

Office Location: Pittsburgh



CATALYST CONNECTION By focusing on a company's specific needs and goals, Catalyst Connection provides customized solutions that lead to measurable, positive results. Catalyst Connection has the expertise to identify areas that will benefit from change, recommend an improvement strategy, and then implement the action plan. Catalyst Connection's staff of industry-experienced consultants help manufacturers increase sales, develop new products, improve product quality, develop employee performance and reduce costs. Contact: Dennis Thompson, 2000 Technology Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, (412) 687-2700, Fax: (412) 687-5232, Email: info@catalystconnection.org, Website: <http://www.catalystconnection.org>

**THE
MANUFACTURING
EXTENSION
PARTNERSHIP
IN PENNSYLVANIA**

Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is a nationwide system of services and support for smaller manufacturers to become more globally competitive. At the heart of the system is a network of affiliated, locally-based manufacturing extension centers. Each center, like Catalyst Connection, is a partnership, typically involving federal, state, and local governments; industry; educational institutions; and other sources of expertise, information and funding support.

C O M P A N Y C L I P S

Pressure Chemical Enhances Web Site to Improve Market Visibility

Pressure Chemical Co. (PCC) provides process development, piloting, and custom manufacturing services to manufacturers employing sophisticated materials in their products. The company also offers a line of fine and exotic chemicals for research and semi-commercial applications. Located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the company employs 40 people. PCC relies on its web presence for market visibility. Unhappy with the quality and cost of its original website, the company found a new host and asked Catalyst Connection to assess the design and recommend areas for enhancement.

Working with PCC employees, Catalyst Connection performed a quantitative evaluation of the company's site based on industry-specific benchmarks. Catalyst Connection identified technical areas for improvement encompassing its look, functionality, and search engine visibility and made detailed recommendations for the company's site.

At the conclusion of the project, PCC moved forward with the planned enhancement of its site, including Catalyst Connections' suggestions for improving its aesthetics, user-friendliness, interactivity, salesmanship, bookmark-ability, and visibility. In the months following implementation, the number of hits the site receives has nearly tripled, from 565 to 1,597 hits per month.

Continued

STATE STATS

DATA* COVERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2001

Number of projects completed with firms
238

Number of firms served
163

Number of firms served for the first time
50

Federal cost share for current operating year
\$1,092,000

State/other cost share for current operating year
\$2,184,000

**Data as reported from center*

DATA** COVERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2001

Increased sales & retained sales
\$61,888,000

Client capital investment
\$19,784,008

Total cost savings
\$5,651,000

Jobs (created & retained)
501

***Source: Independent client impact survey*

**For additional information,
contact Dede McMahon 301-975-5020**



Leed's Implements Cells With Outstanding Results

Leed's headquartered in New Kensington, Pennsylvania, sells promotional products such as leather and canvas business accessories, luggage, computer cases and organizers. Leed's applies logos, repackages the items, and distributes these products to its customers from its 150,000 square-foot facility in the Westmoreland Business and Research Park. The company, established in 1987, currently employs 375 people.

Rapid growth produced a number of challenges, including sales that consistently outpaced production capacity; inefficient product flow; poor communication between shifts; and extended cycle times. The company decided to convert to cellular manufacturing to overcome these hurdles. Leed's contacted Catalyst Connection (formerly the Southwestern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center) for assistance.

Working with a cross-functional Leed's team, Catalyst Connection developed a process for the move to cellular manufacturing. Catalyst Connection included a phased implementation plan; created standard operating procedures for packaging; reviewed quality inspection procedures; provided cellular production overview training to the entire work force; and teamed with Leed's management to help ensure a smooth transition to cellular production, before, during and after the move. As a result of Catalyst Connection's assistance and the implementation of the cell, Leed's realized a 45 percent improvement in production throughput, a 35 percent decrease in production cost and a 45 percent increase in capacity, and identified and implemented cost-cutting measures. The company also reduced freight upgrades by 73 percent and decreased the number of quality-related errors by 25 percent.