

MERIDA



Making it in Massachusetts, in a Very Good Way

A GBMP Client Case Study

Since its founding in 1978, Merida, a privately held manufacturer of natural fiber rugs and textiles, has always done things differently. Proud of their legacy of innovation in the textile industry, employees at Merida's mill in Fall River, a city that was once a major center of American textile manufacturing, are also keen to point to the corporate culture, core principles, business goals and approaches to innovation, design and partnerships that are unique to Merida.

The company's vision is to be the sustainable design leader in the home interiors space. In moving toward that goal, they also want to show the world there's a better way to do business. They believe a successful company can also be virtuous and for them this means:

- Treating employees right
- An unwavering, thoughtful commitment to sustainability in all business practices
- Superior craftsmanship that produces sustainable, gorgeous, customized works of art
- Partnering with manufacturers and suppliers who share their social, economic and environmental priorities

Merida truly is about more than the bottom line and proves it every day. Their commitment to sustainability begins with using rapidly renewable materials like abaca, sea grass, jute, paper, sisal and wool, and following eco-friendly design and manufacturing practices. It continues with their efforts to promote the social and economic health of the local communities where their suppliers and manufacturers are based.

Merida employs a director of sustainability whose role is to continually strengthen their commitment to sustainability by ensuring it is an essential element of everything they do. He also closely monitors the practices and working conditions at partner companies to ensure they live up to their principles as well so Merida can deliver the finest natural fiber rugs possible.

In 2013 Merida consolidated manufacturing operations to their Fall River facility and asked GBMP to help with the transition. Ron Pujalte, Continuous Improvement Manager and Master Black Belt, trained the production team on continuous improvements methods and saw firsthand how the focus on people and good practices, coupled with lean training was able to impact the business. He noted, "This team really understands the influence that they have over their own processes, and the improvements made over a short period of time have had dramatic results. This is a company that prides itself on making premium, made-to-order rugs and delivering them in anywhere from 2 to 8 weeks, depending upon the product."

Zairo Cheibub, Director of Sustainability, noted one key area where Ron's work with Merida has had a big impact, the sample department. When Ron began working with Merida it took 3 -5 days to fulfill sample requests. The department was in a corner and the material and sample process was not well organized. Ron worked with an employee team that re-laid out racking and machines, inventoried all samples, cut racks in half to fit in the area, and labeled everything. They also implemented a change to print sample orders directly in the department. "Samples is a very large part of growing this business and with the training we received we are now able to turn samples immediately; we now have a 100% same day fill rate," remarked Mr. Cheibub.

For more information about Merida please visit <http://www.meridameridian.com>

To view a video about Merida please go to

<http://www.meridameridian.com/newsandevents/merida-on-chronicle.cfm>

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