

Case Example: Improving Speed to Market

1. Situation

- Designer and manufacturer of high-end custom furniture and case goods
- New products developed for market release every 6 months to coincide with industry trade shows
- Current development process typically at 9-10 months meaning that design activity must begin before the release of previous designs were verified in the marketplace

3. Deliverables

- Applied the “Design for Excellence” methodology to create a new development process
- Developed techniques for capturing and apply customer and retailer input
- Created parallel development activities to shorten cycles
- Established a new schedule, with fixed deliverable points, and used it as a model with the development teams

**Discreet
Manufacturing
Industry**

2. Key Issues

- Feedback from design acceptance from industry shows needs to be included in the next design cycle
- There was no mechanism for capturing customer needs or wants in any manner that was useful to the development team
- The designers were preoccupied with the “look” and gave little thought to producibility
- Producibility issues often caused products to be released that were not cost effective to make

4. Results

- Within the first year, reduced the develop cycle from 9-10 months to under 6 months
- Released new designs that were easier to manufacture, thus reducing the time from order to shipment by 25%
- Efficiency gains enabled the development team to produce 15% more designs to bring to market compared to previous efforts

“Using the “Design for Excellence” approach was the single most important breakthrough we made over the past ten years. It reestablished us a market leader.”

President, Custom Furniture Company