



TAUBER INSTITUTE  
FOR GLOBAL OPERATIONS  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## Continuous Improvement



Mastronardi Produce is a private company that produces and distributes greenhouse-grown tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers. As one of the leading players in the US greenhouse produce industry, company revenues have been showing yearly growth of over 15% in the past five years and are now approximately one billion dollars per year.

This Tauber project focused on Mastronardi's largest distribution center in Livonia, Michigan. Mastronardi Produce is interested in achieving operational excellence through lean methodologies, and the objective of the project was to evaluate and introduce operational improvements through multiple lean kaizen events. The objectives of the events were to reduce waste and establish new standards of work while focusing on safety, customer service, product utilization and cost. These kaizen events aim not only to make immediate improvements but also to create a lean culture where the employees are empowered to make change.

After acquiring thorough understanding of the overall processes throughout the facility, the Tauber group decided to focus on improving the product inspection process as the overarching theme of the 2016 Tauber project. The Tauber group held three kaizen events in total: the first event focused on inspection in the production area, the second event on inspection at the shipping docks, and the third on establishing a structured, well-rounded training program for new inspectors. After concluding each event, the team delved into finalizing and initiating implementation of the solutions with cooperation and support from relevant teams.

The Tauber group implemented five major changes: moved the inspection process upstream in the production area with heightened quality inspection while eliminating a non-value-added area of the facility, made new SOPs for inspectors in production and shipping, painted visual aids in the shipping area to increase safety, increased accessibility to equipment and tools for the inspectors, and established a structure for a

well-rounded training program for inspectors. The implementation of these major solutions is either complete or in progress. The expected savings from these improvements amount to approximately \$1.7M per year.

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“This is Mastronardi Produce’s second team project in the last three years with the Tauber Institute for Global Operations.”

—Diana Crossley, Managing Director

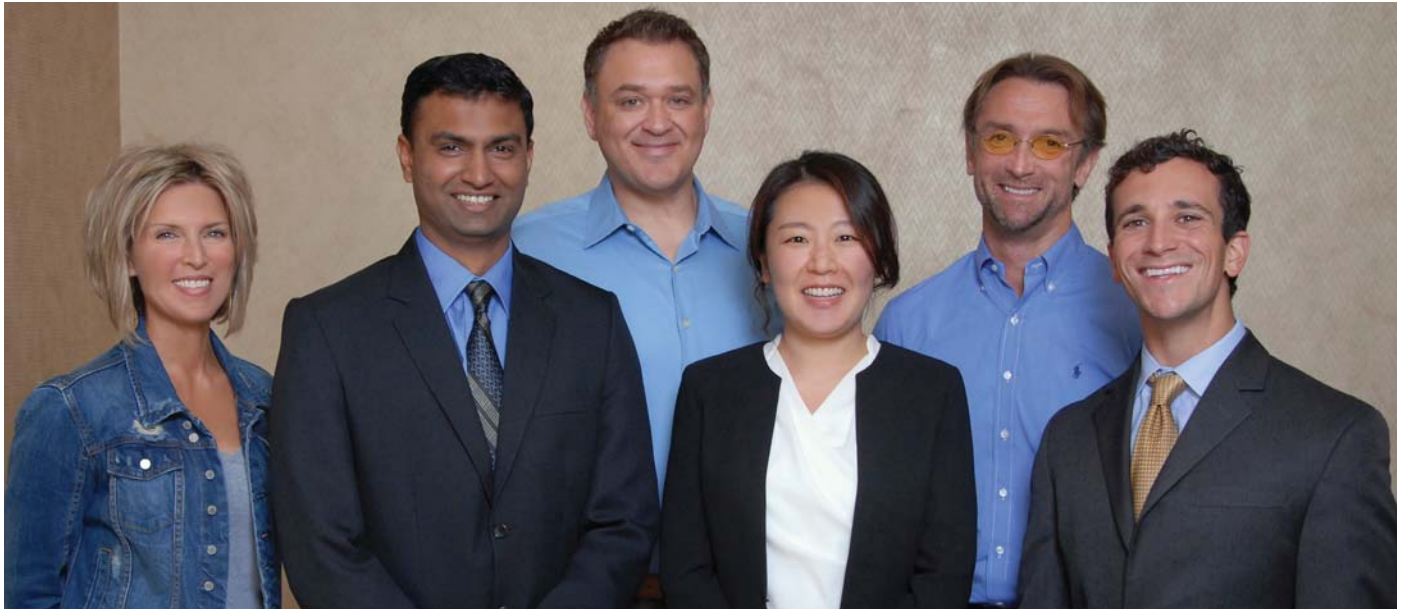
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**Kyle Handley**  
*Ross School of Business*



**Oleg Gusikhin**  
*College of Engineering*



L to R: Jennifer Evangelist, Vivek Vijayan (MSCM), Carlos Collier, Eun Jung Shin (MSCM), Tony Woodrow, and Maxwell Boykin (EGL BSE/MSE in Industrial and Operations Engineering).  
 Photographer: P. Dattilo

## Sunset Produce Project Team

### Students

Maxwell Boykin  
*EGL (BSE/MSE Industrial and Operations Engineering)*

Eun Jung Shin  
*Master in Supply Chain Management*

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### Project Sponsors

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*Vice President Operations*

Tony Woodrow  
*Director of US Operations*

Jennifer Evangelist  
*Director, Program Management Office*

### Faculty Advisors

Kyle Handley  
*Ross School of Business*

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## About Tauber Team Projects

Each two to three person Tauber Team consists of graduate Engineering, MBA, and/or MSCM students. Along with receiving high-level corporate support from the sponsoring company, each team is advised by a College of Engineering and a Ross School of Business faculty member and overseen by a Tauber Institute Co-Director. The projects begin on-site in May and continue for 14 weeks. Students present the results of their projects and compete for over \$40,000 in scholarships at the U-M Tauber Institute's annual *Spotlight!* event, held each September in Ann Arbor, Michigan. *Spotlight!* provides outstanding opportunities for students and corporate partners to establish relationships while exploring innovations in operations and manufacturing.

The 2016 Tauber Team Projects resulted in \$460 million in savings according to sponsoring company calculations, an average of \$14.4 million per project over three years.

To learn more about the Tauber Institute for Global Operations, visit [tauber.umich.edu](http://tauber.umich.edu) or contact us at 734-647-1333.

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