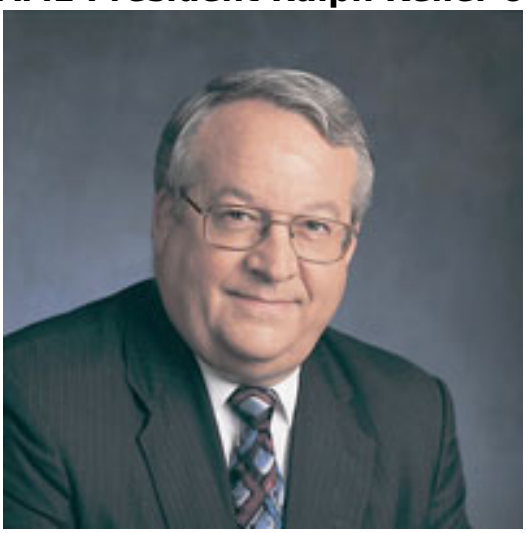
Consistent Efforts, Consistent Results

AME President Ralph Keller outlines the path to award success



AME president **Ralph Keller** sees the annual Manufacturing Excellence Award as a recognition for long term, continuous improvement that is rooted in company culture.

The Association for Manufacturing Excellence [1] (AME) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping companies with continuous improvement and their pursuit of excellence. AME president, Ralph Keller [2], sees the organization's annual Manufacturing Excellence Award as a recognition for long term, continuous improvement, and rooted in company culture.

"We're looking for improvement in critical business metrics, and sustainability of those metrics over time. What we've found is when companies just employ improvement tools, without really changing the culture of the organization, a lot of the changes they get quickly are not sustainable," Keller says. "By going through the application process and taking an introspective look at their business, companies identify for themselves a lot of the possibilities that they have for enterprise excellence and improvement."

Batesville Manchester applied in 2006, and was named the winner of the National Manufacturing Excellence Award, selected from a pool of seven regional winners. When the company reapplied in 2007, they received the southeastern regional award. According to Keller, Batesville Manchester's consistent success came due to the facility's commitment to cultural change.

"It's not just about putting in a new machine, changing to a cell structure, putting in

some lean tools, or initiating demand pull Kanban systems [3]," Keller says. "The Manchester operation has really focused on the people, and changing the culture in which people do their jobs in order to sustain the improvements that they've put in place."

To learn more about AME, visit www.ame.org [1].

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