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# Complex Manufacturer Increases Productivity Company-wide 32% Through Employee Engagement in OpEx

## Situation

A Detroit, Mich. complex manufacturer of steel fabricated wire displays, store fixtures, POP displays, and custom wire frameworks needed to improve the productivity of their overall workforce to enable improved profitability. They were losing money and in a difficult cash flow situation, and there was great pressure from customers to reduce lead times in the face of price pressure from foreign competition. A MetaOps, Inc. MetaExpert™, armed with the knowledge that transformation is 80% people and 20% tools and techniques, was engaged to lead an Operational Excellence (OpEx) workforce transformation.

## Actions

The MetaExpert™ was engaged to mentor the leadership team in strategy, and to lead and coach them in implementing a series of improvement efforts. These included helping them reduce labor costs, decrease lead-times in order to make them more competitive, and increase their profitability. The MetaExpert™ first brought together the owners and key members of management and labor to craft a high-level transformation plan. In the process of discovery and planning they learned:

- Communications with workforce is critical.
- Processes drive waste – not people.
- That ‘silver-bullet solutions’ don’t transform companies – people do.
- That transformation is 80% people and 20% tools and techniques.
- That the power of a plan comes from people understanding it and being empowered to act.

The MetaExpert™ provided a crash course in leadership and teambuilding with education in Operational Excellence (OpEx) concepts and best practices. Their staff embraced OpEx strategies and tactics with coaching and support of the MetaExpert™ to surpass their OpEx goals. He then guided the company to rapidly:

1. Develop people by:
  - a. Holding employee workshops to explain the company’s vision and their roles.
  - b. Developed management skills in what it means to lead.
  - c. Chartering cross functional project teams to examine key processes and quickly implement improvements.
2. Break paradigms and re-invent the business by:
  - a. Creating a process whereby 50% to 70% of the sales volume could be produced in ‘cells’ versus batch & queue.
  - b. Reducing the space for production and inventory by 50% or more.
  - c. Effectively implementing a new layout for the facility to capitalize on flow concepts.
  - d. Rethinking the supply chain execution and partnering with component and service providers to speed flow and reduce costs.
  - e. Collapsing the lead time for deliveries to customers from 12 weeks to 6 weeks or less.
  - f. Implementing team-based approaches to fixing processes problems.
  - g. Improving job satisfaction to reduce workforce turnover by maximizing cooperation and improving morale.

## **ROI**

The company's president credits the MetaExpert™-lead OpEx Transformation with saving the company by:

3. Increasing profits \$50,000.00 the first month and \$700,000.00 annually
4. Collapsing lead times by 50%
5. Lifting productivity by 30%
6. Reducing staff turnover to nearly zero
7. Instilling the highest levels of morale and engagement ever known at this company

**Client Skills Required:** OpEx understanding and deployment, agility in incorporating quick fixes, SOP (standard operating procedures) improvement, continued process improvement, leadership and training in the practice of High-Performing Teams

**Contract Length:** 12 months

**Support by MetaOps, Inc. MetaExperts™:** OpEx training, mentoring, coaching and implementation, and High-Performing Teams development