

# Efficiency Made Easy

by Susan Shinn Turner

*Two experienced workroom professionals have introduced an easy-to-use project tracking and estimating system that works off Excel.*

The old adage, “Measure twice, cut once” is crucial in the window treatment industry. With fabrics costing upward of \$200 a yard, a mistake can mean lost time and money. That’s why Rose Mary LeBlanc and Amanda Smith developed their Seamless Workroom system, as a tool to help colleagues become more efficient, enjoy the process, stay organized, and, perhaps most importantly, measure once.

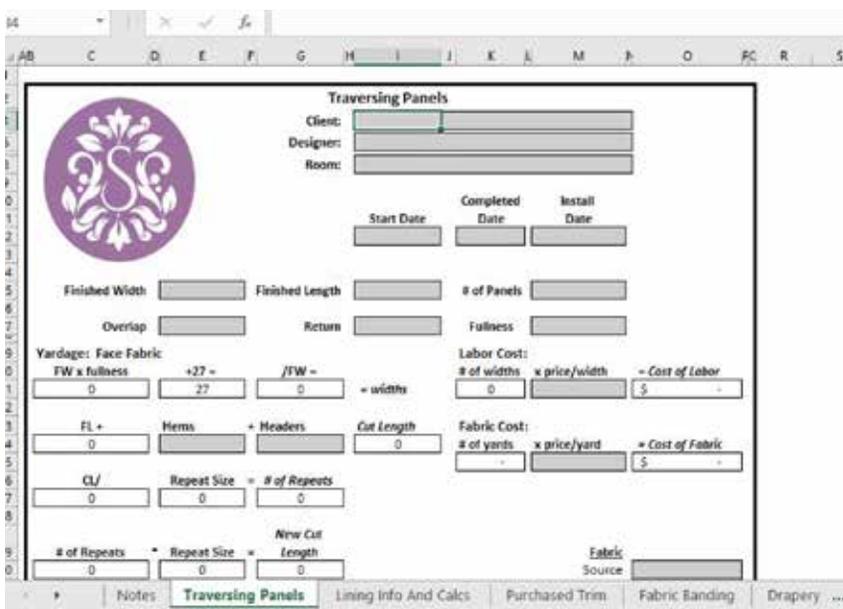
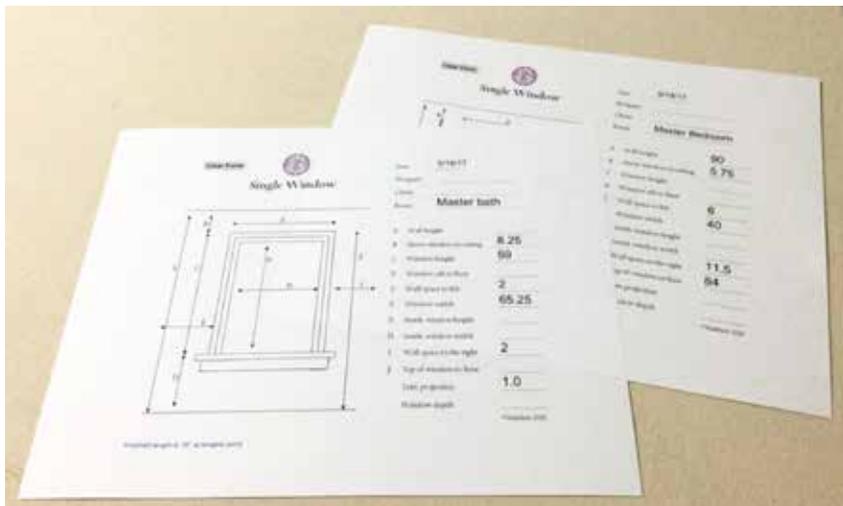
LeBlanc started making her own forms about eight years ago. “In this business,” she says, “we have so much detailed information for every project, to keep track of it all is like herding cats through an airport.”

She wanted to easily enter and track measurements and product information, reference diagrams, and organize hardware, fabric, and trim orders, when all that information was previously spread across multiple programs and platforms. “We needed a way to keep track of it and consolidate everything,” she says. “To help us eliminate a horrible mistake such as using the wrong fabric.”

“Or you use the right fabric but the wrong design,” Smith adds.

