

*"With CMTC's assistance, we were able to improve our workflow and better manage demand. As a result, our company experienced increased sales, 6 new jobs, and cost savings."*  
Pockets Alvarez, CEO

### TRANSFORMATION LEADS TO MORE JOBS

**ABOUT.** Summertree is a minority-owned business that specializes in creating finely crafted baby and children's furniture from select hardwoods. The company's products are high-end; each piece is individually made using "old world wood working techniques," and then personalized with custom hand-rubbed finishes. Summertree's products include desks, chairs, beds, dressers, bookcases, and cribs, and many of its clients are celebrities. Located in Riverside, California, Summertree distributes products to specialty stores and retailers nationwide. The company has around 20 employees and a flagship retail store in Fashion Island, Newport Beach, California.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Summertree was experiencing an increased interest in its products, but was having difficulty meeting all of its orders. The company did not have organized processes or a strong infrastructure in place, and long lead times were causing late shipments at a rate of 90 percent. All departments cited workflow issues, and disruptions and backups were leading to wasted materials and higher production costs. While customers loved the products, Summertree was at risk of losing key clients. The company had to manage current demand before it could increase sales from new orders.

**MEP'S ROLE.** Summertree connected with California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTC), a NIST MEP affiliate. CMTC recommended a six-month Lean Transformation Program for the company, beginning with a series of trainings on continuous improvement. CMTC led Summertree through a Value Stream Mapping exercise to create a blueprint for the company's Lean transformation and prioritize the activities required to improve the workflow. Next, Summertree participated in a Kaizen improvement event to prioritize smaller and incremental improvements. Employees reorganized the shop floor to create a more sensible flow for production and minimize time spent traveling to opposite ends of the facility. The new layout enables team members to identify any issues or backups in production earlier in the process. Summertree implemented a standardized documentation process to track orders and improve communication between team members, and established key performance indicators to help managers evaluate and sustain the success of the changes on an ongoing basis.

The Lean Transformation reduced the Summertree's lead times and increased on-time deliveries, and the company is retaining sales and jobs. With savings from improved operations, Summertree is investing in other areas of the business, such as IT and new equipment. The company is accepting more orders and hiring new employees.



### RESULTS



Increased sales by **\$400,000**



Cost saving of **\$250,000**



Created **6** and retained **12**



Capital investments of **\$115,000**

### NEXT STEPS



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