

FAMILY-OWNED FOREST MANAGEMENT AND WOOD PRODUCTS COMPANY BUILDS SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

ABOUT ZENA FOREST PRODUCTS. Zena Forest Products is a family-owned business located in the Eola Hills of the Willamette Valley. The Deumling family has managed the forest since 1987 and the sawmill since 2008. The Deumlings operate both aspects of the business with a strong focus on maintaining a healthy and diverse ecosystem in their forest. Zena is a mixed hardwood and conifer forest, containing several endangered habitats including Oak Savannah and Oak Woodland. The parcel is FSC certified forestland and spans 1,300 acres. Zena Forest Products produces durable solid hardwood flooring (the longest lasting on the market), as well as lumber for cabinet and furniture making.

THE CHALLENGE. Zena Forest Products recognized the value of their flooring product in the marketplace and asked OMEP to help them develop their manufacturing system capability to enable the broader availability of the offering. They are also expanding their product offerings to reach a broader customer base and are looking to improve the conversion of waste materials as a second product category. For help, they turned to OMEP, the Oregon MEP Center and part of the MEP National Network™.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Working with an OMEP consultant, Zena Forest Products built a large and detailed value stream map that captured their manufacturing processes, product lines, inputs and production outputs. After mapping out processes and product lines, Ben and Sarah implemented significant changes in their manufacturing process. With an emphasis on lean philosophy and fundamentals, they identified areas for optimization in the site layout, and built a plan for continuous improvement, particularly as it relates to capacity. Building the batching process out to meet the kiln space requirements has allowed Zena to realize capacity gains, which reduces downtime and increases first time quality.

Through proper planning capacity calculations, they have worked with OMEP to re-arrange the cutting and milling operations to be more efficient by making use of all waste materials. Sawdust is shipped to local mushroom growers. Scrap wood is used to fuel the on-site kilns. Through training and coaching, Zena is now more effective, with its mission tied directly to its operations. They continue to improve operations and maintain a sustainable forest practice that allows them to deliver superior quality of product.

"I came to OMEP with a list of tangible physical equipment that I thought I had to put money towards to increase production. Instead, we've worked on implementing lean philosophy to increase capacity through our processes and improve the capability of our employees. It has completely changed my perspective."

-Ben Deumling, Owner

RESULTS



\$60,000 in cost savings due to capacity improvements



1 job created, all others retained



\$500,000 in new and retained sales

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