

# Buck Knives

Location: Post Falls, Kootenai County

Project Area: Growth Services, New Product Development, Lean Enterprise

## Situation

The first Buck knife was made in 1902 by a young Kansas blacksmith apprentice named Hoyt Buck who used his imagination to find a new and better way to temper steel so it would hold an edge much longer. Buck Knives has grown to become a famous manufacturer of pocket, folding & fixed blade knives & multi-use equipment for sports, work and outdoor activities. In order to improve plant efficiency, cut costs and increase production, Buck transformed to a Lean Manufacturing operation during the 1990's while still located in Southern California. A relocation to Northern Idaho in 2000 offered opportunities to create a modern Lean plant and a workforce steeped in the principles of Lean. Once the company settled into its new home, Buck investigated ways to ignite growth and build a spirit of innovation that would sustain the company in the years to come.

## Solution

In June 2004, the company broke ground on the headquarters and manufacturing facility in Post Falls, Idaho. The first Buck Knife came off the assembly line in February 2005. Today Buck Knives is one of the largest employers in Northern Idaho providing more than 200 jobs.

- TechHelp worked with Buck to train all workers in Lean manufacturing and to certify a cadre of workers in Lean through the Lean Enterprise Certificate Program (LECP).
- Buck demonstrated that Lean is not limited to the shop floor by incorporating the principles of Lean Accounting into the business.
- Buck developed measurably smarter ideas for growth and ignited a spirit of innovation within its extended management team by implementing the Eureka! Winning Ways (E!WW) Growth program.

## Results

- Buck has created a very efficient Lean Enterprise with a workforce that is steeped in Lean and focused on continuous improvement.
- Twenty workers attended TechHelp's Lean Enterprise Certificate Program and received Lean certification.
- By implementing the Principles of Lean Accounting, Buck is making critical business decisions based on numbers and information that better reflects the financial realities of a Lean Enterprise.
- Buck's E!WW Team generated over 90 ideas for growth during an initial E!WW 7.0 Idea Engineering Session. .
- The Buck E!WW Team took two of its top Eureka! ideas through the Trailblazer Discovery process and is moving forward with those ideas.
- Buck is scheduled to reload its product development pipeline through a second E!WW Idea Engineering Session.
- The Buck team is building the E!WW process and way of thinking into the way it does business in order to create a continuous flow of new product ideas and a strong product pipeline that will fuel future growth.

**“Our investment in Eureka! resulted in enough new ideas to last a few decades. The rapid-fire process brings out creativity, passion, and focus in the participants. And it’s backed up by a discipline that forces you to think through and capture the meaning of your idea.”**

CJ Buck, President & CEO  
Buck Knives



Above, CJ Buck digs deep to uncover measurably smarter choices for growth during Buck's initial Eureka! Winning Ways Idea Engineering Session.

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