

Case Study: Rex Materials Group



How we transformed their business:

- **Reduced lead times, in some cases from 3-4 weeks to under 5 days**
- **Improved on-time shipments from 50% to 98% in one facility**

Synchrono Helps Job Shop Empower Employees to Better Manage Workloads

Imagine a tool so powerful that it can essentially manage an 80-person manufacturing facility automatically. That's what happened at Rex Materials Group.

"Synchrono has provided a means for flexibility to happen by itself," said David Rex, president and CEO. "We run three shifts, five days a week at one of our facilities and require only two supervisors across all of that. Our people come in, work until their list is done and then look at Synchrono to see what needs to be done next. They don't ask anyone; we don't have to tell them. We've found if you give good people the right information, they will make the right decisions."

Rex Materials Group manufactures custom vacuum-formed ceramic fiber products. Founded in 1921, the \$20 million company runs three facilities around the country. In the late 1990s, the company began operations under the theory of constraints (TOC) and modified its homegrown system to apply drum-buffer-rope principles.

The challenge: improve replenishment, resolve planning issues and reduce lead times

"That solution worked for awhile, but then we improved our operations to the point where the variability became smaller than our ability to see it clearly in the old system," Rex said. "In our search for a new solution, we wanted a tool to deal with drum-buffer-rope, improve our replenishment and resolve all our planning issues to eliminate workarounds."

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Dramatic reduction in lead time

“Before we generally needed three to four weeks lead time. Today, we ship between 30-40% of our products within five days of receiving an order. For some products, we receive the order today, make it tonight and ship it tomorrow with no extra effort.”

*David Rex,
President and CEO*

Rex Materials Group selected Synchrono in 2001 and successfully implemented its first facility in 90 days and its second facility 45 days later. Earlier this year, a third facility was purchased and went live in 45 days too.

“The biggest change for us has been reducing our lead times,” Rex said. “Before we generally needed three to four weeks lead time. Today, we ship between 30 percent and 40 percent of our products within five days of receiving an order. For some products, we receive the order today, make it tonight and ship it tomorrow with no extra effort.”

Over the next several months, Rex Materials Group will be focusing on how to get better at managing the system and how Synchrono can help the organization increase the velocity at its plants. “It’s all about learning how to focus more on what counts and less on what doesn’t,” Rex concluded. “Synchrono gives us the information to do that more effectively.”