

ENTERPRISE WIDE TRAINING ACHIEVES POSITIVE IMPACTS

ABOUT ARTHUR G RUSSELL CO INC. The Arthur G. Russell Co., Inc. (AGR) located in Bristol, Connecticut, began as an engineering and research and development firm and has evolved into a world renowned designer and builder of custom assembly machinery. This company employs more than 140 employees and has developed proprietary automation components, cam-driven pick and place units, grippers, escapements and rotary and linear actuators. AGR's ability to feed and handle parts at high speeds has led to specialization in the ultra, high-volume medical device and consumer products industries.

THE CHALLENGE. In order to compete more effectively, AGR sought to reap the benefits of creating a culture of Continuous Improvement within its manufacturing organization. Recognizing that this transformation into an innovative, lean-thinking entity, would require enterprise-wide engagement, AGR's leadership team partnered with CONNSTEP, Inc. (NIST MEP affiliate) to provide the training, tools and framework necessary in driving the process from within. Additionally, AGR's strategic objective was to improve overall customer satisfaction, which included a special focus on product lead time reduction and compliance with customer commitment dates. They also cited the need to reduce inventory and standardize employee performance on any given job.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. CONNSTEP established an ongoing transformative relationship with AG Russell, educated the company's leadership via the Continuous Improvement Champion Certification course and, subsequently, developed roll-out and sustainable continuous improvement plans for total organization involvement and workforce development. Targeted areas during the 5S rollout were projects focused on reorganizing AGR's machine shop based on a new floor plan, removal and disposal of unused equipment and the implementation of an ongoing GROW (Get Rid of Waste) program. Additionally, weekly Lean-themed team collaboration sessions were introduced, engineering information carts were assembled and placed throughout the facility floor to empower employees to access information on their own which led to reductions in wait times and impacts to production schedules. These efforts have contributed to increased employee engagement and a new Lean culture throughout AGR. Improving information flow throughout the organization is currently on the forefront of the company's focus including a project focused on connecting software systems to enhance communication among departments.

"Partnering with CONNSTEP has been extremely beneficial to AG Russell. From the initial leadership education to the rollout to our entire organization, we have seen amazing gains in our total organization's engagement, goal attaining and results."

-Jason Ensminger, Continuous Improvement and Plant Manager

RESULTS



Reduced lead times 20%-25%



Increased sales of \$7M



Retained sales of \$8M



10 jobs retained and 6 new jobs



Cost savings of \$1.4M

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