

Helping Connecticut Manufacturers

**GROW.
IMPROVE.
SUCCEED.**



CONNSTEP

Grow. Improve. Succeed.



WHO WE ARE

At **CONNSTEP**, we provide business consulting services that focus on identifying opportunities for growth, improving productivity, and ensuring our clients remain competitive in evolving market conditions.

CONNSTEP is Connecticut's official representative of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), which is part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), a Department of Commerce agency.

Focused on helping small and mid-sized manufacturers generate business results and thrive in today's technology-driven economy, the MEP National Network comprises 51 MEP Centers located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, and its 1,400 trusted advisors and experts at approximately 450 MEP service locations, providing any U.S. manufacturer with access to resources they need to succeed.

PART OF THE



MEP
**National
Network**[™]

WHAT WE DO

CONNSTEP's multidisciplinary team of experts use a holistic approach that provides advanced, technical solutions to generate bottom-line improvements for your business and produce innovative, results-driven top line growth for enterprise-wide impact.

Our Key Services Include:

- **BUSINESS GROWTH**
- **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**
- **CYBERSECURITY**
- **QUALITY MANAGEMENT**
- **TECHNOLOGY & AUTOMATION**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY**
- **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**



RESULTS.

Value Delivered to **CONNSTEP** Clients

The success of our clients comes from the implementation of standard programs to help facilitate growth and stability.

The results speak for themselves.

\$226M

NEW & RETAINED SALES

\$30M

COST & INVESTMENT SAVINGS

\$39M

NEW INVESTMENTS

978

NEW & RETAINED JOBS

As reported from client surveys in FY2023.



CONNSTEP, *Your First Step to Better Business*

For more than 25 years, **CONNSTEP** has been helping manufacturers grow and succeed across Connecticut. Working with us, you can expect outcomes that address the specific needs of your business with improvements that keep it moving in the right direction.



BUSINESS GROWTH.

Identify solutions & grow your business.

Finding the best opportunities for business growth and improvement can be a challenge for any manufacturer, especially when running your organization doesn't leave you much time for marketing and business development.

Our business growth consultants help you by utilizing their extensive knowledge and strategic expertise to enable you to reach your goals, whether you're looking to expand your current market or diversify your customer base.

🌀 *Increase top-line growth*

🌀 *Improve profitability*

🌀 *Get the best return on your marketing investment*

🌀 *Identify the best new market opportunities*

Growth Services

BENCH-MARKING & ASSESSMENTS

Discover your true areas of vulnerability, prioritize next actions, and make the best use of limited resources.

STRATEGIC MARKETING

Make the best use of your time, energy, people, and budget by focusing on the marketing priorities most beneficial to your business.

MARKET RESEARCH

Get the insights you need to develop new products and services, and base your strategy on reliable data for realistic growth projections.

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION & SEO

Our website development and digital marketing services can help increase your website traffic, generate more qualified leads, and improve conversion rates.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Our business development service is perfect for companies lacking dedicated resources to handle market research, make calls, and pursue follow-up activities.

WEBSITE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Increase your online presence and grow your business through site enhancements or a website redesign.

NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Executing a well-defined, efficient process for developing new products that meet or exceed customer expectations will help improve productivity, reduce lead times, and increase margins / profitability.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

We work with you to develop a comprehensive strategic plan with a clear set of goals for you and your leadership team. You'll know where to focus your efforts as well as what not to focus on, in order to reach your sales, marketing and organizational growth goals.

Another
CONNSTEP
Success Story

SCHWERDTLE STAMP COMPANY

Bridgeport-based Schwerdtle Stamp Company, manufacturer of tools, dies and fixtures, partnered with CONNSTEP to build a strategic plan around the use of technology for customized gripper fingers for use by robots in automated assembly operations. The company focused on the tooling used in the plastics industry for decorating and assembly including tools for hot stamping, heat sealing, and thermal-forming. By targeting a new market – silicone molding bonded to aluminum – and improving operations, Schwerdtle has grown its customer base, reduced costs, created and retained jobs, increased sales, and invested in ongoing training of their highly skilled engineers, CNC programmers and machinists.

