



## Advance Turning rewarded for lean work

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### Staff Writer

Advance Turning & Manufacturing has been accorded world-class status for lean manufacturing.

"What I like about you guys is you beat yourselves up a lot," said Roger Kremer, chairman of the National Association of Job Shops and Small Manufacturers, who presented the company with a plaque to commemorate the honor Friday.

"You say, 'We're good, but we can improve.' You have the right attitude."

Lean manufacturing is a continuous improvement process that became popular in the early '90s after the Massachusetts Institute of Technology conducted a study on American and Japanese business practices.

Companies that practice lean manufacturing, strive to reduce waste, increase productivity and improve product quality and customer satisfaction.

Since the association was formed last year, about 50 companies in the region have been given a lean assessment and only Advance Turning has achieved world-class status for not only making continuous improvements but sharing its best practices with other companies.

"Everyone should be proud of this," said company President John Macchia Jr., who accepted the plaque. "It's great."

Advance Turning makes parts for the pharmaceutical/medical and aerospace markets.

The company has grown from one employee, Macchia's father, John Macchia Sr., working in his basement in 1968, to about 80 employees working in a shop at 4005 Morrill Road today.

Following lean manufacturing practices, Macchia Jr. said the shop floor is as clean as a kitchen and arranged logically with a designated place for every employee and every piece of equipment.

George Haynes, a machinist at the company for 20 years, said the recognition felt good. "It's nice to be first," Haynes said. "I really do think we're probably as far advanced as anybody is in lean manufacturing."

But there's always room for improvement, said Brent Sundermeyer, a toolcrib manager who has worked at Advance Turning for 14 years.

"Lean manufacturing is never a thing you quit doing. It's something we strive to do better every day," he said.

Macchia Jr. said that's the attitude that has made the company so successful. "It's nice to hear people say there is always room for improvement, and not to work harder but to work smarter," he said.

John Macchia Sr., chief executive officer of the company, also was part of Friday's ceremony. He was surprised to receive the first copy of his new book on Advance Turning, "Backstreet Lean."

Macchia Sr., who is now semi-retired, said when the company moved from traditional to lean manufacturing in the early '90s, not every employee was comfortable with it, but they got used to it and now it's second nature.

"It's an attitude. It's a culture," Macchia Sr. said. "It's a tribute to our employees."

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