

## TPM PROJECT REDUCES MAINTENANCE DOWNTIME

**ABOUT ZENDEX TOOL.** Zendex Tool Corp. is a family-owned and operated manufacturer in Danbury, Connecticut, launched in 1984 by its founder and president Al Cocco. Needing a way to quickly and efficiently move disabled cars into his auto body shop and paint booth, Mr. Cocco created his original invention, the GoJak® Self-Loading Wheel Dolly. Five additional product lines were subsequently developed for the company. Zendex Tool prides itself on designing and manufacturing some of the most durable and functional products on the market with a very high percentage of materials and components sourced domestically.

**THE CHALLENGE.** Zendex carefully sustains the quality and extremely tight tolerances of each and every product built by their highly skilled workforce. However, they were faced with increasing disruption to workflow productivity and inventory inconsistencies impacting operational and financial performance.

The company was looking to improve their processes and material flow on the shop floor to address their production and inventory issues. The leadership of Zendex Tool decided to engage the services of CONNSTEP, Connecticut's MEP center and part of the MEP National Network™, who would introduce the benefits of adopting lean manufacturing principles and processes.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Leveraging lean manufacturing tools and techniques, CONNSTEP assisted Zendex in identifying areas of opportunity, and then recommending and implementing process improvements in its business. Using Value Stream Mapping, their present state was documented mapping out the entire production process. This resulted in restructuring the shop floor into production cells, having material right where it's needed. In addition to the cell design addressing disrupted flow, Kanban cards provide a visual benefit to the process, with quantity and date made helping to determine an optimal batch size and ensuring high turnover of WIP inventory. Understanding standard batch size enables employees to know what to make and in what order to get the most orders out in the quickest amount of time. Vendor Managed Inventory at point of use became instrumental for high turnover items.

The lean manufacturing introduction and Kaizen event that CONNSTEP conducted with Zendex Tool resulted in numerous process improvements and subsequent productivity gains. Addressing their inventory discrepancies has eliminated inaccuracies that were taking valuable time away from shipping product.

Implementing 5S in the shipping and receiving department improved the visual status of the workflow, realizing an increase in shipping productivity of 50%. Zendex has also decreased the time managing inventory from 8 hours per week to 3.5 hours per week for an improvement of 56%.

**"Working with CONNSTEP and gaining valuable exposure to lean manufacturing principles and continuous improvement was absolutely transformative for our company. We needed to make changes and with their guidance we are in a much better competitive position for the future."**

-Dean Cocco, Vice President of Operations

## RESULTS



2 jobs created or retained



\$200,000 in cost savings



\$155,000 in new products

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