

# Continuous Improvement Yields \$7M in Increased Sales and \$1.4M in Cost Savings



## Background

Founded in 1945, The Arthur G. Russell Co., Inc. (AGR) located in Bristol, Connecticut, began as an engineering and research and development firm and has evolved into a world-renowned designer and builder of custom assembly machinery. Privately-held, this company employs more than 140 employees and has developed proprietary automation components, cam-driven pick and place units, grippers, escapements and rotary and linear actuators. AGR's ability to feed and handle parts at high speeds has led to specialization in the ultra, high-volume medical device and consumer products industries. The company also focuses on a continued application of more sophisticated controls, servo systems, sensors and inspection equipment to meet increasing customer demands for higher speeds and unprecedented reliability.

## Situation

In order to compete more effectively, AGR sought to reap the benefits of creating a culture of Continuous Improvement within its manufacturing organization. Recognizing that this transformation into an innovative, lean-thinking entity, would require enterprise-wide engagement, AGR's leadership team partnered with CONNSTEP, Inc. to provide the training, tools and framework necessary in driving the process from within.

Additionally, AGR's strategic objective was to improve overall customer satisfaction, which included a special focus on product lead time reduction and compliance with customer commitment dates. They also cited the need to reduce inventory and standardize employee performance on any given job.

## Results for Arthur G. Russell Co.:

- Reduced lead times 20%-25%
- Increased sales – \$7M
- Retained sales – \$8M
- 6 new jobs created
- 10 jobs retained
- Cost savings – \$1.4M



*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  
Continuous Improvement and Plant Manager  
The Arthur G. Russell Co., Inc., Bristol, CT



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## Solution

CONNSTEP established an ongoing transformative relationship with AGR, educated the company's leadership via the Continuous Improvement Champion Certification course and, subsequently, developed roll-out and sustainable continuous improvement plans for total organization involvement and workforce development.

This was achieved by CONNSTEP through the execution of the following services:

- Workforce (TWI)
- Growth
- Continuous Improvement

Specific to these services, CONNSTEP-based projects included:

- 5S
- Super State Map, Vision Statement and Strategy Map
- Current and Future State Value Stream Maps
- Draft Deployment Plan including prioritized Kaizen events
- Training and Communication Plans
- Lean Awareness Training Workshops
- Team based Process Improvements (Kaizen) with outputs that include metrics, a Kaizen Newspaper and a management Report-Out
- Continuous Improvement Champions Certificate course
- Training Within Industry (TWI) workshop

Targeted areas during the 5S rollout were projects focused on reorganizing AGR's machine shop based on a new floor plan, removal and disposal of unused equipment and the implementation of an ongoing GROW (Get Rid of Waste) program. Additionally, weekly, Lean-themed team collaboration sessions were introduced, engineering information carts were assembled and placed throughout the facility floor to empower employees to access information on their own which led to reductions in wait times and impacts to production schedules. These efforts have contributed to increased employee engagement and acceptance of a new Lean culture throughout AGR.

Improving information flow throughout the organization is currently on the forefront of the company's focus including a project focused on connecting software systems to enhance communication among Engineering, Manufacturing, Accounting and Time Management departments.



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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.