



## **U.S. Rubber Bounce Back! story: Brian Moreno**

Despite being “completely blindsided,” by his felony charge in 2015, Brian Moreno was determined to make the most of a bad situation. Today he’s thriving in his position as second shift mold line leader at U.S. Rubber, where his leadership skills and eagerness to learn are helping him build a new future.

After his cousin, a close friend and confidant, died, Brian was in a dark place. For years, partying helped him cope with the loss. Eventually, he pulled himself out of his depression and began to move on. He started working two jobs, one of which offered union benefits and the promise of a promotion. Brian thought he’d left his carousing days behind him, but “when I finally found myself again and got myself situated,” he says, “that’s when the decisions of my partying days caught up to me.”

Although he never spent time in prison, the felony derailed Brian’s life and his budding career, landing him three and a half years of probation and 280 hours of court-mandated community service. Job hunting proved difficult. While one of Brian’s temporary employers helped him schedule around court dates and community service, he spent a long time looking for full-time work. Then in June 2020, a cousin introduced him to a U.S. Rubber employee who told him the company was hiring. Brian says, “He definitely thought I was joking when I told him I’d be in the next day, but he told me where to be at what time, and I showed up as promised. I was hired within the week through [Bounce Back!](#)”

Brian started as a table operator cutting lengths of rolled flooring to fill orders. His supervisors were quickly impressed by his consistency and willingness to work. “They knew they could rely on me to do a good job, and if overtime became available, I was on it,” he says. “Now I’m one of the few people they trust to shut the business down on a Saturday, and I’ve only been here two years. Earning that trust means a lot to me.” Now, as the second shift mold line leader, Brian is proud to man the helm of the first step in the company’s production line.

Brian challenges himself to finish his entire workload in time to help others with theirs. And he relishes the opportunity to learn and makes the most of every chance to jump on a new machine. He’s also honing his newfound leadership skills. “My ability to work well with other people surprised me a little,” he says. “Most of the jobs I’ve had in the past have been more about individual effort than team collaboration. This is a welcome change. As the lead guy on the mold line, I’ve gotten good at managing tough situations and keeping my team motivated despite daily mood changes.”

Brian hopes the next step in his career will take him from the shop floor to the main office. “I want to learn everything there is to know about what happens on the floor so I can bring that knowledge to the top,” he says. “There’s a gap between the two departments in any workplace but I’d like to do what I can to close it.”

Today, Brian is grateful for the opportunity he has, and for the people who stood by him while he was struggling. “My wife, parents, sister, close extended family and best friends have been there for me through everything,” he says. “It’s been nothing but love, especially from my parents, and it makes me proud to see them so happy about my success.”

To others struggling through similar hardships, Brian says, “I heard a quote the other day and it really resonated with me. It goes: ‘When you feel everything’s falling down around you and you feel buried, you’re not really buried; you’ve just been planted. It might seem like there’s no hope, but there are always cracks in the earth for you to grow through.’”