

Rebuilding Product Innovation: From Limited Output to Scalable Development Engine



The Challenge

The opportunity required addressing a combination of structural, aesthetic, and performance-related challenges:

- ✓ Limited product development capacity, with only a small team and minimal supporting infrastructure
- ✓ Absence of a formal project management system or structured development process
- ✓ Low product output, averaging only a few new product launches per year
- ✓ Increasing product performance issues, including quality concerns in the field
- ✓ Growing competitive pressure due to lack of innovation and speed to market
- ✓ Rising regulatory complexity requiring advanced testing and certification capabilities
- ✓ Need to scale both technical capability and organizational alignment simultaneously

How a structured execution system transformed product development capacity, improved quality, and restored market leadership within a high-value manufacturing environment

A Canadian manufacturer of high-value building products initiated a strategic effort to strengthen its product development and innovation capabilities as part of a broader five-year growth strategy.

The organization primarily operated within a made-to-order model, serving premium residential and light commercial markets across North America, with a significant portion of its business in coastal regions of the United States.

In parallel, new regulatory requirements — particularly in hurricane-prone regions — were introducing new performance standards, including impact testing and enhanced durability criteria, increasing both the technical complexity and urgency of product innovation.

The organization recognized the need to significantly expand its new product development capacity to support growth, maintain competitiveness, and respond to changing market demands.



The Debonair Edge Approach

A structured execution system — at the time referred to as the STEP process (Streamlining The Efficiency of Projects) — was implemented to rebuild and scale the organization's product development capability.



Project Storyboarding (the Genesis)

- ✓ Established clear, end-to-end development pathways from concept through to market launch
- ✓ Aligned technical, operational, and commercial stakeholders on sequencing, priorities, and dependencies
- ✓ Created a repeatable scheduling methodology for planning and coordinating multiple concurrent product projects



Execution Architecture

- ✓ Built a formal product development structure, including governance, roles, accountability, and standardized project execution processes
- ✓ Defined quality, testing, and performance requirements aligned with evolving regulatory standards
- ✓ Applied the new framework to the development of a new Product Innovation Center, including advanced prototyping and testing capabilities



Team Enablement

- ✓ Built and scaled a cross-functional product development team, including engineering, technical, and project management capabilities
- ✓ Established alignment across design, manufacturing, and commercial functions to support coordinated execution
- ✓ Equipped teams with structured tools, processes, and skills/ training to manage increased volume and complexity



The Outcome

The transformation of the product development function resulted in a significant increase in both capacity and performance.

Product output increased from approximately 2–3 new product launches per year to approximately 20, representing a step-change in the organization's ability to innovate and respond to market demand.

At the same time, the contribution of new products to overall revenue increased from approximately 3% to 12% of top-line sales, demonstrating the direct commercial impact of the enhanced development capability and framework. .

The organization also strengthened its position within the market, with improved product quality and a renewed reputation for innovation. This was reflected in increased visibility and recognition at major industry events and trade shows.

Beyond the Project

Beyond the immediate improvements in output and performance, the overall impact reshaped the organization's approach to product development.

The introduction of structured processes, combined with expanded technical capability and infrastructure, created a scalable foundation for ongoing innovation. The Product Innovation Center enabled full-scale prototyping and advanced testing supporting both product quality and regulatory compliance.

The organization transitioned from a reactive position to a proactive, system-driven approach, capable of sustaining higher levels of performance.

Closing Insight



When product development is structured, resourced, and aligned as a system, organizations can dramatically increase innovation output while improving quality, performance, and market position.