

Banner Engineering and the Center for Independence – A Business Relationship that Works

Banner Engineering and the Center for Independence began their business relationship in October of 2007 with a single contract. From that original labeling job, the relationship has expanded to include 11 contracts for labeling, packaging, assembly and deburring. According to Evan Burgstaler, Plant Manager, “the relationship is mutually beneficial, and even though I feel good about helping to provide work options for persons with disabilities, I wouldn’t do it if it didn’t make sound financial sense”.

Steve Besch, a production manager for Banner, toured the Center for Independence’s Production Areas with Leadership Huron. He was impressed with the Center for Independence’s facility and work capabilities. With labor at a premium he felt that workers at Center for Independence could complete these simple tasks as well as Banner workers, freeing their employee’s time for more complex on site manufacturing processes.

Steve approached Dan Liebing, Coordinator of Community Development for the Center for Independence, to obtain a bid for the labeling contract. Upon receiving the bid from Liebing, Steve met with Evan Burgstaler, Plant Manager, to propose outsourcing this job to the Center for Independence. Burgstaler recently stated, “it was an important decision for the plant, as we would need to change the way we manage our inventories and specific job orders to allow for outside processing”. After evaluating all of these factors, he determined that the cost was “very fair”.

The workers at Center for Independence appreciate the opportunity to work with the Banner contracts. The jobs are diverse and people really enjoy having the different types of work, everyone has a personal favorite. So far in 2012 Banner contracts have provided work for 34 people who received \$3031.59 in wages.

Recently when discussing how the relationship has worked for both entities, Burgstaler commented that one of the reasons that the relationship has expanded over time is Center for Independence’s flexibility and responsiveness, as well as quality control and affordability. The Center for Independence appreciates Banner’s willingness to continue to explore new work options for persons with disabilities, and their positive “word of mouth” support with other manufactures in the area.

