



# NATIONAL MANUFACTURER/ DISTRIBUTOR

A Books@Work Case Study

Books@Work brings professors into the workplace to build critical thinking and lifelong learning through the discussion of great literature.

## The Program

A national manufacturer/distributor has hosted Books@Work in a Northeast Ohio facility for nearly 18 months. The Director of Operations and shipping floor employees meet weekly with professors to discuss their readings and debate human themes. The result? **Deeper collaboration** across teams, **increased leadership skills** and **improved employee engagement** - in short, a meaningful shift in the culture of the organization.

## Supervisor Reflections on the Value of Books@Work

"Books@Work has **opened my eyes to what people are capable of**. It's a unique opportunity to see individual thought processes firsthand. In fact, I promoted an employee based, in part, on what I saw in Books@Work."

"The program has given this team an opportunity to **hone their critical thinking skills** and gain a **better understanding of how to interact with leadership**."

"Books@Work participants are **taking more initiative**. The participants **stepped up** when their shift had a supervisor vacancy. They **ask more strategic questions** and are **more comfortable answering questions** from executives who tour the facility."

"The participating shift had **higher employee engagement scores** on the Company's last regular survey. I attribute this to Books@Work."

## Participant Reflections on the Books@Work Experience

"What it does is **bring people together. I've seen the culture change**."

"Books@Work [has] **broadened me**. It is like with food. If you have never tasted it you don't know. Then when you get into it you are like, 'oh this is good'. It opened me up to that [new kind of experience]."

"I used it as **an opportunity to improve my English**."

"We are **interacting with one another, we are learning something that we didn't know**. Something we didn't know about a particular race or religion and just doing something different period."

"[I made] **my mom and my daughter read [Henrietta Lacks] too. We talk about the book and the story all the time**."

"I was never a big book reader. **I am proud of the nice selection of books on my book shelf that I have read**."

## Selected Seminar Readings

Willa Cather, *My Antonia*

Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

Ernest Hemingway, *Collected Short Stories*

Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*

## The Participants

- The majority work in the outbound shift, and they were joined by supervisors
- They range in educational level, with many holding only a high school diploma.
- One reported that Books@Work provided the first book he had ever owned.

## Demographic Information

Percent, n=12

### Gender

Male 75

Female 25

### Age Ranges

Age 30-39 60

Age 40-49 35

Age 50-59 5

### Race

White 60

African-American 35

Hispanic 5

That Can Be Me, Inc.

www.booksatwork.org