

For Immediate Release
May 7, 2007

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ARIZONA MEP GETS IN THE SPIRIT

*Organization Takes Spirit Electronics Through Principles of Lean Manufacturing,
Improves Work Flow and Customer Satisfaction*

PHOENIX, AZ - Spirit Electronics, Inc. is known for its commitment to its customers. The Phoenix, Arizona company is a distributor specializing in supplying products and services to the military/aerospace industries. Since Spirit continuously adds new franchises to their distributor base, the company not only wanted to maintain their outstanding customer service, but find ways to improve on order and quality processes as well.

“Our work with Spirit Electronics was really a three-phased approach project. In the first phase, we performed an enterprise assessment where we interviewed and rated everyone to find the company’s strengths and opportunities for improvement,” said John Little, Director of Operations at the Arizona MEP. “Then the next step was to identify the primary area to work on, using the Time Wise® Value Stream Management System. We began mapping their present process in their order management office to establish their current state.”

“Our Value Stream Map revealed many opportunities where we could do things more efficiently. With the help of the Arizona MEP, we envisioned our future state and saw how we could improve the way we process orders. We reduced our 32-step process to only 14 and shortened our lead time which left additional time for us to work with the customers and process more orders,” said Vickie Wessel, President of Spirit Electronics.

Following their Value Stream Mapping process, Little and his team developed a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) for Spirit Electronics. The CIP is a set of activities ranked from “easy” to “difficult” which are designed to bring continual improvements to their order process.

“Conducting a 3-day Kaizen event for the order management process was the third phase of our project. A Kaizen event consists of short bursts of activity that results in incremental but constant improvements. Through their Kaizen event, the staff at Spirit Electronics was able to create standardized workstations with a visual, more efficient and relaxed working environment,” added Little.

After the initial work with the Arizona MEP, Spirit Electronics also participated in a one-day team building and problem-solving workshop with the organization, as well as a Time Wise® 102 Lean Awareness workshop.

“I cannot say enough about the tremendous staff at both Time Wise® and Arizona MEP,” added Wessel. “We have seen some great results within our company and have some extremely powerful tools to use for continuous improvement and growth. We hope to continue working with the Arizona MEP for years to come.”

The Arizona MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (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 Arizona MEP program call 480-874-9100.

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