Results for

SCHWERDTLE STAMP CO.

20

JOBS CREATED & RETAINED

\$400K

INCREASED SALES

\$300K

COST & INVESTMENT SAVINGS

\$590K

INCREASED INVESTMENTS

“In my opinion, small manufacturers are missing a real understanding of the crucial need for a new approach to business development that includes technology scanning and management of technology in addition to the more typical business practices of strategic planning, SWOT analyses, and sales and marketing activities. The extensive industry experience that CONNSTEP’s consultants possess, helps them offer real value to manufacturers that goes far beyond training.”

KATHY SAINT, PRESIDENT

Schwerdtle Stamp Co., Bridgeport, CT

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

Improve your day-to-day operations.

Continuous improvement, also known as Lean and process improvement, emphasizes the prevention and elimination of waste in your organization's operations from the office to the shop floor. Waste is defined as any extra time, labor or material spent producing a product or service that doesn't add value to it. Continuous improvement methods that remove waste ultimately streamline and optimize key processes in your business.

ELIMINATING WASTE & STREAMLINING PRODUCTION CAN HELP:

-  Shorten lead times & reduced costs
-  Increase customer response & satisfaction
-  Strengthen competitive advantage
-  Improve efficiency, productivity & quality

Results for

ARTHUR G. RUSSELL COMPANY

\$8M

RETAINED SALES

\$7M

INCREASED SALES

\$1.4M

COST & INVESTMENT
SAVINGS

\$1.2M

INCREASED INVESTMENTS

ARTHUR G. RUSSELL COMPANY

Bristol-based The Arthur G. Russell Company, a world renowned designer and builder of custom assembly machinery, partnered with CONNSTEP to create a Continuous Improvement culture using Lean throughout their entire company. They focused on product lead time reduction, compliance with customer commitment dates, inventory reduction and standardizing employee performances on any given job.

“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, PRESIDENT

The Arthur G. Russell Co., Inc., Bristol, CT

Continuous Improvement Services

5S

Create an infrastructure for sustaining your workplace organization efforts, with custom audits, hands-on implementation, and mentoring support.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

We diagnose your work environment for areas of change and identify barriers to implement changes. You receive a custom solution to ensure your change efforts are successful by capitalizing on company strengths.

CELL DESIGN

Utilizing the 5-step Cell Design methodology, we help you produce the most product in the least amount of time by efficiently linking manual and machine operations to maximize value-added content while minimizing waste.

KANBAN/PULL

Kanban controls the flow of production by replacing materials at the same rate they are consumed based on actual demand. CONNSTEP guides you in determining how to manage demand, locate and size supermarkets, select pull signals and implement the system.

VALUE STREAM MAPPING

Create a visual map of a current process, documenting both information and material flow to highlight areas of excess, shortages, delays and communication issues. This current state map becomes the foundation towards building a future state, with less waste and improvement metrics.

TOTAL PRODUCTIVE MAINTENANCE (TPM)

CONNSTEP's Certified Maintenance Professionals offer a hands-on practical approach to implementing TPM, a process that maximizes the productivity of equipment for its entire lifetime and provides immediate and sustainable results.

KAIZEN

Kaizen events are intensive, focused efforts to improve a process quickly by eliminating waste wherever possible.

SUPPLY CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

CONNSTEP works with you and your Supply Chain to target strategic, tactical and operational issues within the control and oversight of materials, information, and finances as product flows through the various organizations.

PLANT LAYOUT

Plant layout involves helping you optimize workspaces, ensuring maximum value is derived from these production areas.

SETUP REDUCTION

CONNSTEP leads your team through documenting and analyzing your current changeover process and identifying waste. By completing this critical review, the results will yield an action plan to reduce or eliminate waste and streamline your process.

