/events or call the Clarion SBDC at (814) 393-2060.
YOUR STRATEGIC BUSINESS ADVISORS

If you have questions, or would like to speak with someone from NWIRC about services, please contact your Strategic Business Advisor:

Tom Weible
814.590.5202
Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Elk Jefferson, McKean & Potter Counties

Susan Hileman
814.572.2077
Crawford, Forest, Mercer & Venango Counties

Ed Barthelmes
814.923.3084
Erie & Warren Counties

UPCOMING EVENTS

Lean Champion Certification*
Sept 7, 14, 21, 28
Location: Titusville
Hands-on training and individual assignments specific to your manufacturing business. The program is presented once a week for 4 weeks. The first two weeks (Principles of Lean and Value Stream Mapping) can be taken as stand-alone courses.

HR Forum: Transferring Training into Results
Sept 15, 22 & 29
Locations: Erie, Clarion, Warren Training is a significant investment for organizations. This program will focus on how to make learning pay off in the workplace after the classroom sessions are over. Content includes: measuring ROI of training, what type of training is best for your situation and environment, what leaders can do once the training is complete, and more.

OSHA Compliance and Injury Prevention
Sept 8, 27, & Oct 13
Locations: Dubois, Erie, Franklin
Prepares organizations to deal with regulatory compliance, injury prevention, and business liability. Course includes the new Silica standard, Electrical Hazard Awareness, Medical Record Access, and revised Record Keeping & Injury Reporting standard that will impact all manufacturers with 20 or more employees.

Selling Your Edge
October 19
Location: Titusville
Are you sales driven or dependent on the whims of your marketplace? Learn a systematic approach to selling rather than quoting and hoping. Participants will apply principles of lean manufacturing to selling by developing a repeatable process and reducing waste. Featuring a Sandler Certified Instructor.

For more information or to register for training, visit www.nwirc.org