

# Human Resource Assistance Helps Award-Winning Manufacturer Grow

Rotary swaging and axial forming technologies? Sounds very complicated...and it is. When your German parent company has been in business 112 years, was first in the world to build an automatic rotary swaging transfer system, **AND** first in the world to build BMW's largest rotary swaging transfer system, you've got a lot to live up to!

## Challenge

In 2016, New Berlin, Wisconsin, Felss, a pioneer in the auto supplier industry and expert in its craft, was named Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year (small business) by the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce. Their road to success came with many challenges that they dealt with head-on.

Felss—an MRA member since 2013—has experienced 20 percent year over year growth since 2010. They knew they needed efficient processes, an organizational structure that could support their growth, and a public reputation as an employer of choice. While Felss had never employed a human resource professional, they knew they needed HR assistance to help build infrastructure, identify organizational best practices, gain stakeholder buy-in, and prepare the organization for change.

## Objective

They turned to MRA for help. MRA's Human Resource Business Partner (HRBP), Maureen Siwula, worked with Felss' leadership to realign the organization, implement a staffing and talent management strategy, ensure benefits and compensation were market competitive, and bring new focus to culture and safety.

According to Felss General Manager David Gazzo, "Having an HRBP here at Felss was one of the best decisions we took to drive the company to the next level. The HRBP helped hire and train the workforce, develop a performance management system, build organizational culture and values, and improve employee motivation! This resulted in better customer service, stronger employee relations, high community involvement, and successful workforce development."



*"At Felss, we now believe our employees make us the preferred supplier that customers return to again and again,"* said Gazzo.

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## Results

Through their partnership with MRA's HRBP, Felss achieved valuable results:

- ✓ Hired twenty new employees in 12 months for mission-critical positions.
- ✓ Educated staff about core organizational values to get everyone on the same page, which facilitated more efficient and consistent decision-making.
- ✓ Conducted leadership training that strengthened managers' skills and their interactions with the workforce.
- ✓ Created a new employee handbook and conducted handbook training to ensure all employees understood the rules and were being treated equal, resulting in less attorney expenses, fewer employee complaints, and reduced manager time addressing complaints.
- ✓ Developed and implemented employee satisfaction initiatives resulting in improved benefit programs that attracted and retained the best employees.
- ✓ Expanded charitable giving and community engagement programs to involve more employees.
- ✓ Reduced turnover and the costs associated with recruiting and training new employees since employees were happier and more engaged.
- ✓ Initiated a new safety program that increased workplace accident reporting, lowered safety costs, and reduced the likelihood of future accidents.

While Felss did not measure these results, studies have shown that better hiring decisions can save a company over \$100,000 in the first year alone, and more than five times that in hiring, turnover, complaints/lawsuits, reduced workers' compensation claims, and other ongoing costs over the next ten years.

Organizational growth can present many challenges. With the right strategies, an organization can overcome them and become stronger.

Does your organization need HR assistance? Each of MRA's Human Resource Business Partners is a highly trained, degreed professional with at least 15 years of professional industry experience and is backed by the entire MRA team with over 2,000 years of combined experience! Our HRBP's are available to step in and provide HR assistance however, wherever, and whenever you need it.

For more information, contact Member Relations at [MemberRelations@mranet.org](mailto:MemberRelations@mranet.org), or call 800.488.4845.