

COLLABORATION AND INFORMATION ALLOWS TEKTITE INDUSTRIES, INC. TO RIDE OUT PANDEMIC DISRUPTIONS

NJMEP SUPPORTING NEW JERSEY MANUFACTURING PAYS OFF

BACKGROUND

Tektite Industries, Inc. is headquartered in Trenton, New Jersey, and is a leading LED lighting manufacturer. Their lights are Made in the USA to ensure quality, reliability, and performance. Their customers include the outdoor, industrial, government, and military markets and they have been serving these clients since 1990.

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.

A challenge for New Jersey manufacturers like Tektite was understanding if their business would need to shut down. Additionally, Tektite experienced a massive drop in business as they rely on trade shows to secure a large portion of their orders.

"If we would have had to shut down like they did in Pennsylvania and other states, it would have very likely put us into the ground." Scott Mele, President Tektite stated.

With little clarity, a plethora of government support programs to consider, and an overnight drop in business, Tektite turned to NJMEP for support.

"I relied a lot on NJMEP for their tracking of the various support programs. The emails we received from NJMEP gave us the information we needed to get out in front to take advantage of COVID funding and support programs immediately once they were available. NJMEP is my trusted source for this kind of information. On top of that, NJMEP's advocacy ensured the governor understood you can't shut down manufacturing in New Jersey and that helped protect our business."

— Scott Mele, President Tektite Industries, Inc.

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SOLUTION

Immediately upon being informed 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.

Keeping Tektite open and providing them with the accurate information they needed gave the company the ability to retool equipment and begin manufacturing facemasks and face shields. It kept people busy, the employees working, and didn't cost much. By considering all manufacturing 'essential', manufacturers like Tektite were able to shift efforts toward alleviating the PPE shortage in New Jersey and throughout the nation.

NJMEP created the COVID-19 Supply Chain directory at the start of the pandemic. Manufacturers and suppliers could sign up to be part of the community of companies ensuring that the supply chain could continue unimpeded. Additionally, manufacturers in need of materials or support could sign up to be informed on additional resources and opportunities available in New Jersey. Tektite took advantage of this directory to collaborate with their peers and other local New Jersey manufacturers.

RESULTS

New Jersey manufacturing was under threat at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. NJMEP worked tirelessly to provide accurate, up-to-date information to manufacturers while at the same time working with local and state governments to ensure manufacturing stays open. The COVID-19 Supply Chain database provided manufacturers with new connections and networking opportunities to help keep business moving.

By collaborating with NJMEP, Tektite benefited in the following ways:

- **RETAINED SALES: \$70,000**
- **RETAINED JOBS: 9**
- **INCREASED SALES: \$60,000**

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