



Helping Connecticut Manufacturers

**GROW  
IMPROVE  
SUCCEED**

*At CONNSTEP, we provide business consulting services that focus on identifying opportunities for growth, improving productivity, and ensuring our clients remain competitive in evolving market conditions.*



**OUR KEY SERVICES INCLUDE:**



## Improve Quality

Quality is the ability of your products or services to conform to your customers' expectations and requirements. Product and service quality is the primary way your organization stays competitive in the marketplace.



## Reduce Lead Time

Lead time is the total time it takes to complete a series of tasks within a process. An example is the time it takes to transform raw materials into finished goods. By reducing lead time, your organization can quickly respond to changes in customer demand while improving your return on investment (ROI).



## Eliminate Waste

Waste is any activity that takes up time, resources or space but does not add value to a product or service. By eliminating unnecessary activities, your organization can deliver higher quality products and services the first time and every time.



## Reduce Total Costs

Total costs are the direct and indirect costs associated with production of a product or service. When your organization eliminates waste and reduces lead times, you can continually balance the prices of products and services as well as operating costs to gain market share and profits.



## Increase Your Competitive Edge

Continuous improvement, also known as Lean and process improvement, emphasizes the prevention and elimination of waste in your organization's operations from the office to the shop floor. Waste is defined as any extra time, labor or material spent producing a product or service that doesn't add value to it.

Continuous improvement methods that remove waste ultimately streamline and optimize key processes in your business. This can lead to reduced costs, shortened lead times, and improved deliveries with the desired outcome of satisfied customers.

Eliminating waste and streamlining production can help:

- grow your business
- improve your profits
- increase your company's valuation



Bristol-based **The Arthur G. Russell Company**, a world renowned designer and builder of custom assembly machinery, partnered with CONNSTEP to create a Continuous Improvement culture using Lean throughout their entire company. They focused on product lead time reduction, compliance with customer commitment dates, inventory reduction and standardizing employee performances on any given job.

**Results** for The Arthur G. Russell Company:



Retained Sales

**\$8M**



Increased Sales

**\$7M**



Cost & Investment Savings

**\$1.4M**



Increased Investments

**\$1.2M**

Continuous Improvement Tools

**5S**

Collaboration to create an infrastructure for sustaining your efforts for Workplace Organization, with custom audits, hands-on implementation and mentoring support.

**Cell Design**

Utilizing the 5-step Cell Design methodology, CONNSTEP will help you produce the most product in the least amount of time by efficiently linking manual and machine operations to maximize value-added content while minimizing waste.

**Change Management**

We diagnose your work environment for areas of change and identify barriers to implement changes. We capitalize on company strengths to make those changes and provide a custom solution to ensure your change efforts are successful. We not only address business-related practices but also the culture and leadership style of the company to keep resistance low and accountability high.

**Kaizen**

Kaizen events are intensive, focused efforts to improve a process quickly by eliminating waste wherever possible.

**Kanban/Pull**

Kanban controls the flow of production by replacing materials at the same rate they are consumed based on actual demand. CONNSTEP guides you on determining how to manage demand, locate and size supermarkets, select pull signals and implement the system.

**Lean Office**

Office wastes can be found in excess paperwork, redundant approvals, inefficient work area layouts, and complex tracking systems, Applying Lean principles and continuous improvement techniques to your administrative processes can improve information flow and office productivity. Initiatives that help protect your profits, keep you competitive and your customers satisfied.

**Plant Layout**

Plant Layout involves helping you maximize workspaces, ensuring maximum value is derived from these production areas.

**Setup Reduction**

CONNSTEP leads your team through documenting and analyzing your current changeover process and identify waste. By completing this critical review, the results will yield an action plan to reduce or eliminate waste and streamline your process.

**Supply Chain Development**

CONNSTEP works with you and your Supply Chain to target strategic, tactical and operational issues within the control and oversight of materials, information and finances as product flows through the various organizations.

**Total Productive Maintenance (TPM)**

CONNSTEP's Certified Maintenance Professionals offer a hands-on practical approach to implementing TPM, a process that maximizes the productivity of equipment for its entire lifetime and provides immediate and sustainable results.

**Training Within Industry (TWI)**

TWI uses methodologies that develop essential skills for supervisors and team leaders. TWI Job Relations teaches skills needed to avoid or resolve "people-centric" problems. TWI Job Instruction teaches the process of the "one best way" to do a job and is the foundation for standardized work.

**Value Stream Mapping**

Create a visual map of your current process, documenting both information and material flow to highlight areas of excess, shortages, delays and communication issues. This current state map becomes the foundation towards building a future state, with less waste and improvement metrics.