## A Meeting of Minds

The two met in 2009 at a meeting of the Charlotte chapter of the Window Coverings Association of America (WCAA), and hit it off right away. LeBlanc began sewing in 1992, making pillows and slipcovers, in addition to window treatments. She currently also teaches fabrication and designs fabrics for Spoonflower. Smith started her workroom in 2001 and concentrated mainly on panels and Roman shades, but now also makes bedding, pillows, and valances.

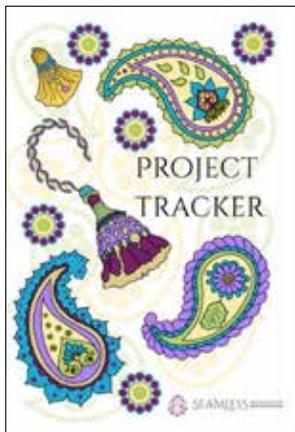


"We're always working and talking fabrics," LeBlanc says. "That's how we came up with a lot of these products—talking through projects, discussing what tools work best, wondering if there was something better out there. But neither of us were able to find another product that was flexible, could be used on tablets and phones as well as computers, and was as easy as writing down measurements in a notebook."

### Breaking It Down

"What we do is very custom," says Smith. "A lot of times, we go above and beyond for a project, but we might forget to charge for some of those details because most of us have our own routines." The Excel workbooks offered by Seamless Workroom tracks expenses—both product and labor, then automatically transfers them to the quote page at the end of the workbook.

The system provides tracking ability for project details which relate to the cost



of quoting and fabricating anything you need when it comes to window treatments or other soft home furnishings, all devel-

oped through the combined insight and experience of LeBlanc and Smith.

An Excel expert built out each workbook with all the necessary formulas already plugged in. Just start on the first page and fill in the necessary details. The workbook automatically calculates fabric yardage, labor, lining yardage, hardware, trim, and banding, then extrapolates it all to the quote page. And, given that they're Excel-based, the forms can be used not only on desktops and laptops, but on tablets and phones as well.

"Our goal was to make them incredibly easy to use, anywhere, for any type of project. If a box isn't filled, it serves as a reminder that you may have forgotten something," LeBlanc says. "It's a great cross-reference."

Seamless Workroom offers a total package of all fillable measuring forms

and excel workbooks, but also bundles for individual options for windows, specialty windows and doors, bedding and accessories, productivity, traversing panels, and stationary panels. You can also purchase a four-bundle package. Both excel workbooks are available in imperial and metric. Also recently added is the Project Tracker which is also an Excel workbook that helps organize and track the scope of the project, details, job progress, materials, hardware, pricing and yardage, as well as change orders and remakes. The tool is attractive to a wide range of people in the industry, LeBlanc says—workroom owners, installers, and designers.

Margi Kyle, owner of The Designing Doctor, says she could have "absolutely" benefitted from such a tool earlier in her career. "This is a tool that will make all of it so much easier for those who have studied window design," Kyle says. "It's going to save workroom owners tons of time. This tool can bridge the gap between designers and workrooms."

With such an automated program, Carolyn Rushing says, you have a plan. Rushing is president of WCAA's Charlotte chapter. "You can do everything the same way every time. It is a great time saver. Not only is it great for organization, the measuring form gives measurements for all types of windows. All of those numbers have to balance. It's a great reassurance. It's a good cross-check between the workroom and the designer. You understand each other's language."

Rushing says she had previously purchased a product that promised similar results, but was disappointed. "The Seamless Workroom product really is better because it's not as cumbersome. The ease of use is better. The beauty of this is that these two ladies have been in the workroom for a long time. They know our needs—what works and what doesn't



work. They have thought of every possible thing you could possibly want."

"Not everybody is going to need every form or even every element of a form all the time," LeBlanc notes. "But the forms remind you to get all the details down. You save time and money. These forms makes us more efficient."

### A New Partnership

Seamless Workroom has partnered with the Window Fashion Certified Professional (WFCP) program and will be offering demonstrations of the system at booth #136 at IWCE. There will also be a show special of 10 percent any purchases made at the show.✘

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Rose Mary LeBlanc and Amanda Smith of Seamless Workroom developed a collection of Excel-based fill-in forms to help workrooms gather and organize all the details necessary to complete a job efficiently and profitably. The Seamless Workroom worksheet packages help ensure that all details are accounted for and billed accordingly.