

NSF CERTIFICATION POSITIONS COMMERCIAL BAKERY TO EXPAND ITS CUSTOMER BASE

BACKGROUND:

Schripps European Bread, a privately held wholesale bread bakery in North Bergen, recently received NSF Certification enabling the company to gain access to a larger customer base...ones that require their customers to have food safety certification. The company, which employs 52 and has been in business for 25 years, makes deliveries of its 250 kinds of bread, 365 days a year, 3 times a day to its 175 customers in the New York City, Philadelphia and Atlantic City areas. Robert Johnsen became a partner in Schripps in 2010 and took the lead in this initiative.

CHALLENGE:

At the time the new partnership was created in 2010, the company was on a downward trend because of the impact of the 2008 recession on its customers. Robert Johnsen made many changes in order to position the company for growth. As a result, the business grew by double digits.

Mr. Johnsen's plan was to continue to grow profitably a minimum of 10% annually by pursuing larger clients. To do business with these larger clients Schripps needed to strengthen its food quality culture by meeting the audit requirements of NSF and eventually meet higher requirements of GFI's SQF certification.

Schripps has been talking to and working with NJMEP since receiving a phone call in 2010. Johnsen and his colleagues attended NJMEP workshops in Lean Food production, Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and OSHA's New Hazard Communication Standard. They also participated in webinars on Supply Chain, Business Continuity and Five Common Failures.

SOLUTION:

In 2012 NJMEP conducted a Food Safety Assessment for Schripps. This evaluation determined the kind of workforce training that would be required for the Bakery to pass the NSF Audit. NJMEP developed a training plan to address the NSF Audit requirements. Although the company was on the upswing, training costs could be high. NJMEP suggested that Mr. Johnsen apply for a NJDOL Skills4Jersey grant. Together they completed the application and waited for approval. Once received, the training began.

One hundred twenty-eight hours of training in preparation for the NSF Audit took place. Schripps' workers expanded their knowledge of GMP's (Good Manufacturing Practices), HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point), SSOP (Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures), Hazard Communication [Standards modified to adopt the GHS (Globally Harmonized System)], Allergen Control and Preventative Maintenance. 75% of the company participated, including all front-line workers. When asked about the process, Mr. Johnsen explained, "NJMEP assisted us with the writing of the grant, management of the training approved on the grant and all of the paperwork requirements from required forms to invoicing. The process went smoothly and we were able to complete 100% of our training in the contracted time frame of 12 months."

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RESULTS:

When surveyed by NIST on the initial assessment, consulting and participation in the Supply Chain webinar Schripps reported:

- (3) New hires
- (15) who were at risk were retained (By completion of the grant Schripps reported having 52 employees)
- \$100,000 was invested in new plant equipment and information technology

In regards to the workforce training Schripps:

- Invested \$28,015.00 in the program which was their portion of the matching requirements of the Skills4Jersey investment in the company.
- Reduced workforce training costs by \$25,600 as a result of the NJDOL investment in the company.
- The first line workforce became more competent, new factory leaders emerged and there more empowerment in the leading frontline workers and less reliance on management alone in regard to food safety & quality took place.

In addition, as a result of the training, European Bread passed the NSF Certification Audit which has opened doors that had previously been closed to them.

As a result of the first line work force being more competent, new factory leaders have emerged and there is more empowerment in the leading frontline workers and less reliance on management alone in regard to food safety & quality, he added. In addition, “We would not have been able to afford the cost of reaching NSF certification on our own and it was an essential part of the future and continued growth of our company. We are very thankful for this NJ DOL program and NJMEP’s assistance.

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