**Lean Healthcare**

Health reform is driving change in the delivery of healthcare. In response to this transformation, organizations must focus on strategies that simultaneously increase revenue and reduce costs. CONNSTEP deploys a comprehensive management approach that engages all stakeholders, eliminates roadblocks and allows healthcare systems to improve the quality of patient care by reducing errors and waste.

Why Continuous Improvement?



PROFITABILITY



CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS



COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS



EMPOWER EMPLOYEES



DATA-BASED DECISIONS

*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,  
Executive Vice President,  
The Arthur G. Russell Co., Inc., Bristol, CT



Compliance measures, quality management, and industry certifications are increasingly important in today's competitive business climate. In order to attract new customers and retain existing ones, manufacturers are being mandated to:

- ensure cybersecurity compliance
- meet stringent quality requirements
- become certified in specific standards

When you make the business decision to become registered to a quality standard or achieve compliance in cybersecurity, CONNSTEP works with you every step of the way. Our strategic efforts help you create sustainable competitive advantages in the marketplace.

More specifically, our quality management specialists can perform your strategic Internal Quality Auditing with a program customized to your direct requirements. We'll even train your internal quality auditors to maintain your quality registration.

CONNSTEP can help you meet your customers' requirements and align them with the rest of your business processes so you can compete more effectively.



“ *When the CONNSTEP team came in to help us prepare for the registration, they understood the whole picture. They understood what the end result of this system was supposed to be. It was going to help our efficiency, minimize risk, and help with employee safety, now and in the future.* ”

– Wayne Rydzy, President, Pauway Corporation

#### Cybersecurity

We offer a four-step cybersecurity program for DoD, GSA, and NASA contractors in which we gauge your current situation and subsequently tailor a plan specifically for your internal capabilities, budget, and time sensitivity.

#### Internal Quality Audits

Focus on running your business while qualified consultants perform a strategic internal quality audit.

#### Quality Certification

Make the business decision to become registered to a quality standard that will help you attract new customers, retain existing customers and compete in the global market.

#### Quality Mentoring

Our team of experienced quality management instructors will design a course based on your company needs. Potential topics, but not limited to, are:

- Workplace Skills
- Print Reading & Measurement for Manufacturing
- Quality Management Systems & Basic Audit Principles
- Problem Solving using Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA), A3, and Root Cause Analysis (RCA)
- Production Parts Approval Process (PPAP)
- Failure Mode Effects Analysis (FMEA)

**Our QMS Specialists can assist with registration in these quality standards:**

**General Quality Standard**  
ISO 9001:2015 Certification

**Aerospace Standard**  
AS 9100D, AS 9110, AS 9120 Certification

**National Aerospace & Defense Contractors Accreditation Program**  
NADCAP Certification

**Automotive Standard**  
IATF 16949 Certification

**Energy Management System Standard**  
ISO 50001 Certification

**United States Military Standard**  
Mil-STDs Certification

**Medical Device Standard**  
ISO 13485, FDA CFR Title 21 Part 820 Certification

**Laboratory Standard**  
ISO 17025 Certification

**Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Standard**  
ISO 14001 Certification

**Occupational Health and Safety Standard**  
OHSAS 18001 Certification





You're busy running your business, and working on marketing and business development doesn't always get enough attention. We understand, because we work with companies like yours across Connecticut that have the same challenge.

That's why we developed a suite of business development services tailored to the needs of small to mid-sized companies to:

- grow sales
- increase your customer base
- identify new market opportunities
- get the best return on your marketing investment

In addition to offering strategic counsel to grow your business, you receive tactical assistance to reinforce your own internal resource capabilities.



“ *Based on our improved efficiencies and lead time reduction, we were able to secure more business. We also saw our win ratio increase for quoting new business with new customers. We feel this enabled us to set ourselves apart from our competition.* ”

– James Foss, Inside Sales Manager, Accutron, Inc.

### Growth Services

#### Benchmarking/Assessments

Discover your true areas of vulnerability, prioritize next actions and make the best use of limited resources.

#### Business Development

Our business development service is perfect for companies lacking dedicated resources to handle market research, make calls, and pursue follow-up activities.

#### Business Growth Program

We establish a framework to bolster your business sales and revenue by assessing barriers to your company's growth, providing training and personalized guidance to eliminate those barriers.

#### Market Research

Get the insights you need to develop new products and services, and base your strategy on reliable data for realistic growth projections.

#### New Product Development

Executing a well-defined, efficient process for developing new products that meet or exceed customer expectations will help improve productivity, reduce lead times and increase margins/profitability.

#### Strategic Marketing

Make the best use of your time, energy, people, and budget by focusing on the marketing priorities most beneficial to your business.

