

# InCord CICC Project Nets Shorter Lead Time for Key Product Line



## Background

InCord is North America's largest custom netting fabricator, serving customers worldwide with the highest quality rope and nets since 1995. InCord's mission is to provide the best custom safety netting in the industry which they fulfill everyday with ISO 9001:2015 quality certified fabrication and industry leading turnaround time.

The company and its employees consider their customers to be partners, delivering the highest quality safety solutions to meet all project requirements. InCord provides custom netting for a variety of industries including construction, material handling, amusement parks, sports facilities, entertainment venues, and more.

## Lean Continuous Improvement Training

In order to further the Lean manufacturing skills of its workforce, InCord management chose Team Manager Alyssa Schmidt to attend CONNSTEP's Continuous Improvement Champion Certification (CICC) training program.

The CICC course provides comprehensive exposure to the principles and practices needed to develop and sustain a Lean Enterprise. Participants in the program receive immediate reinforcement of the classroom training by applying what they've learned to a real-life project within their organization.

The in-house project selected by Schmidt as part of her CICC training involved improving the production process of a key product line to reduce lead time which would benefit InCord and increase customer satisfaction.

## Results for InCord:

- Lead Time Reduction by 97%
- Back Order Reduction by 100%
- Inventory Reduction
- Setup Time Reduction
- Distance Traveled Reduction



***"I learned a lot at CONNSTEP's CICC program and took a lot back to InCord. It was time well spent. Most importantly, our staff saw the results of this project and were pleasantly surprised at what they had accomplished. Continuous improvement principles and practices are now ingrained in our culture here. And the results speak for themselves."***

– Alyssa Schmidt  
Team Manager  
InCord, Colchester CT



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## A Challenge Affecting the Business

The CICC project that Schmidt initiated focused on InCord's Construction Division and their Personnel Safety Nets market. Production was having a difficult time meeting specific ship dates on reorder points for the Make to Stock Personnel Safety Nets.

This was having a negative effect on sales and customer demands of InCord's Perimeter Systems, which in the construction business help shield damage from falling debris, prevent injuries and provide protection from liability.

It also resulted in the constant need to back order about 45% of the time which compromised InCord's inventory management, affecting the production of other products fabricated by the company.

## Being a Change Agent

It was clear to Schmidt that they needed to rebuild their production process. Nets were not properly in place and were not marked. Demand was increasing yet every minute of capacity was being used.

A current state value stream map was drafted and analyzed with an eye towards structuring and designing a future state for the production process. Goals were established which included reducing total production lead time per order from 111 days to 34 days and reducing the number of back orders from 45% to zero. Project risks were identified, such as smaller batch sizes preventing the production team from meeting a specific customer demand, with mitigation efforts put in place.

Observations for achieving goals included:

- Minimize inventory on hand for a more visual cycle count
- Combine processes for greater efficiency
- Produce smaller batch sizes to close out in a 1-2 day lead time vs. large batch sizes closed out in 18 day lead time
- Reduce travel by implementing 5S and Cellular Manufacturing with a new warehouse layout

## Netting Solutions for Better Results

Given the fragmentation of travel that took place between the production silo's, the InCord team proceeded to combine processes and reconfigure the layout for fabricating the safety nets. They went from placing the nets horizontally to hanging them vertically, doubling the amount of product in the same square footage space. There were visual management cues for continuous flow and standardized training for the staff.

Reduction has been a key element in this project. There's been reduction in inventory, reduction in set up time, and reduction in distance traveled for quicker production. The reduction goal for lead time was met, going from 111 days to 34 days with further efficiencies eventually bringing lead time down to 3-5 days due to added capacity and more available work time.



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