TRAINING WITHIN INDUSTRY (TWI)

TWI uses methodologies that develop essential skills for supervisors and team leaders. TWI Job Relations teaches skills needed to avoid or resolve "people-centric" problems. TWI Job Instruction teaches the process of the "one best way" to do a job and is the foundation for standardized work.

LEAN OFFICE

Office wastes can be found in excess paperwork, redundant approvals, inefficient work area layouts, and complex tracking systems. Applying Lean principles and continuous improvement techniques to your administrative processes can improve information flow and office productivity. Initiatives that help protect your profits, keep you competitive, and your customers satisfied.

CYBERSECURITY.

Protect & comply with ever-changing requirements.

Being protected and secure is becoming increasingly important among manufacturing businesses, particularly defense contractors who are held to high cyber standards when dealing with federal government contract work.

The cybersecurity consultants at CONNSTEP work with defense manufacturers in Connecticut to ensure their compliance with federal contract requirements. We know that cybersecurity readiness is imperative to the sustainability of every business. So is adapting to new and evolving cyber threats from adversaries.

When you make the business decision to achieve compliance in cybersecurity, CONNSTEP works with you every step of the way. Our strategic efforts help you:

- ❖ *Remain vigilant with online behavior*
- ❖ *Customize security & response plans for your best insurance*
- ❖ *Avoid suffering a cyberattack at your business*
- ❖ *Understand the compliance mandates for your industry standards*



Cybersecurity Services

CYBERSECURITY MATURITY MODEL CERTIFICATION (CMMC) 2.0

The CMMC framework includes a comprehensive and scalable certification element to verify the implementation of processes and practices associated with the achievement of a cybersecurity maturity level.

DFARS COMPLIANCE & NIST SP 800-171

We conduct an executive overview of the steps and processes required to achieve compliance over time and other related federal cyber regulations and to ensure you will be compliant with the controls described in NIST Special Publication 800-171.

GAP ANALYSIS

The process involves evaluating your security controls and identifying where gaps exist with respect to NIST SP 800-171, which may be preventing you from being compliant.

SYSTEM SECURITY & INCIDENT RESPONSE PLANS

We work with you to document policy and procedures designed to meet NIST SP 800-171 standards and train employees on them, and help develop and implement system security plans for your information systems that describe the security requirements in place or planned for the systems.

Another **CONNSTEP** *Success Story*

INFINITY FUEL CELL

As a government contractor, Infinity Fuel Cell was obligated to conform to established cybersecurity requirements. CONNSTEP worked with Infinity to comply with Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) requirements, improving the safeguards of their defense-related data.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT.

Ensure the quality reputation of your business.

Compliance measures, quality management, and industry certifications are increasingly important in today's competitive business climate. You can create a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace by building a reputation known for

quality that not only attracts new customers but also retains existing ones. CONNSTEP can help you meet your customers' requirements and align them with the rest of your business processes so you can compete more effectively.

Quality Management Services

INTERNAL QUALITY AUDITS

Focus on running your business while qualified consultants perform a strategic internal quality audit. We'll even train your internal quality auditors to maintain your quality registration.

QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Make the business decision to become registered to a quality standard that will help you attract new customers, retain existing customers, and compete more effectively in the global market.

QUALITY ESSENTIALS PROGRAM (QEP)

Designed to address the growing need for skilled quality workers in manufacturing. QEP is led by our team of instructors with years of quality management experience. Program participants learn essential quality principles, concepts, tools, and tasks.

