



## Success Story: F-M Enterprises



[www.fmfab.com](http://www.fmfab.com)

### Profile

Location: Merrill, Wisconsin  
Years in Business: Founded in 1997  
No. of Employees: 35  
Products: Exterior window walls, sun shades, fixed windows, and store fronts

NWMOC Projects: Value Stream Mapping, 5S Visual Workplace Organization, Capacity Analysis, Plant Layout

### Situation

FM started small and has grown into a solid, trusted supplier to companies throughout the United States. FM designed and fabricated the New York Mets Citi-Field Stadium glass walls and the front of the new Discovery World in Milwaukee, WI. They knew they needed to change their manufacturing process to meet their increased volume requirements and to become even more responsive to their customers.



F-M Client: Thrivent Bank, Appleton, WI

### Project

Project managers from the UW-Stout Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC) met with the owners, evaluated their operations, and made recommendations on how FM could move ahead on their continuous improvement journey. An initial value stream mapping process was completed with a team, and the improvement process began. This initial effort resulted in significant changes to their production layout and workflow.

As the seeds of change continued to grow, FM was ready to advance to the next level. More value stream mapping was completed, and a significant effort was initiated for workplace organization and workflow improvements. Dramatic changes occurred in production, so NWMOC project managers then spent time with the engineering and production-scheduling processes. As a capstone to these efforts, a final value stream map was developed that linked the customer directly through engineering, scheduling, production, and shipping. These changes resulted in reduced cost, less stress, reduced lead time for the customers, and a significantly enhanced ability to respond to last-minute changes from the customers.

The employees at FM continue to use these concepts on their own to design efficient, rapid-response manufacturing processes for new product lines that they develop. During the last 3 years, six NWMOC project managers have worked with FM to provide expertise for their needs and to demonstrate NWMOC's commitment to "sticking with you" for the long haul.

*The programs that NWMOC has in their tool box have lowered F-M's cost by 50% in just the first few months of implementation. I would recommend NWMOC to everyone and anyone who wants to grow their business and their bottom line.* Renea Frederick, President

### Results

- Reduced overall customer lead time by 40%, even more for change orders
- Lowered manufacturing costs by 50% for one product line
- Reduced stress with better organization and workflow