



Springs Window Fashions Rises to the Challenge and Avoids Potential Closure of their Montgomery, PA Facility to Cheaper Manufacturing in Mexico

CLIENT PROFILE

Springs Window Fashions - Montgomery, PA plant

www.springswindowfashions.com

150 employees

Springs Window Fashions, with facilities in Montgomery and Williamsport, PA, as well as throughout North America, manufactures blinds, shades and drapery hardware under the brand names of Bali®, Graber® and Nanik® and for many private label accounts.

SITUATION

In August 2007, the Springs Window Fashions team in Montgomery encountered one of the toughest situations any business can face - cut costs significantly or see a sizeable amount of manufacturing move to Mexico.

That was the unexpected directive from their senior leadership team, who had been evaluating production costs of the company's line of horizontal blinds. At that time, the cost to produce a horizontal blind in the U.S. was \$6.10 more than what it would cost in the company's Mexico facilities. When the Montgomery team saw that producing blinds in their plant was costing Springs Window Fashions an extra \$3.8 million each year, they knew that their exceptional quality and service weren't enough. They had to roll up their sleeves, develop an aggressive plan of action and cut costs in order to save jobs for the number of Central PA families who were depending on them.

SOLUTION

The Montgomery team wasted no time in taking action. They spent the first several months evaluating internal operations and developing a framework of a plan. With a clearer picture of the situation formed, they turned to the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce, who quickly assembled an impressive gathering of professionals that included members of **IMC**.

The challenges at hand called for a comprehensive approach involving several parties. For their part in the mission, **IMC** joined forces with the Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center to provide Lean Manufacturing expertise - specifically, in Kaizen Methodology. More than 20 days of training ensued, during which Springs Window Fashions employees put their fears aside and worked collaboratively toward an effective strategy for operational improvement.



RESULTS

All of the training, planning and strategizing combined for exceptional results. Springs Window Fashions' senior leadership were so impressed by the team's efforts and the cost reductions identified that they retained the horizontal blind manufacturing presence in Pennsylvania, as well as brought in two additional product lines that provided job opportunities for 40 additional workers.

The cost-reduction strategy included:

- improved scheduling;
- adding kitting throughout the process to eliminate WIP;
- design and development of a smaller Sani machine (for cutting painted aluminum coil), requiring half the footprint of its predecessor; and,
- reflowing of plant operations for increased productivity.

The Springs Windows Fashions' team achieved dramatic results between August 2007 and September 2010:

- 30% improvement in productivity
- \$2,628,737 in savings from 2007
- a decrease from \$6.10 to \$2.80 in the cost difference compared to the Mexico plant
- 150 jobs retained
- significant profits in 2009

According to Facility Manager Doreen Decker, "We have been able to keep manufacturing here in Pennsylvania and have reduced the cost of producing a horizontal blind by \$3.30. Our goal is still ahead of us, but we are very optimistic that we will achieve a cost of \$17 per blind in 2011."

TESTIMONIAL

*"Springs Window Fashions-Montgomery is still here. We are smaller, but still provide jobs for more than 150 people. I truly believe that if it were not for the help of our outside consultants, like **IMC**, this facility would be closed. Because of their network and willingness to cooperate for the good of an organization, we were introduced to various government programs and professionals who had the skills that we were lacking. **IMC** provided us outstanding and even nurturing service. They continue to check in with us to see what else they can do to help."*

Doreen Decker
Facility Manager