QUALITY MENTORING

Our team of experienced quality management instructors will design a course based on your company needs. **Potential topics, but not limited to, are:**

- **WORKPLACE SKILLS**
- **PRINT READING & MEASUREMENT FOR MANUFACTURING**
- **QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS & BASIC AUDIT PRINCIPLES**
- **PROBLEM SOLVING USING PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT (PDCA), A3, AND ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS (RCA)**
- **PRODUCTION PARTS APPROVAL PROCESS (PPAP)**
- **FAILURE MODE EFFECTS ANALYSIS (FMEA)**
- **MISTAKE PROOFING**

Our QMS Specialists can assist with registration in these quality standards:

Aerospace Standard

AS 9100D, AS 9110, AS 9120 Certification

Automotive Standard

IATF 16949 Certification

Energy Management System Standard

ISO 50001 Certification

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Standard

ISO 14001 Certification

General Quality Standard

ISO 9001:2015 Certification

Laboratory Standard

ISO 17025 Certification

Medical Device Standard

ISO 13485, FDA CFR Title 21 Part 820 Certification

National Aerospace & Defense Contractors Accreditation Program

NADCAP Certification

Occupational Health and Safety Standard

OHSAS 18001 Certification

United States Military Standard

Mil-STDs Certifications



Another **CONNSTEP** *Success Story*

PRECISION EXPRESS MANUFACTURING

Precision Express Manufacturing (PEM) is a Swiss CNC machine shop for high quality, precision parts. The company was interested in becoming certified to the ISO 9001 standard to meet the increasing requirements of some of their existing customers, and also help them to attract new ones with their new certification. CONNSTEP managed the implementation to the new standard, and we also conducted their internal quality audit.

CAREY MANUFACTURING

The Director of Quality & External Relations at **Carey Manufacturing** attended CONNSTEP's five-week Quality Essentials Program (QEP) to improve her limited knowledge about quality tools and techniques, and leveraged her coursework to set up a quality management system for their organization.

TECHNOLOGY & AUTOMATION.

Transform new technologies into new opportunities.

As a manufacturer, you are constantly striving to get your production output done quicker, better, and less expensively. Your workforce needs the proper tools and equipment to achieve your goals.

Adopting technology and introducing Industry 4.0 into your production operation can not only help streamline your efforts but also improve the quality of products throughout all stages of the manufacturing process.



Technology & Automation Services

TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATION

Enables small-to-medium sized manufacturers to get their new technologies to the right markets as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.



TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN MARKET INTELLIGENCE (TDMI)

Transform proposed new technologies into successful new market entrants by using market intelligence to reveal the benefits and impact of technology-based assets.



TECHNOLOGY SCOUTING

Make your new product ideas become a reality. We can help you define, discover, and deploy the technology you need to bring new products to market.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY.

Integrate EHS Measures for Workplace Safety.

Everyone in your organization from senior leadership to front-line workers should understand the importance of EHS programs and compliance. Your business can benefit by avoiding or mitigating environmental risks at your company and maintaining a safer workplace.

By implementing innovative EHS processes, manufacturers are able to sidestep adverse impacts to their surrounding environment, establish a safety culture among their workforce, and minimize injuries and their associated costs.

Environmental Health & Safety Services

ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENTS & REPORTING

Identify potential or existing environmental contamination liabilities and evaluate hazardous substances.

OSHA INSPECTIONS, TRAINING, & COMPLIANCE AUDITING

Ensure your facilities are compliant with the regulatory requirements applicable to your business and industry.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Avoid or eliminate detrimental impacts to the environment using a wide variety of analysis and testing tools.

HEALTH, SAFETY, & EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS

Prepare facility-wide safety programs that promote and encourage worker participation at all levels.

- Prevent injury, liability, and compliance costs*
- Create safety measures for greater worker morale*
- Improve environmental management & performance*
- Ensure compliance with applicable local, state, and federal environmental & safety regulations*

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Develop a stronger, qualified workforce.

CONNSTEP provides hands-on consulting services with assessments and training programs that focus on developing your employees. We can help you meet your company goals while improving the skill sets and productivity of your

workforce. Our workforce development training programs provide vital skills in Lean continuous improvement, quality management, and employee engagement that raise the performance levels of your workers.

Your newly trained staff return to your company with the knowledge and experience to teach others.

