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## **Florida MEP Helps Synchron EMS Achieve Efficiencies with Improved Production Flow**

*Melbourne-based electronic assembly manufacturer implements lean transformation*

**Melbourne, FL** – At a time when every manufacturer recognizes the need to drive down non-value added costs, Melbourne-based electronic assembly manufacturer Synchron EMS is demonstrating how rapidly efficiency improvements can occur when a company commits itself to the purpose. Embarking six months ago on a sustained initiative with the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP) to implement a Lean transformation throughout its facility, Synchron is reaping the benefits today. Their latest project to improve the production flow and storage facility resulted in impressive efficiency gains.

The challenge Synchron faced is common to assembly manufacturers: How to improve the warehousing and movement of components to the shop floor. The problem facing Synchron was identified during initial Lean Training and Value Stream Mapping exercises that MEP project managers led with company employees. The exercises revealed that raw materials procured from vendors were being handled multiple times by employees before they were released to the shop floor for assembly, thereby wasting time and manpower.

MEP project managers addressed the problem by holding a kaizen event that focused on the stockroom. Working with Synchron employees, the stockroom was reorganized along two important principles. First, the layout was reordered to reflect the production needs for higher volume customers. Second, warehouse space was reordered so that no product was handled more than once. Both goals were met with a striking improvement in the efficiency of the operation.

“The kaizen event in the warehouse eliminated the problem of handling electronic components multiple times and reordered the layout so that it’s optimized for higher volume customers. But equally importantly, the project achieved an 11 percent reduction in space utilization. By freeing up that much warehouse space, the company was able to move set-up and component preparation operations from the manufacturing floor into the stockroom, which in turn benefited the shop floor,” said Florida MEP Project Manager John Bankey, who led the initiative.

Bankey was impressed by the determination with which company managers implemented improvements identified in the Value Stream Mapping exercise.

“The Value Stream Mapping exercise generated 20 ideas for continuous improvement that will reduce or eliminate waste in the RFQ to parts kitting process,” Bankey stated. “In all my years of leading continuous improvement efforts, I’ve never seen a company do such an outstanding job of implementing the ideas in such a short amount of time. It really reflects the commitment of Synchron to transform their operation and become a next generation manufacturer.”

Synchron President John Sjolander expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the initiative.

“Even with high-expectations for our team, we did not expect to be able to achieve this much this quickly. But with Florida MEP assistance, we not only were able to improve on our plan for continuous improvement, but we were able to implement the improvements immediately. And importantly, we were able to implement it without impacting production. That was a key factor for us, and the resulting improvements in efficiency will help us maintain a competitive edge in these challenging economic times,” Sjolander said.

### **About Synchron EMS**

Synchron EMS is an ISO certified provider of electronic assembly and electronic manufacturing solutions, based in Melbourne, Florida. The firm specializes in low-to-medium volume, high-mix, advanced technology oriented contract manufacturing. Services range from prototyping, and new-product introduction to comprehensive supply chain management, test development, and complete low-to-mid volume production of printed circuit and electromechanical assemblies.

### **About Florida MEP**

The Florida MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP 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 2000 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 on the Florida MEP program call 321-939-4000.