#### Strategic Planning

We work with you to develop a solid strategic plan with a clear set of goals for you and your leadership team. You'll know where to focus your efforts as well what not to focus on, in order to reach your sales, marketing and organizational growth goals.

#### Technology Acceleration

Enables small-to-medium sized manufacturers to get their new technologies to the right markets as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

#### Technology-Driven Market Intelligence (TDMI)

Transform proposed new technologies into successful new market entrants by using market intelligence to reveal the benefits and impact of technology-based assets.

#### Technology Scouting

Make your new product ideas become a reality. We can help you define, discover, and deploy the technology you need to bring new products to market.

#### Website Optimization & SEO

Our website development and digital marketing services can help increase your website traffic, generate more qualified leads, and improve conversion rates.

**Bridgeport-based Schwerdtle Stamp Co.**, manufacturer of tools, dies and fixtures, partnered with CONNSTEP to build a strategic plan around the use of technology for customized gripper fingers for use by robots in automated assembly operations. The company focused on the tooling used in the plastics industry for decorating and assembly including tools for hot stamping, heat sealing, and thermal-forming. By targeting a new market – silicone molding bonded to aluminum – and improving operations, Schwerdtle has grown its customer base, reduced costs, created and retained jobs, increased sales and invested in ongoing training of their highly-skilled engineers, CNC programmers and machinists.

**Results** for Schwerdtle Stamp Co.:



Jobs Created & Retained

20



Increased Sales

\$400K



Cost & Investment Savings

\$300K



Increased Investments

\$590K



*In my opinion, small manufacturers are missing a real understanding of the crucial need for a new approach to business development that includes technology scanning and management of technology in addition to the more typical business practices of strategic planning, SWOT analyses and sales and marketing activities. The extensive industry experience that CONNSTEP's consultants possess, helps them offer real value to manufacturers that goes far beyond training.*



Katherine Saint,  
President, Schwerdtle Stamp Co., Bridgeport, CT

**Continuous Improvement Champion Certification (CICC)**

This course helps participants develop the skills necessary to implement Lean principles and practices and includes a mentored Lean project designed to produce ongoing ROI results.

**Lean for Hospital Managers**

Improve the delivery of healthcare by understanding specific benefits that accrue when the people who actually do the work look at the details of processes and fix problems where the work is done.

**Lean Office**

Streamline your office processes and procedures by applying efficient methodologies to your office and administrative environment that improve the flow of information while eliminating wasteful steps.

**Quality Essentials Program (QEP)**

The QEP addresses the growing need to enhance the knowledge of quality principles among skilled manufacturing workers. Each workshop is held once a week over a consecutive five-week period.

**Training Within Industry (TWI)**

A timeless and practical tool, especially in the mass production setting, TWI helps to facilitate greater speed to market and remove waste associated with training time.



Seasoned experts with vast practical experience in industries ranging from manufacturing to healthcare teach your team in ways that are practical, efficient, and yield lasting results. Your newly trained staff return to your company with the knowledge and experience to teach others, such as the principles of Lean thinking and continuous improvement initiatives. Spreading the learning to their team helps your organization achieve progress and sustain meaningful advancements.

We can deliver training on-site at your facility or through our many seminars and courses.



**Chester-based AeroCision**, a quality aerospace machining company, participated in CONNSTEP's proprietary Continuous Improvement Champion Certification (CICC) program to provide training that allows their team to work together systematically towards their Lean enterprise goals. The value stream mapping tool was an instrumental part of helping with their growth strategy. In mapping out its value stream, AeroCision brainstormed with teams from every department on ways to improve inspection time and load leveling its production process.

#### Results for AeroCision:



*Attending CONNSTEP's CICC program inspired me to think outside the box in terms of different methods for time saving and to make more meaningful ROI suggestions for AeroCision's capital investments. The Lean training I received from CONNSTEP really opened AeroCision's eyes to a new, cost effective, high quality step up the chain.*



Sean Morrissey,  
Production Manager, AeroCision, Chester, CT

## Value Delivered to CONNSTEP Clients



*Independent survey results as reported by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) for FY 2019 and FY 2020*



CONNSTEP's multidisciplinary team of experts use a holistic approach that provides advanced, technical solutions to generate bottom-line improvements for your business and produce innovative, results-driven top line growth for enterprise-wide impact.

Schedule a no-risk, no-cost discovery session with us today



CONNSTEP, Inc. is a consulting firm helping Connecticut small and medium-sized manufacturers and other businesses reach their goals by strengthening their strategic, technical, and operational expertise, thereby supporting the growth of Connecticut's economy.

CONNSTEP is the official representative of the MEP National Network™ and NIST MEP in Connecticut.