

L GAMBERT LLC REMAINS AGILE AND INFORMED THROUGH NJMEP COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS AND SUPPORT

BACKGROUND

L Gambert LLC. has been manufacturing shirts in Newark, New Jersey since 1933. They stock inventory of over 1,500 shirt fabrics sourced from all around the world and are known for manufacturing high-quality custom shirts as well as overcoming any challenge that stands in their way. L Gambert opened in the midst the Great Depression, and during WWII they made shirts in exchange for rations to share with their local neighborhood. COVID-19 brought L Gambert back to their roots. Leadership rose to the challenge and did all they could to ensure their business survived these challenging times while at the same time giving back to the local community and helping the nation push forward.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced local governments all over the United States to begin mandating businesses that are deemed 'non-essential' to shut down. Many state governments oversaw the selection of which manufacturing companies should be considered essential. This proved disastrous. All manufacturing is essential, especially in the case of a pandemic. Closing a manufacturing plant that a government official deemed 'non-essential' would cause a domino effect that impacts an untold number of other manufacturers up and downstream.

CHALLENGE

At the very beginning of the pandemic, factual information was difficult to come by. Business leaders were being bombarded by executive order after executive order. Oftentimes, these executive orders seemed to contradict themselves or provided sets of guidelines without any specific details.

Fear and uncertainty surrounding the manufacturing industry during the first couple weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic created a challenging business landscape for L Gambert LLC. They were fearful that their business would close, and they could not find the information on the executive orders that were being released each day. The Mayor of Newark informed L Gambert LLC. that the city was shutting down and to have employees in the building.

Once employees could return to work, they were concerned about driving to the facility. With misinformation spreading about the curfew, employees were not confident they could travel to work without being stopped by the police.

Communication from government agencies and banks in charge of PPP loans was extremely difficult to follow or entirely inaccurate. The Mayor of Newark informed L Gambert LLC. that the city was shutting down and there should be no employees in the building.

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— Mitch Gambert, Operations Manager, L Gambert LLC

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SOLUTION

Immediately upon discovering that businesses were going to be shut down by state government, NJMEP sprang into action. NJMEP is not a lobbying group, but advocacy is a large portion of the business's efforts. By bringing together the New Jersey manufacturing community to highlight the importance of keeping all manufacturing open in the state, the Governor ultimately allowed these businesses to continue operating.

To address the misinformation that was prevalent during the first few weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, NJMEP made it a mission to examine, review, and summarize the governor's executive orders. These summaries were reviewed by NJMEP affiliate attorneys then shared with every manufacturer NJMEP could reach. Only the facts were provided.

Developing the Travel Letter that informed police that the driver is an essential manufacturer made employees more confident they could drive to work without being stopped by police. Even if they were pulled over, the letter was reviewed by NJMEP affiliate attorneys and signed by the business owner.

NJMEP made itself available to answer any questions L Gambert's leadership may have about state guidance or new executive orders as well. "Just knowing that we had NJMEP behind us and the ability to secure information from [NJMEP] and that was tantamount to me doing what I had to do to stay open" Mitch Gambert, Operations Manager, L Gambert LLC stated.

RESULTS

Remaining open and having access to the critical information which allowed L Gambert to continue operating benefited the company in the following ways:

- **RETAINED SALES: \$500,000**
- **RETAINED JOBS: 15**

"NJMEP was the only reliable source for information, and I mean that. There is no question of the value that I found from [NJMEP]. It was the one thing that let us feel comfortable with opening the doors."

— Mitch Gambert,
Operations Manager, L Gambert LLC

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