For example, the principles of Lean thinking and continuous improvement initiatives. Spreading the learning to their team helps your organization achieve progress and sustain meaningful advancements. We can deliver training on-site at your facility or through our many seminars and courses.

Workforce Development Services

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CHAMPION CERTIFICATION (CICC)

This course helps participants develop the skills necessary to implement Lean principles and practices and includes a mentored Lean project designed to produce ongoing ROI results.

HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING & SERVICES

From leadership development to change management to staff morale and recruitment, we create strategies and processes that keep our clients ahead of the pack.

QUALITY ESSENTIALS PROGRAM (QEP)

The QEP addresses the growing need to enhance the knowledge of quality principles among skilled manufacturing workers. Each workshop is held once a week over a consecutive five-week period.

TRAINING WITHIN INDUSTRY (TWI)

A timeless and practical tool, especially in the mass production setting, for supervisors and team leaders. TWI helps with employee conflict resolution, facilitates greater speed to market, and removes waste associated with training time.

AEROCISION

Chester-based AeroCision, a quality aerospace machining company, participated in CONNSTEP's proprietary Continuous Improvement Champion Certification (CICC) program to provide training that allows their team to work together systematically towards their Lean enterprise goals. The value stream mapping tool was an instrumental part of helping with their growth strategy. In mapping out its value stream, AeroCision brainstormed with teams from every department on ways to improve inspection time and load leveling its production process.

Another CONNSTEP Success Story

Results for AEROCISION

8

JOBS CREATED
& RETAINED

\$5M

INCREASED
SALES

\$700K

COST & INVESTMENT
SAVINGS

\$2.2M

INCREASED
INVESTMENTS



“Attending CONNSTEP’s CICC program inspired me to think outside the box in terms of different methods for time saving and to make more meaningful ROI suggestions for AeroCision’s capital investments. The Lean training I received from CONNSTEP really opened AeroCision’s eyes to a new, cost-effective, high quality step up the chain.”

SEAN MORRISSEY, PRODUCTION MANAGER

AeroCision, Chester, CT

Partner with CONNSTEP

*We're seeking full-time
& part-time candidates
with expertise in the
following areas:*

**Continuous Improvement Principles
& Practices**

**Cybersecurity Compliance & CMMC
2.0**

Environmental Health & Safety

**Executive/Leadership Coaching
& Supervisor Training**

**HR Recruitment
& Organizational Management**

**Quality Management including
Implementation of Standards:**

ISO 9001, AS9100, ISO 13485, ISO 14001,
& Nadcap

**If you have the interest and capabilities
to facilitate improvements and implement
solutions for manufacturers, we would like
to talk with you.**

Apply Online



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RESOURCES/
THIRD-PARTY-RESOURCE-
APPLICATION/**



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**CONSULTING SUBJECT
MATTER EXPERTS**

**YOUR EXPERIENCE IS
VALUED HERE!**

Looking to make a difference with your
career background?

Join CONNSTEP, a leading business
consulting and training organization serving
manufacturers across Connecticut, as a
third-party service provider.

You'll utilize your knowledge, experience,
and leadership skills to help manufacturing
companies throughout the state achieve
their goals.

ABOUT CONNSTEP

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Commerce agency.

CONNEX™

CONNECTICUT

Powered by  CONNSTEP

CONNEX connects U.S. manufacturers and suppliers into a single platform.

CONNEX Connecticut—licensed and administered by CONNSTEP—is designed to strengthen Connecticut’s manufacturing ecosystem.

Through CONNEX, manufacturers, suppliers, and buyers can post and respond to needs, visualize supply chain risk, and search for qualified manufacturers.

CONNEX also makes it easy to find new contract opportunities, and will notify you of new jobs that you are uniquely qualified and have a good chance of being considered for.

CONNEX Connecticut is **FREE**, for Connecticut manufacturers.

<https://portal.ct.gov/manufacturing/CONNEX>





CONNSTEP

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**MEP
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CONNECTICUT

MAKE IT HERE

