



CUSTOMER Focus

Overcoming Skepticism to Obtain Results: An Exceptional Flower Producer Flourishes

By Tony Popowski

Business Changes for a Local Company

Dramm and Echter Inc. is a successful horticultural greenhouse producer based in Encinitas, CA. The organization is now ranked as one of the top 75 producers in the US and generates up to 40 flower species at any given time. For over 35 years, its high quality products, custom packing and a variety of delivery choices have served as the company's foundation for growth. Today, the organization is a family of three distinct production and sales areas that consist of approximately 100 employees.

Like many other manufacturers in the Golden State, Dramm and Echter Inc. was presented with a major challenge: the economic downfall. The roadblocks appeared extremely difficult to overcome - a volatile market together with a staggering local economy and rising energy costs all led to struggles with profitability.

Bob Echter, President of Dramm and Echter Inc., would find out that consulting would help his company weather the storm, but not after initial doubts.

Is Consulting Good For Me Right Now?

During the start of the downturn, Bob was attending a trade show when he heard of a concept called lean methodology. He became interested in learning how this notion related back to business. As time went on, he found that managers from his company had also discovered "lean" from a local seminar and were enthused with the idea. While he believed that improving efficiencies, reducing waste and boosting leadership effectiveness all sounded great in theory, he wondered if the methodology would actually translate well into his business.

Bob wondered to himself, "What areas of my business can be improved?", "How would I go about implementing change?" and "Could this actually lead to measurable results for my company?" Bob ultimately thought it would at least be worth finding out more information and contacted CMTC.



At first, Bob was skeptical of CMTC. After all, he felt that his business wasn't your "typical manufacturer." Additionally, he just didn't feel comfortable implementing any changes during an unpredictable economy. Was investing in consulting really the most strategic decision in an untrustworthy market?

Enter CMTC

Faced with the obstacles of the economic downturn, Dramm and Echter decided that they couldn't continue business the same way. After careful deliberation, the company decided that consulting and training would ultimately help their organization and partnered with CMTC. Bob found that the lessons of lean training were universal and realized that because CMTC had experience working with manufacturers in

Southern California, they genuinely understood the area, its resources and how business worked in the region.

CMTC initially united with Dramm and Echter Inc. on leadership training. Bob remarked how critical this investment was to assist his management team in implementing more effective policies and work cohesively. Because leadership training was working so well, Bob decided to additionally invest in Lean training. This helped his organization become more efficient and eliminated wasted resources. The benefits of consulting were making a significant impact, so the company also decided to invest in continuous process improvement. This program assisted Dramm and Echter Inc. to solidify their long-term sustainability to reach their organizational goals.


Bob particularly saw the value in CMTC's Change Management (CM) program, a process that is designed to help address organizational, behavioral and technical change simultaneously during procedural improvements. The result of the CM program was that his management team and entire staff understood the importance of change and enthusiastically embraced it.

The Outcome: A Better Working Environment

Dramm and Echter Inc. realizes both the measurable and intangible benefits of CMTC's assistance. In a "before and after assessment", Bob reports that there have been significant gains in margin sales, a reduction in inventory waste and improvements related to labor costs. Bob also sees a vast difference in interdepartmental communication. In the past, production would be working on one project, sales would be working on another, while management would have different goals. Now, all sectors of his company work together and


recognize each other's contributions to the company's success. Bob firmly believes that the improved quality of communication has led to greater efficiency, allowing time for management and employees to complete more projects.

Dramm and Echter affirm that investing resources to improve efficiency and effectiveness helps your bottom line and long-term growth. While it's very easy to be distracted from focusing on procedural improvements during an unpredictable market, Bob now believes it's necessary to incorporate this into your daily routine.



"I'm glad we invested in CMTC during the downturn. It caused us to have a clear focus on improvement instead of concentrating on negativity. We're trying to move forward instead of hiding under a rock. Understanding how important training is demonstrates your desire to improve the leadership and skills of your employees and the company as a whole."

Bob Echter, President



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