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MANUFACTURING

RIMES program focuses on new-product creation

By [Kevin Shalvey](#)

PBN Staff Writer

A consulting program set to kick off this month at Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Services aims to increase companies' ability to develop new products and grow their top line.

The program – called Eureka! – focuses on enterprise growth through new products and marketing, which are elements of manufacturing that haven't traditionally been the focus of RIMES.

"We're a manufacturing, engineering, profit-engineering organization, no longer just focusing on manufacturing cost reductions, but also growth, measurably smarter choices for growth," said Ed Murphy, program manager. "This is what I like to call the execution of innovation."

It's an effort for RIMES to branch out in its offerings to Rhode Island companies, Murphy said. "This really helps a company with, first, innovation, and then executing that innovation."

The process, based on the Deming Cycle's Plan-Do-Check-Act model, begins with what Murphy described as a "unique" brainstorming session that will leave a company with at least 50 ideas for potential growth.

"What we will do is to fill up your pipeline with these good ideas ... and all 50 of those ideas become the backlog of ideas that you might chose to develop," Murphy said.

Then, action plans are developed to realize two of those ideas, and "we guarantee that they'll have at least two action plans that they can follow through with," Murphy said. The ideas must focus on the three major catalysts for company growth: new products, new customers and a wider marketing reach.

The cost for a spot in the three-month program – which already has attracted at least two Rhode Island manufacturers, Murphy said – will be less than \$15,000.

The program was originally developed by Doug Hall, based on a reverse-engineering study of 4,000 successful products. A design engineer and marketing consultant, Hall “has taken his process after more than 20 years, coupled with his success as an engineer at Procter & Gamble, and put it all together in a meaningful way,” Murphy said.

Hall’s fee for running the same program is \$125,000.

According to the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, RIMES’ parent organization, 60 percent of companies are looking for ideas for cost savings, but 80 percent are interested in growing top-line sales. That’s why RIMES, with this the program, is taking a step toward offering support for developmental growth.

And, for the same reasons, the program is well aligned with Rhode Island’s innovation economy and recent partnership with the R.I. Economic Development Corporation, RIMES CEO Leslie Taito said.

“It’s great, it’s a very logical time,” she said. “We did an innovative thing in partnering with the Economic Development Corporation, being co-located, and really taking a leap to having a collaborative effort.”

If, for some manufacturers, day-to-day tasks have held them back from innovating, the Eureka program will allow them to make significant progress in less time, she said.

“The Eureka program really systematically walks them through the process of looking at a new product, a modified product, a new market,” she said. “And it makes them ask, ‘How do we go for it, and what’s the best product to launch?’”.

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For more information about Eureka!®, please contact Ed Murphy at RIMES. 401.270.8896 emurphy@rimes.org