



Success Story: Southern Aluminum Finishing

Aluminum Manufacturer Paints a Picture of Cultural Significance

In 1946, Southern Aluminum Finishing (SAF) was founded by Marvin McClatchey to meet the post-World War II building boom throughout the Southeast. The company, headquartered in Atlanta, with plants in Villa Rica, Georgia and in Indiana and California, has been a family-run manufacturer for the past 70 years. In 2005, SAF began the complicated process of adding another painting operation to coat their aluminum pieces in order to expand their business reach and take hold of additional market share.

Penn McClatchey, CEO and the fourth McClatchey to run the company, continues to uphold many of the same traditions his father and brothers worked to instill. As a culture first organization, a third of SAF's 250 employees have been with the company more than 10 years, including Ralph Strickland, an employee who is about to retire at the age of 80. He says, "I have been able to try many things during my time here and really enjoy coming to work every day."

Frank Buchholz, general manager of the Villa Rica metal fabrication plant and painting operation, who has worked for the company since 2014, says "It's all about the family culture for us and with that comes the importance of providing training to help our team members be successful."



Since making these improvements, SAF has:

- Implemented quality management system.
- Reduced dollars spent in paint inventory by 50 percent.
- Increased efficiency in the paint mixing operations and decreased paint waste by two-thirds.
- Cut internal rejects by 55 percent.
- Improved productivity efficiency by 15 percent.
- Went from 634 days without lost time injury to 1,050 days and counting.

»» Situation

As a long-time client of the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP) at Georgia Tech, SAF has worked with Larry Alford, South metro Atlanta region manager, and many other GaMEP team members on facility layout, applying multiple lean tools, implementing an ISO 9000 based quality management system, and a recurring annual membership to the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium.

More recently, SAF started working with GaMEP on strategic planning. By doing so, the company realized they needed to put more emphasis on increasing their leadership and communications skills at all levels of the organization. Over the course of the past two years, they began a journey of front-line leadership training.

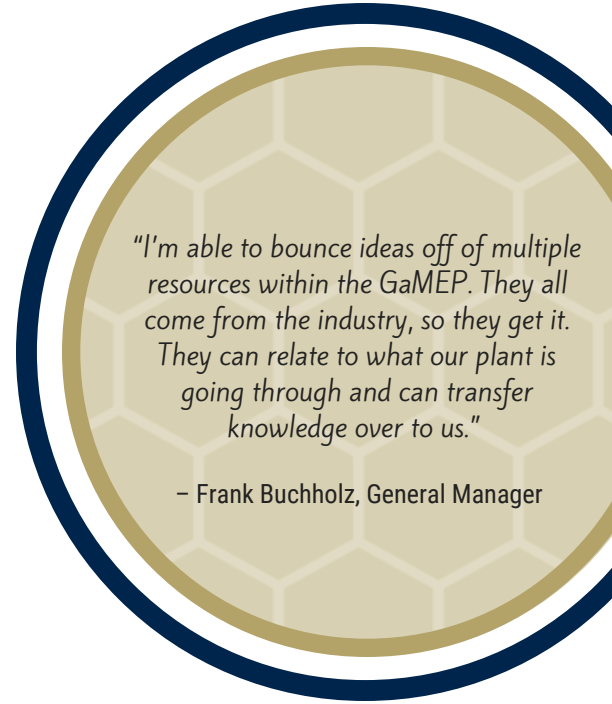
»» Solution

Since completing the front-line leadership training, the SAF team has enhanced their problem solving techniques, process flow, and on-site job training, attributing to a significant improvement in quality control and productivity improvement.

In addition, the team deployed a behavioral-based safety training program to encourage team members to report on activities that followed safety guidelines or resolved safety concerns, in order to promote a safety-first culture. As a result, SAF currently has more than 1,000 consecutive days without a lost time injury.

To ensure that this training keeps getting passed on throughout the organization, SAF is creating an internal training curriculum and a new education training center. Buchholz said, "Our goal is to cross-train an employee so we have the flexibility to move them around the plant. We have multiple types of fabricating equipment and our metal goes many of these machines throughout the entire process. We take each employee and train them on each piece of equipment, so that they don't just have one job or skill-set throughout their time at SAF. By doing so, we have increased the number of new ideas submitted by employees, resulting in productivity improvements."

As they look towards the future, SAF, alongside GaMEP, also recently completed a smart readiness assessment, determining areas of technology-related improvements which will continue to boost their plant-wide communication efforts.



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