Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership: A Commercialization Collaborator

Helping companies overcome challenges to successfully commercialize their technologies
The National Institute of Standards and Technology’s Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) works with small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers to help them create and retain jobs, increase profits, and save time and money. The nationwide network provides a variety of services, from innovation strategies to process improvements to green manufacturing. MEP also works with partners at the state and federal levels on programs that put manufacturers in position to develop new customers, expand into new markets and create new products.

MEP has over 1,000 technical experts located in every state – serving as trusted business advisors, focused on solving manufacturers’ challenges and identifying opportunities for growth. As a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce, MEP offers its clients a wealth of unique and effective resources centered on five critical strategic growth areas: technology acceleration, supplier development, sustainability, workforce and mid-sized manufacturing.

MEP Centers

MEP Centers are a diverse network of state university-based and non-profit organizations, partnering with the Federal government to offer products and services to meet the specific needs of the manufacturers.

Each year MEP centers help thousands of manufacturers solve problems, increase productivity, improve their economic competitiveness, upgrade their workforces, and enhance their technological performance. MEP Centers provide manufacturing companies with a wide array of fundamental services that are focused in the transfer of new manufacturing technology systems; connecting manufacturers with federal, state, or university R&D labs, as well as where their needs are connected with technology solutions developed at research laboratories.

Services are provided through a combination of direct assistance from center staff and assistance from private-sector consultants. This diversity is a strength of the program and permits local MEP Centers to provide a wide range of mission-related services tailored to the state and regional economies they serve.

MEP centers exist as a result of a partnership among the federal government, state/local governments, and industry to help manufacturers. Centers are created through a competitive, merit-based process where funding is contingent upon successful annual reviews of each center. MEP centers are supported by cash contributions from public and private organizations that leverage the federal investment. In addition, center services are fee-based and designed to be flexible and responsive.

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As manufacturers develop new products, enhance existing products, strive to expand and diversify markets, develop and improve production and engineering systems and processes, and work to strengthen competitive positions within supply chains – MEP has developed a range of products and services to help manufacturers identify opportunities that will accelerate and strengthen their growth and competitiveness in the global marketplace. MEP offers an integrated portfolio of high-value consulting and business solutions that help companies commercialize technologies. Some of these services include:

Total Increased/Retained Sales

New Sales

Retained Sales

Jobs Created

Jobs Retained

Cost Savings

New Client Investments

$8.2 Billion

$3.6 Billion

$4.6 Billion

19,170

41,327

$1.3 Billion

$1.9 Billion

Design for Manufacturing (DFM)

Design for Assembly (DFA)

Machine and Equipment Design

Lean Process Improvement

Quality Management and Control

Innovation is at the core of what MEP does. Manufacturers that accelerate innovation are far more successful and realize greater opportunities to participate in the global economy. By placing technology developed through research at federal laboratories, educational institutions and corporations directly in the hands of U.S. manufacturers, MEP plays an essential role in sustaining and growing America’s manufacturing base.

To accelerate and promote innovation, MEP provides a framework of Technology Acceleration that helps manufacturers rapidly move new product opportunities into production and into the market. MEP serves as the connection between manufacturers and the technology opportunities and solutions they require to grow and compete in the global marketplace. By exploiting opportunities to leverage and adopt technology, manufacturers have the advantage to establish a foundation for long-term business growth and productivity.

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Product Design and Prototyping

Helps manufacturers turn their ideas from product design and prototype to manufacturing to market. Up to 80% of a product’s costs are committed during its design phase. Smart, strategic choices in materials or simplification of components can result in major cost savings that could mean the difference between market success and failure. MEP Centers bring custom design and prototyping capabilities make new product ideas a cost-effective reality for companies to successfully compete.

Lean Product Development

Applies the waste elimination philosophy of lean operations to the product development process. This approach reduces rework, improve resource utilization, and reduce new product development risk. The focus is on reducing labor costs and capital investment. The key benefit is that the company eliminates the waste from its processes while reducing product development time and eliminating costs.

Lean Process Improvement

Improves a company’s overall operation by using the concepts of lean manufacturing. The core of the lean manufacturing is the idea that any resources not creating value for a customer in the form of a product or service are wasted. Lean establishes a systematic approach to eliminating wastes and creating flow throughout a company. It improves efficiency in the production of goods and services and also helps develop and implement a long-term plan to streamline a company’s operation for success.

Quality Management and Control

Assists manufacturers to continuously improve all areas of their company’s operation through quality management systems. For consistency and effectiveness, quality systems are required to serve in FY2010

33,838Manufacturers served in FY2010

So you developed a technology using SBIR funding? The federal government has invested in resources that can help you with commercialization as well!
**Strategic Business Development**

Provides manufacturers with a strategic business plan to help them prepare for the future, align strategy and goals, identify opportunities for business growth and cost reduction, increase top-line growth, manage talent, and increase market potential.

**Technology Scouting**

Connects technology needs with developed technologies or technical capabilities that – unlike traditional “push-based” technology transfer – is pull-based. Over the past few years, NIST MEP has been researching Technology Scouting tools and services to find solutions for manufacturers unmet technology needs that help them access and pull technologies from government laboratories, universities, and private sector sources outside normal channels.

**Technology Driven Market Intelligence**

Provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to technology focused market intelligence. TDMI identifies the benefits and the market impacts related to a company’s technology-based asset (e.g., idea, product, process, capability) and provides customized actionable intelligence they need.

**Supplier Development**

Helps manufacturers understand, maintain, and expand their capabilities and positions in supply chains. MEP works closely with suppliers to provide guidance and training on Lean, Quality, and other performance improvement programs that will help them thrive in existing and future global supply chains.

**Supplier Scouting**

Connects small U.S. manufacturers with business opportunities by matching their specific capabilities with the supply chain needs of federal agency and original equipment manufacturer (OEM) partners. MEP leverages its vast knowledge of local manufacturer capabilities to identify and pre-qualify supplier capabilities and capacities, and provide assistance to suppliers as needed.

**Exportech**

Helps companies enter or expand in global markets. The program assists participating companies in developing an international growth plan, provides experts who will vet their plans, and connects the companies with organizations like yours that will help them move quickly beyond planning to actual export sales.

**Stay Connected!**


For more information contact Clara Asmail at: asmail@nist.gov, (301) 975-2339

The NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership is a nationwide system of resources, transforming manufacturers to compete globally, supporting greater supply chain integration and talent management, and providing access to technology for improved productivity. MEP is built around manufacturing extension centers locally positioned throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico addressing the needs of America’s manufacturers.

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