

**For Immediate Release**

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President, NH MEP  
603-226-3200**NH MEP Provides Training to Local Manufacturer and University Students for Mutual Benefit**

**Rochester, NH** – Developing a skilled manufacturing workforce in New Hampshire is vital for moving the state into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One way this is being accomplished is a combined training partnership with the New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership ([NH MEP](#)), Spaulding Composites, Inc. ([www.spauldingcom.com](http://www.spauldingcom.com)) and the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Department of Mechanical Engineering (<https://ceps.unh.edu/mechanical-engineering>).

In 2013 Spaulding Composites, a global supplier of specialty composite materials and value-added fabricated products located in Rochester, NH began informal Lean manufacturing training for the shop floor. “At the time it was organic,” said Kenneth (Ken) Otto, CEO and President of Spaulding Composites. “We made great strides in shrinking floor space and scrap. It was about a 60% reduction across the entire business.” But things changed when they began making parts for a very large customer. “We needed to be on a growth path of continuous improvement and needed more formal training in Lean.” To Ken, that meant making an investment to train his people. “I can’t be everywhere to manage everything. I need well trained people to run their own departments without me looking over their shoulder. Proper training empowers them to make good decisions on their own.” Now the question for Ken was where to get that training?

Ken turned to Adam Stymiest his Quality Manager. Adam started with Spaulding in September 2016 and quickly saw opportunities for improvements in their manufacturing operations. He discussed that with Ken and began doing research into training options. Adam has had experience with NH MEP and thought it would be a good partnership. He got to know Mark Berry working on a technology project, one of NH MEP’s Project Managers who also had a relationship with the University of New Hampshire’s Department of Mechanical Engineering. “In discussions with Mark about our needs for continuous improvement and staffing Mark created the idea of the joint training venture and he put together a series of 3 Lean Manufacturing training sessions that combined Spaulding employees with mechanical engineering students from UNH.” said Adam. The Spaulding employees would benefit by learning Lean manufacturing. The students would benefit by experiencing real world manufacturing with the hopes of making manufacturing their career.

Starting with the Principles of Lean Manufacturing workshop participants learned Lean concepts with four separate factory simulations. Next they developed a Value Stream Map to identify how the manufacturing process will operate at an optimum state. Finally they learned the Fundamentals of Kaizen (improvement events) in order to lead their own future continuous improvement initiatives.

The outcome of the training? From the manufacturer’s perspective, Spaulding was very impressed how the classes were larger than expected and how smoothly everything went. According to Adam, “It was great to see how the students evolved during the training. They were a little apprehensive at first but it wasn’t long before they opened up and became frequent participants in the discussions. The students brought a good energy, fresh eyes and we believe having training in an actual manufacturing environment will help them in the future.”

James Skinner, a Senior from the UNH Mechanical Engineering Department who attended the training said this, “It was very interactive and hands-on. I now understand how to apply what we were taught to any manufacturing company. It was a great way to get into industry as a profession.” Bradley Olsen, another Senior from the UNH Mechanical Engineering Department said, “The training simulates what goes on in a real manufacturing setting and I can apply what we learned when I’m ready to look for work in manufacturing.”

Dr. Brad Kinsey, Chairman of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the UNH College of Engineering and Physical Sciences was pleased with the results of the training. "I appreciate Spaulding Composites and NH MEP working with us to educate our students on this important topic for manufacturing. Such real world experiences and material help to extend their learning beyond the classroom." said Brad.

Ken Otto summed it up this way, "The goal of Spaulding Composites is to grow and be successful through continuous improvement while shaping the future workforce in NH. To that end the collaboration of NH MEP, our employees and UNH students has been great. A fantastic experience overall and we would do it again."

"During the last 7 years, NH MEP has started its workforce development initiative in manufacturing. This is the first attempt to engage engineering students in implementing lean side by side with employees in a manufacturing setting. We plan on doing more of these training partnerships with clients in the future. I thank Ken Otto, CEO and President of Spaulding Composites, Dr. Brad Kinsey, Chairman of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the UNH College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, as well as the NH MEP trainers Mark Berry, Brodie Ingalls, Jill Duddy, and Mike Clark." said Zenagui Brahim, President of NH MEP.

#### **About NH MEP**

The NH MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP system 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 2,000 manufacturing and business "coaches" whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits and enhanced global competitiveness. For information on the MEP Lean Energy and Environment program, please visit [www.nhmep.org](http://www.nhmep.org), or phone 1-603-226-3200.

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