

## CONFECTIONER ADDS LEAN PROCESSES TO ITS LONG LIST OF INNOVATIONS

### BACKGROUND:

**The James Candy Company** has a long history of innovation. Confectioner Enoch James brought his family to Atlantic City in the 1880's to sell their "original" Salt Water Taffy. James had developed a high quality recipe that would not pull out one's teeth and eliminated the stickiness that made the taffy and its wrapper inseparable. The result of his efforts—a smooth, rich, wholesome taffy available in a variety of flavors and a new "Cut-to-fit-the-mouth" shape. The James' product line soon extended to chocolate dipped Salt Water Taffy, filled centers, chocolate taffy pops, macaroons and boardwalk fudge. Enoch James' packaged his confections in seashore novelties such as the "barrel" and "satchel" that are still popular today. In addition to developing new recipes, flavors, shapes and packaging, the James' family updated the manufacturing process to include taffy wrapping machines, the first candy pulling machines, electric tempering ovens, and vacuum cooking kettles.

Meanwhile in 1890, Joseph Fralinger, a former glassblower and fish merchant, opened a retail store on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City. Within a year, Fralinger had added a taffy concession and spent the winter perfecting his Salt Water Taffy formula. He packed one-pound oyster boxes with Salt Water Taffy, making it the first "Atlantic City Souvenir."

The two families of taffy makers joined together in 1907 to form **James Salt Water Taffy Co.** The Bayard Chocolate company was acquired in 2004 and its operation was moved into the Boardwalk Facility. The machines that James developed made great strides for the taffy manufacturing process and are the basis of how taffy is still made today. This innovative company has continued to improve its processes by introducing Lean manufacturing principles into its organization.

The James Candy Company and New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, Inc. (NJMEP) have a long history together, going back to 1999 when they first worked together on a Y2K project. The relationship continued... implementing training in various Lean tools, in 2002 a Strategic Business Plan, creating Job Descriptions and Performance Measures so when employees requested training in Computers, Supervisory Skills and Food Production Processing technology, NJMEP provided it. The list goes on.

### CHALLENGE:

Frank Glaser, James' President, wanted to improve customer service levels, reduce inventory, decrease lead times and improve employee job satisfaction. To do these he felt that he needed to upgrade the skills of his current workforce. Once again he called on NJMEP who recommended in depth Lean Manufacturing training. NJMEP's trainer outlined the program and NJMEP suggested applying for a New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDoL) Customized training grant to help defray the costs. In addition to implementing the training, NJMEP assisted in preparing and submitting the grant and when it was approved managed the reporting process.

### SOLUTION:

The comprehensive Lean Manufacturing Training consisted of six areas of focus that was delivered over a ten-month period to forty-one employees from all aspects of the organization. Accountants, office and mail clerks and mail machine operators to General and Operations Managers, Maintenance and Repair Workers, Production Laborers and First-Line Supervisors/Managers, all would be trained in Lean.

#### Connect with NJMEP:



They would learn:

- Financial Benefits of Lean Manufacturing
- Quality at the Source Tactics (QAST)
- Continuous Improvement Methods
- Team Building
- Business Management Service
- Application of the above in the Manufacturing Process

QAST places skills and knowledge in employees' hands to keep defects from moving through the production line. Employees are taught quality standards at each step of the process and are empowered to correct defects or remove the defective item before they move onto the next step in the production process. By catching these defects earlier in the process, quality is improved and the cost of defects is reduced.

Mr. Glaser was able to achieve his objectives. He was able to improve customer service levels, reduce inventory, provide faster order fulfillment and improve employee job satisfaction.

## **RESULTS:**

As a result, the company:

- Saw a \$1,500,000 increase in sales
- Hired 6 new employees
- Retained all its production employees that were at risk (increased productivity on the chocolate side of the business allowed the company to retain its production employees where they used to be laid off in the winter months when the demand for taffy-based products falls off)
- Achieved a \$1,500,000 in overall cost saving and a \$38,400 saving in training cost as a result of the NJDoL investment through the grant

James Candy continues to work with NJMEP on training its workforce to assure it moves forward on its continuous improvement spectrum.

**When asked about working with NJMEP over the years, Mr. Glaser explained, "NJMEP's trainer was an expert, professional and courteous to all levels of employees. He continued to maintain a rapport which greatly facilitated the training and the results. Our trainer has become a mentor to many of our employees and a trusted advisor to our management."**

**Glaser added, "Our relationship with NJMEP has contributed significantly to our revenue growth and productivity improvements. We are a stronger, more profitable company, and we feel that the continued assistance provided by the MEP will enhance our prospects for future growth. The MEP program is indeed one stop shopping for the mid-sized manufacturer."**

**Connect with NJMEP:**



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- Lean Business Solutions
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- R&D Tax Credits
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### **Connect with NJMEP:**

