



## Success Story: Master Metals Inc.

### Profile

Location: Onalaska, Wisconsin  
Years in Business: Founded in 1979  
No. of Employees: 14  
Products: Custom manufactured sheet metal fittings for commercial industrial heating, ventilating, & air-conditioning systems  
NWMOC Projects: Lean Overview w/ Legos, 5S events, Value Stream Mapping, Cellular Flow



1<sup>st</sup> row: J. Butteris, B. Nasset, W. Amsrud (NWMOC) & John McCabe (MM) 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Corey Dominy, Dick Bott, and Doug Janssen of MM.

### Situation

Master Metals owner Dick Bott had invested in new equipment, but his labor hours were increasing. He knew he needed to control the hours and get a return on his investment. Dick met with NWMOC project managers to identify the services that would improve his company.

*"It's the best investment we've ever made. There's no return [on investment] better."*  
Dick Bott, VP/Owner, Master Metals Inc.

### Project

NWMOC Project Managers held a Lean Manufacturing overview for employees, followed by 5S events, Value Stream Mapping, and Cellular Flow. The new goal of completing each job in 4 hours or less was established and communicated. Visual management was employed to spot bottlenecks and resolve them early. John McCabe described their improved quality control process as checking each fitting from the beginning and not waiting until the fitting is out in the field being installed before an incorrect fitting is discovered. Much rework has been eliminated. People are conscious now about quality at every step in the process. They have a clean safe work environment, hours of repetitive tasks have been reduced or eliminated, and the carts that once weighed 4,000 lbs. now weigh only 500 lbs. and are much easier to work with. "Overall," Dick said, "We have saved 35% in travel distances." John admitted that he was pessimistic at first, until he noticed *immediate* results after the first Lean Lego session. People were happier and motivated to help. They moved equipment around to make better use of the space and to improve the work flow. "I can thank Stout for getting me thinking that day," John added.



A key solution was organization and working together. "NWMOC showed us how to do smaller orders and have more accurate measurements in the field," Dick commented. Dick summarized by saying "Profit is a result of good work; focus on quality product and the safety and happiness of your people." Master Metals is more efficient now, but without the NWMOC changes, all jobs could have been in jeopardy. Dick concluded by saying "It's been a pleasure to work with you. Everyone from Stout has been a class act."

### Results

Decreased Work in Process by 84%	Gained 30% production floor space
Decreased travel distances by 73%	Cost savings of \$100,000+
Reduced cart weight from 2 tons to 500 lbs.	Reduced supplier monthly invoices from 100 to 40
Achieved goal of completing each job in 4 hours or less	