

**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2017 9:27 AM  
**To:** meprfi <meprfi@nist.gov>  
**Subject:** MEP Competitive Awards Program RFI Responses

Hello,

██████████ had reached out to our company regarding a potential grant and whether we would find this valuable to our company. Please find our response to one of the questions below:

(1) What are the key problems and issues facing small U.S. manufacturers and their competitiveness and opportunities for growth in the near-term (1 to 2 years), mid-term (3 to 5 years) and/or long-term (more than 5 years)?

The largest hurdle that our company is facing in the near-term and mid-term is the strengthened dollar. Many of our components are from US manufacturers as we pride ourselves as being an American made product. However, with the strengthened dollar it is becoming more difficult in both the International and Domestic markets to remain price competitive with our competition out of Europe. For instance our competitors have been able to cut their prices 20% solely from exchange rate changes. This already has impacted us in the European market and we are waiting for it to come in full force domestically and in the Asian and Australian markets.

Another difficulty we face is with the few International manufacturers where we purchase in USD. They are shockingly enough giving us a price increase this year and our volume is small enough where they are not budging.

With us being a small business and not wanting to risk quality, it is very difficult for us to switch suppliers and we have had multiple issues when doing so. Training on how other companies, perhaps of our size, work through this would be beneficial for our company to help improve quality, decrease costs and gain market share.

Both short and long-term cybersecurity threats remain out there. It is difficult for us to create a solid strategy without baselines for a company of our size. Training on this as well would be beneficial for us.

Please let me know if you have any questions and thank you for your consideration.

