



Welcoming & Solving Challenges

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LEAN

MANUFACTURING PRODUCTS

LEAN Manufacturing Products Inc. developed from their own manufacturing and metal fabrication experience. They realized they needed ways to free up floor space, coordinate work flow and improve efficiency as they developed their manufacturing plant. When they couldn't find the products they needed, they came together and designed their own!

This highly creative group has long relationships with many local metal manufacturing facilities. This allowed them to quickly prototype, test and produce products that helped propel them on their "lean" journey. So many customers asked about the new products, that they created Lean Manufacturing Products, Inc. to offer these solutions to everyone!

Meet Lean Manufacturing Products Inc.

Metal manufacturers (ie companies such John Deere, Bunn Coffee Roasters, and all the third-party suppliers that support their overflow work) constantly focus on getting more product out the door. Typically, they purchase newer, faster machines to process the orders. Or sometimes they build an expansion or buy an additional building. However, they all have HUGE opportunities for efficiency gains through organization. Let's just say that manufacturing facilities are not typically known for their shine.

From the principles of 5S – the core of lean manufacturing – individual work cells should have everything they need to do a particular job, and absolutely nothing else. And that's where Lean Manufacturing Products can help. Companies are constantly investing in more multi-million-dollar equipment, building more multi-million-dollar additions, and hiring more employees because they think it's the answer to their growing pains. But that's not necessarily their answer. If they look inside their already-existing box, they'll see what we – Lean Manufacturing Products, – can offer them through our lean manufacturing principles and products. We offer products that streamline processes, allowing them to get more product out the door using the same resources they already have budgeted. By our math, that's a much easier solution than buying additional machinery, expanding to larger buildings, or hiring redundant help. Our goal is to increase throughput while maintaining (or even lowering) the pre-existing bottom line of every company we work with.

At its roots, our goal is to help manufacturers improve productivity and profitability within their existing facility space with fast and easy-to-implement material handling solutions that: - Save time - Improve organization - Increase workflow visibility - Clean up cluttered shop floors - Protect your sheet metal material from damage - Reduce inventory - Minimize employee stress

Not only were we able to find success with Wisconsin Metal Parts as a supplier, we discovered a company that is committed to the success of its customers, built upon a sustainable workforce and dedicated to making the world a better place!



The Challenges Lean Manufacturing Products Inc. Faced

Challenge #1 Sourcing Multiple Divisions Through One Vendor

Nearly all of LEAN's products are steel-intensive, which is ideal for single-source manufacturing. However, it's difficult to find companies that truly specialize in various divisions. For example, a tool & die shop may have a laser for "supporting" their other departments, but it's probably not meant for true production. Likewise, a machining shop may have a punch press to help diversify, but again, specializing in various divisions is hard to find.

However, this is one of the many reasons Wisconsin Metal Parts was so attractive to us – not only did they have support divisions, we couldn't even tell which ones "supported" the others; they truly work as a cohesive unit that shares parts across divisions on an hourly basis to make sure the best equipment and talent is being used to produce the parts as quickly, efficiently, and accurately as possible. Instead of needing to seek out different vendors for different operations, we trusted Wisconsin Metal Parts, Inc.'s expertise, and they have delivered on their promise without falter.



Challenge #2 In-house Design of Robust Weld Fixtures

Welding can be tricky to outsource, especially for new products. If it is a "project takeover," there is typically tribal knowledge that can be passed along to make the transition process easier for the new fabricators. However, that wasn't the case for us – we were releasing new product, and we needed to rely on a vendor that had the inside expertise to design and build appropriate fixturing.

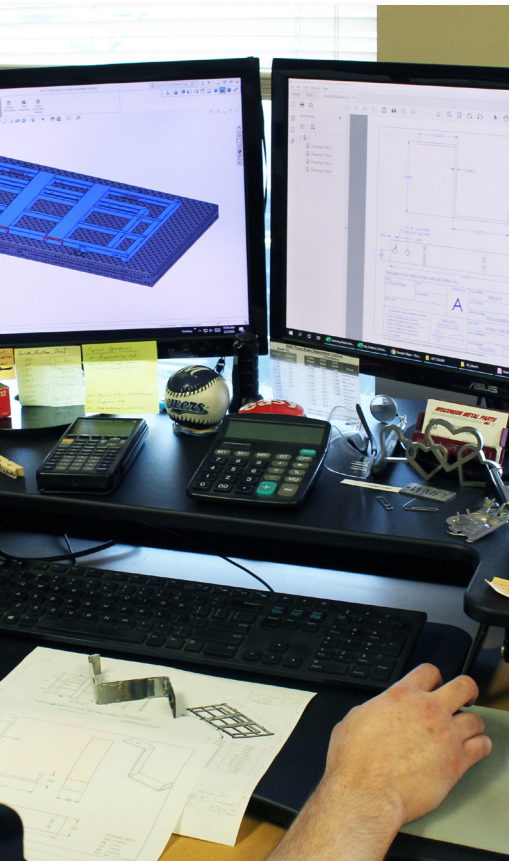
First, their team took the time to listen to us and understand the final products and how everything lined up. Then, we underwent a few small design changes that would help weldments locate in place through slots & tabs. Finally, after much studying and brainstorming, they successfully built fixtures that would maintain the quality and tolerancing, and be efficient to hit attractive price points. With the repetitive nature of our outsourced product, these fixtures are intentionally robust, and all maintenance is upkept by the Wisconsin Metal Parts team.

