

Printing Company Drives Environmental Sustainability Through Efficiency

Background

Family-owned and operated since its 1949 founding by John F. Sommers, Allied Printing Services Inc. started in a small, 150-square-foot building in Manchester, Connecticut.

75 years later and carrying on a legacy of customer focus instilled by his father and grandfather, third-generation President and CEO John Sommers guides a team of over 400 employees at Allied's now 30-acre campus.

The Sommers family prides itself on treating employees and customers as family. Those customers span a wide range of industries, from education and pharmaceuticals to manufacturing, healthcare, travel & leisure, and automotive.

They believe 'no detail is too small' when it comes to their array of printing services including prepress, offset web and sheetfed printing, digital printing, finishing equipment, and fulfillment solutions.

The company's commitment to quality, environmental sustainability, client collaboration, and technological innovation drives its success.

Challenge

A leader in sustainable printing, Allied Printing is ISO 14001:2015 certified and recognized by People's Action for Clean Energy for its Going Green initiative. The company reduces its environmental impact and improves efficiency through eco-friendly practices, including extensive recycling, a large solar array, energy-efficient lighting, an on-site fuel cell that contributes to a near-zero carbon footprint, and the exclusive use of vegetable-and soy-based inks.



Results for Allied Printing Services, Inc.:

The following metrics resulted from Allied Printing working with CONNSTEP for their PRIME 1 project:

- **Cost savings: \$50,000**
- **Increased investments: \$12,500**
- **Jobs retained: 1**



"We had a great experience working with CONNSTEP. We chose them for their proven track record in helping businesses improve efficiency, and their expertise certainly delivered. Their work not only made us significantly more efficient and adaptable to change but also strengthened our team. Thanks to their support, we're now even more flexible in responding to our customers' needs."

Chris Gouveia
Senior Vice President/General Manager

Ben Fournier
Digital Print Manager



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To boost operational and financial performance and strengthen sustainability efforts, Allied's leadership sought assistance to address slow machine changeovers and downtime, print defects, and production inefficiencies in their digital printing department.

Solution

Allied's leadership contracted with CONNSTEP for this initiative, and a PRIME (Process Re-engineering for Increased Manufacturing Efficiency) Lean Manufacturing Event, funded through the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund and administered through Eversource Energy, was recommended for the company.

The PRIME project would assist Allied in identifying, recommending, and implementing workflow and efficiency improvements in its Xeikon digital printing area, which comprised roughly 22% of the department's energy consumption.

To reach a 20% goal of productivity gain by increasing the existing printing output of 1,824 linear feet per hour on its six digital web printing presses, CONNSTEP Continuous Improvement Consultant Carissa Roman was brought in to facilitate the project.

Carissa would work with Allied's leadership to identify a Lean project team, lead Lean training, conduct Value Stream Mapping to identify improvement opportunities, set goals for the Xeikon printing area, and establish implementation priorities.

Results

A 3.5-day CONNSTEP analysis of Allied's Xeikon printing area revealed opportunities for improvement including cross-shift communication and refined procedures for job changeovers.

A future state Value Stream Map was developed, leading to the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures for uniformity, including scheduling similar-color print jobs to eliminate cleaning downtime. More frequent preventative maintenance and reorganized changeover carts reduced changeover time by over 50%.

Visual aids improved job communication, cutting preproduction time and job bag errors while clarifying requirements. Centralized, controlled wire storage prevented contamination and print defects. 5S improvements such as removing extra supplies and decluttering, eliminated wasted time searching for supplies.

The successful PRIME project, an outcome of these efficiencies, boosted digital printing output by 21% (exceeding the 20% goal), increased sales, reduced waste and overtime with new, more efficient machines, and yielded measurable energy savings, further supporting Allied's sustainability efforts.



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.