

# Lean Training Streamlines Operations for Home Bathroom Remodeling Manufacturer



## Background

Syn-Mar Products, Inc. is a family-owned and operated business based in Ellington, Connecticut. Syn-Mar specializes in manufacturing high-end, grout-free bathroom shower systems as well as one-piece vanity tops, which are sold through a distributor network. Syn-Mar has been marketing its products throughout New England for nearly five decades and has recently expanded its sales territory to include New York and New Jersey.

The Hill family founded the company in 1977. The current owner, Tim Hill, assumed ownership of the company from his parents in the mid-1990s and his son, Derek, is the company's Sales Manager. Syn-Mar's workforce consists of 22 employees working out of its 15,000-square-foot facility.

## Challenge

Facing the potential of spending between \$500,000 and \$1 million to add onto their existing facility, Syn-Mar's leadership sought alternative options to grow their business while avoiding the prohibitive cost of building an addition.

They recognized the need to minimize waste on the shop floor and improve their material and information flow to enhance productivity.

Understanding that continuous improvement can lead to a dramatic change in operational effectiveness, Syn-Mar's leadership reached out to CONNSTEP, the Connecticut Manufacturing Extension Partnership center, to help achieve greater success for their company.

## Solution

Leveraging CONNSTEP's industry experience and

## Results for Syn-Mar Products, Inc.:

As a result of the successful Lean 101 Training session, Syn-Mar was able to make space and workflow efficiency adjustments, invested in workplace practices and employee skills, and re-worked existing machinery, resulting in the following metrics:

- **Cost savings: \$500,000**
- **New investments: \$5,000**
- **Increased investment: \$5,000**



*"Working with CONNSTEP has been instrumental with starting the conversation around lean with our entire team and getting everyone on board with maximizing efficiencies and constant improvement. It's forced us to look at all aspects of the business from accounting, production, customer service, and more to find the best possible way to provide the most for our customers as efficiently as possible. We were able to reimagine our space and avoid a \$1 million addition to our facility by working with what we already have and cleaning up wasted areas and wasteful procedures."*

Derek Hill  
Sales Manager,  
Syn-Mar Products, Inc.



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subject matter expertise, Business Development Advisor, Paul Aiello, recommended Syn-Mar's management provide their employees with Lean Principles and Practices awareness training.

Delivery Consultant, Matin Karbassioon, CONNSTEP's Continuous Improvement Champion Certification Program leader, facilitated the full-day training program to help Syn-Mar achieve its goals of future growth potential, cost reduction throughout the organization, and improvement of operational effectiveness.

To maximize the benefits of Lean 101, Syn-Mar's workforce was trained on a wide range of topics, including Definition of Lean, Evolution of Manufacturing, Traditional vs. Lean Manufacturing, Lean Terminology & Techniques, Application of Lean Tools, Teamwork, and Impact of Lean Manufacturing.

## Results

In addition to serving as a team-building exercise, the Lean Principles and Practices interactive workshop focused on office and factory processes where trainees applied Lean techniques such as standardized work, visual management, batch-size reduction, and pull systems to improve the performance of a simulated manufacturing operation.

Syn-Mar's workforce adopted the 5S methodology to reorganize their shop floor, eliminating clutter, improving cleanliness, and enhancing safety. This

transformation minimized waste and improved productivity.

Syn-Mar streamlined their workflow, reimagined their workspace, and re-configured existing machinery to eliminate the need for a costly facility expansion and the purchase of new product molds.



CONNSTEP, Inc. is a consulting firm strategically helping companies in Connecticut to grow their businesses and improve operational methodologies, leading to increased profitability, improved efficiencies, and creating sustainable competitive advantages in the marketplace.