The Challenges Lean Manufacturing Products Inc. Faced

Challenge #3 Quick Scaling

When we started sending work to Wisconsin Metal Parts, Inc, we did not start small. We asked them to learn about us quickly, gear up for quick-scaling and get started!

Of course, new comes with growing pains. However, right from the start, their team put detailed processes and checks/balances in place to ensure only conforming product headed out the door. Further, they pulled labor hours from their larger cross-trained workforce to share labor and scale appropriately. They had both the equipment and team to scale both up and down with our sales so we consistently held the same lead times to our end customers.



Challenge #4 Open-Book Quoting and Transparency

When we work with vendors, we rely on a high-trust, transparent pricing scheme. There are other companies that send RFQ's nationwide, just to find the one company that accidentally underbids it; then "awarding" the work to them. We consider that to be malicious business, and it's not what we set out to do. We need our valued suppliers to stay in business, and we want them to be excited to perform well for us. If they know they're going to lose money or merely break even when they begin to fabricate the job, how "excited" are they to give us their absolute best work?

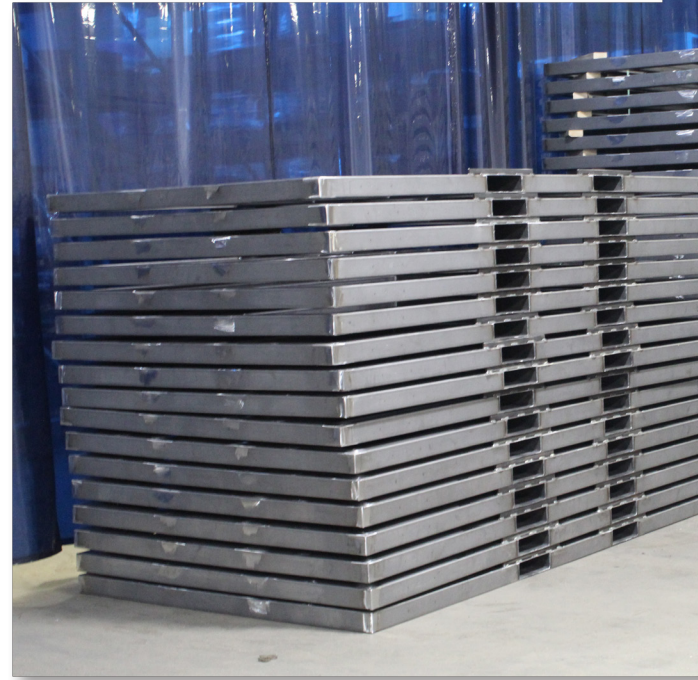
We trust our vendors to be fair with us, to watch steel market trends, and to communicate proactively when increases or decreases are expected. Systematically, we've created a pricing system with Wisconsin Metal Parts that is tailored to our style of outsourced projects and allows for consistent, same-day pricing.

The Challenges Lean Manufacturing Products Inc. Faced

Challenge #5 Save on Production Costs

Wisconsin Metal Parts became intimately familiar with our product line so they could best-recommend new or different manufacturing processes. In manufacturing, there is an endless number of ways to achieve the same final part, and the trick is doing it in the most efficient, cost-effective manner. Fortunately, the Wisconsin Metal Parts team has a very keen eye when looking for this, and they have a lot of different talents and equipment that they can utilize.

Most recently, we performed an On-The-Floor R&D session for a new project, where we spent a few hours with the welding team leader reviewing a prototype and making changes so the production run would be set up to run more efficiently – and as those changes were made, Wisconsin Metal Parts was able to pass along a significant cost savings.



Challenge #6 Drop-Ship to Powder Coater

We primarily deal with carbon steel, so secondary processes are needed after fabricating. By trusting the registered ISO processes at Wisconsin Metal Parts, including intense inspection, we are able to ship directly from their facility to our powder coater. With full inspection reports behind each shipment, we find comfort in knowing that only conforming product makes it out the door. This saves countless hours of own inspection, and also allows faster lead-times to our end-customers.

For supply chain, all weldments and components are pre-packaged and loaded by Wisconsin Metal Parts so they flow smoothly into our powder-coater's operations and then back out their door to our final customer.

The Challenges Lean Manufacturing Products Inc. Faced

Challenge #7 Fluctuation in Delivery Dates

In the fast-paced world of contract manufacturing, things tend to change. Workload, material availability, equipment downtime, deer hunting season, etc. They all can cause some on-the-fly changes to timelines, and we understand that. To help us control our own supply chain, we have weekly Monday meetings with our account managers from Wisconsin Metal Parts to review all active orders and communicate openly about any challenges.

For example, if we have 10 open contracts, and a piece of equipment goes down, which 8 contracts are the highest priority? With proactive communication, we are able to work together and keep our end customers informed and happy.



Challenge #8 Long-term Vendor Sustainability

We need vendors that are in it for the long haul. We need to know that who we do business with is staying in business – and preferably under the same ownership with the same key players. By working with Wisconsin Metal Parts, we trust the long-standing reputation, the processes that are in place, and most importantly the key players that have showed us time and time again that they truly want us to succeed. They believe that when we succeed, they also succeed – and to us, that's the sign of a great relationship. By working together and keeping all lines of communication open, everyone can keep growing, developing, and finding pride in the "wins" that we share.



We Welcome Challenges!

After acknowledging these challenges, the first contact with Wisconsin Metal Parts, Inc. assured Lean Manufacturing Executives that they have found the right team that would help them capitalize on present and future opportunities.

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