

Mar-Bal, Inc. invests in Operational Excellence strategies through customer collaboration.

Thermoset industry leader listens to the voice of the customer and enhances the customer's experience.

CHAGRIN FALLS, OH--(April 12, 2011) - Mar-Bal, Inc., a Chagrin Falls, Ohio-based leader in the thermoset industry and innovative solutions provider, has made a long-term investment in their people resources by deploying Operational Excellence (OpEx) strategies gained by participating in the Whirlpool Six Sigma Operational Excellence program.

Dr. Li Bradshaw, a Materials Chemist at Mar-Bal's Research and Development Center in Chagrin Falls recently achieved Master Black Belt from Whirlpool's OpEx program. Li was recognized at the Certification Ceremony held December 17th at Whirlpool's Benton Harbor, Michigan Global Headquarters. Her master training started over two years ago and involved intense courses focused on Six Sigma and train-the-trainer. During her journey to the Master Black Belt certification, Dr. Bradshaw taught 4 week black belt classes at Whirlpool and shared her expertise with the group.

"Mar-Bal's investment and commitment to the OpEx principles, combined with Li's personal dedication, is a great example of a valued partnership with the Whirlpool Corporation," stated Ken Kleinhample, Vice-President of Global Quality at Whirlpool Corporation. "We know that achieving perfect quality starts with knowing our customer's requirements and it cannot be achieved without your supplier partners. OpEx is the woven fabric of our company's DNA and now of Mar-Bal's as well," further stated Kleinhample.

The OpEx program is more than just tools. The main purpose is the investment in the development of people skills and thus benefit to Mar-Bal's customers. Mar-Bal will now begin the process of training their colleagues to utilize the philosophies and methods of OpEx. In the effort of continuous process improvement and gaining more efficiency through knowledge building, OpEx provides for a common language which is important for Global companies like Whirlpool and Mar-Bal to position within their entire manufacturing and business structures. The main benefit is to provide top quality products needed for Mar-Bal and their customers to grow.

"Our OpEx endeavor at Mar-Bal began over 8 years ago," stated Steven Balogh, Vice-President Materials Engineering and Purchasing for Mar-Bal. "After my first OpEx session, I was convinced that this was the direction we needed to go as a company." After that initial class, two materials engineers and a quality manager from Mar-Bal completed the Black Belt training. After Black Belt training, Li Bradshaw furthered her knowledge and became a Certified Black Belt. Based on her mastery of the tools and techniques she was invited by Whirlpool to attend their two year Master Black Belt program. "For Li to achieve Master Black Belt is an outstanding evolution for Mar-Bal and great credit to our collaboration with our key partner Whirlpool," further stated Balogh. "We look forward to deploying this culture into the entire Mar-Bal organization attacking complex problems with a customer focus mindset, critical thinking and complete toolbox of technical and analytical resources."



About Whirlpool Corporation

Whirlpool Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances, with annual sales of approximately \$17 billion in 2010, 71,000 employees, and 67 manufacturing and technology research centers around the world. The company markets *Whirlpool, Maytag, KitchenAid, Jenn-Air, Amana, Brastemp, Consul, Bauknecht* and other major brand names to consumers in nearly every country around the world. Additional information about the company can be found at <http://www.whirlpoolcorp.com>.

About Mar-Bal, Inc.

Mar-Bal, Inc., headquartered in Chagrin Falls, OH, is a compounder and molder of Thermoset composite products. Since 1970, Mar-Bal has engineered and manufactured quality, customized materials and parts while delivering unmatched client cost-effectiveness through superior customer service and commitment to the total value. Mar-Bal serves the appliance, electrical and industrial marketplaces from their four facilities in North America. Mar-Bal, an ISO 9001:2008 Registered Company, continues to develop innovative products and has a portfolio of brands and proprietary products. www.mar-bal.com.

Media Contact:

Mar-Bal, Inc.

Ron Poff, Marketing Manager

PH: 440-539-6595 Email: ron.poff@mar-bal.com

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