



## Leader Perspectives

Making the connection between creating a company where employees embrace learning as part of their job and producing profitable growth is not always easy.

Jim Allen, CEO, Mold Masters International, joined EDGE shortly after purchasing the company in 2009.

investment casting industry, the connection is clear: one cannot happen and be sustained without the other.

To offer learning opportunities to his leadership team, owner and CEO Jim Allen joined [EDGE](#) shortly after purchasing the company in 2009.

EDGE, the Northeast Ohio non-profit organization that helps mid-market companies develop their leaders and grow their value, creates business-building learning opportunities for its member companies.

Head of Operations Ray Jonaitis said “You cannot get the same kind of exposure to other out-

standing company best practices any other way.” Examples include a visit to [Sherwin-Williams](#)’s headquarters last year to learn their innovation processes. “How else would we get that kind of introduction to the region’s top innovation leaders?” he asked. He pointed out that EDGE offers sophisticated learning experiences, such as [Emotional Intelligence](#) and [Appreciative Inquiry](#), through various partnerships with universities like Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State.

---

*“For me, EDGE has helped me grow as an individual. But I also teach what I learn to others in my department. When my lead people are growing, it helps the company become more successful.” –Helen Buchans, production scheduler*

---

Helen Buchans, a production scheduler, said: “For me, EDGE has helped me grow as an individual. But I also teach what I learn to others in my department. When my lead people are growing, it helps the company become more successful.” An example Helen shared was that she used ideas from EDGE to bring a new technology into the company to save costs, improve quality and speed up production – a digital X-Ray machine. She chose a machine operator who had demonstrated a keen willingness to contribute to be in charge of learning how to use this machine. She said in the period of just six months, he has embraced this new technology.



Mold Masters International leadership team shares insights at an EDGE Forum Event.

For Vili Stjepic, production manager in the Pattern Division, EDGE programs reinforce the importance of listening before reacting. His idea for developing an employee incentive plan that encourages efficient work and new ideas also came from an EDGE learning opportunity.

Since instituting the plan, overall efficiencies are up 25%, and quality scores have improved 50%.

“EDGE has encouraged me to take chances,” said Quality’s Cherie Eddy. Cherie developed the company’s recycling program from a [Conscious Capitalism](#) event that she attended through EDGE. In addition to saving money in trash disposal, the company over three years has recycled more than 40 tons including spray cans, paper, plastic bottles, aluminum cans and cardboard.



Snjezana (Snow) Palavra, with the Pattern Division, said she and a team of colleagues are now looking into applications for [Additive Manufacturing](#), a concept that was introduced at an EDGE event held at [The Technology House](#). The process will allow them to create and customize products more quickly.

In addition, for Snow, the idea of caring about all employees as if they were your son or daughter was the most powerful idea she learned at



Snjezana (Snow) Palavra and Jim Allen of Mold Masters discuss the possible applications of Additive Manufacturing for their company.

an EDGE event. The concept, shared by Barry-Wehmiller CEO Bob Chapman, led to his development of [A Truly Human Organization](#), the details of which were explored and shared at several EDGE programs.

Through EDGE, leaders have been able to grow to help transform Mold Masters into the learning organization that is helping them cultivate ideas to sustain a stable workforce and create profitable growth.



To learn more about how you and your leadership team can benefit from EDGE membership contact **Sarah Shoaff (216) 536-9396, Sarah@edgef.org.**

EDGE | 6801 Brecksville Rd., Suite 160, Independence, OH 44131 | [www.edgef.org](http://www.edgef.org)

EDGE drives growth for mid-sized companies by bringing together their leadership teams to share best practices and inspire each other to pursue the biggest opportunities. EDGE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, and is the only NEO economic development group that is focused on helping mid-sized companies strengthen their leadership teams in order to take their companies to the next level.