

Quality Filters – Coupling Lean With Innovation To Expand Market Share

Industry

33399 All Other General Purpose Machinery Manufacturing

Company City

Robertsdale

Company State

Alabama

Company Name

Quality Filters

Company Profile:

Quality Filters, Inc., located in Robertsdale, AL, is a leading air filter manufacturer and distributor of home air filter and commercial industrial air conditioner filters. For more than 30 years, the company's air conditioning filter products have met the standards for LEED certification and provide optimum indoor air quality in even the worst air quality environment.

Situation:

Quality Filters has operated as a lean enterprise for some 10 years, with ongoing training, coaching and implementation assistance from the Alabama Technology Network (ATN). Lean, a system based on eliminating or removing waste and non-value-added activities from a process, typically frees up additional production capacity within manufacturing operations. Over the past decade, Quality Filters has done just that, and credits the application of Lean to being a significant factor in enabling the company to begin exploring entry into broader markets. ATN's Innovation Engineering Management System, which is designed as a scientific process for evaluating business growth ideas and strategies, presented a business growth program that fit the company's need for assistance in exploring new product development ideas and introducing those into new markets.

Assistance:

In 2008, the company engaged the ATN-Auburn University Center to help facilitate and coach an innovation session and follow-up assistance. During the session, participants generated more than 50 different concepts for market growth.

After this session and continued support, Quality Filters developed a strategy and approach to expand into the filtration e-retailer channels which primarily serve residential customers. The ability to custom print air filters with the e-retailers logo helped increase the company's sales by 15 percent

In addition, Quality Filters developed a relationship with the owner of the Lysol Brand and will begin manufacturing a Lysol branded residential filter beginning in late summer of 2012. The filter will be sold through a major retail store throughout the mid-west. The filter is an innovation for the industry as its' specially created media is the first and only asthma certified filter by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation. To receive this certification, the filter had to meet special standards established by the foundation.

Results:

In addition to a 15 percent sales growth, ATN innovation assistance has enabled Quality Filters to expand its plant by 20,000 square feet. This could result in as many as 150 new jobs over the next four years.

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