

**HiRel Systems Reaffirms Commitment to LEAN Manufacturing Techniques:** *New process improvements are saving money and securing jobs.*

DOVER, NH – HiRel Systems is a manufacturer of high-tech custom magnetic components and military power supplies. Their world-class manufacturing facility in Dover employs over 100 dedicated workers, making it an important part of the region’s economy.

HiRel Systems’ success over the years has been due in part to their commitment to Lean manufacturing principles that increase productivity and reduce waste. A few months ago, plant manager Kathleen Strevel recognized the plant’s Lean initiative had begun to stall and reached out to Christopher Tsakiris of the New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NH MEP) for help. “Implementing Lean techniques in high mix/low volume operations is challenging,” said Strevel. “Labor can be consumed by non-value added activities and by waste. Chris and the NH MEP team were instrumental in providing the training necessary to reaffirm our commitment to Lean techniques while boosting our efficiency.”

The NH MEP team worked with HiRel Systems’ management to tailor a training package designed to enhance the company’s existing Lean techniques. The program was partially funded through a supply chain enhancement grant. Training began with the Basic Lean for Job Shops module, providing hands-on instruction to 20 employees from all levels of production and administration. These activities were followed up by Value Stream Mapping and Kaizen training to empower employees to identify and reduce waste throughout the company.

Since receiving the training, HiRel Systems has realized tremendous results in the Kaizen point-of-use cell: lead time to customers has been reduced to 5 days; floor space in the preparation area has been reduced by 20%; set-up and staging times were reduced by 75%; inventory was reduced by 25% by working with suppliers and the customer; and product now travels through three production areas instead of seven. “The NH MEP training was incredibly valuable for our company,” said Strevel, “Our employees enjoyed the training and are now better prepared to implement Lean techniques. As a result, the Dover facility has already realized significant process improvements which are saving us money, improving relationships with customers, and ultimately securing our New Hampshire workforce.”

“The management and staff of HiRel Systems should be proud of their accomplishments in strengthening their continuous improvement processes,” said Zenagui Brahim, Executive Director of NH MEP. “Whether companies are new to Lean or just need a refresher, NH MEP is available to assist.”

**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 more information, please visit [www.nhmepeg.org](http://www.nhmepeg.org), or phone 1-800-MEP-4MFG.