



**NJMEP**

Helping New Jersey Manufacture Success

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# SUCCESS STORIES

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# NJMEP SUCCESS STORIES

NJMEP serves as trusted business advisors and technical experts to New Jersey manufacturing companies. NJMEP has helped thousands of manufacturers improve operations, increase profits,

create or maintain jobs, and establish a foundation for long-term business growth and productivity.

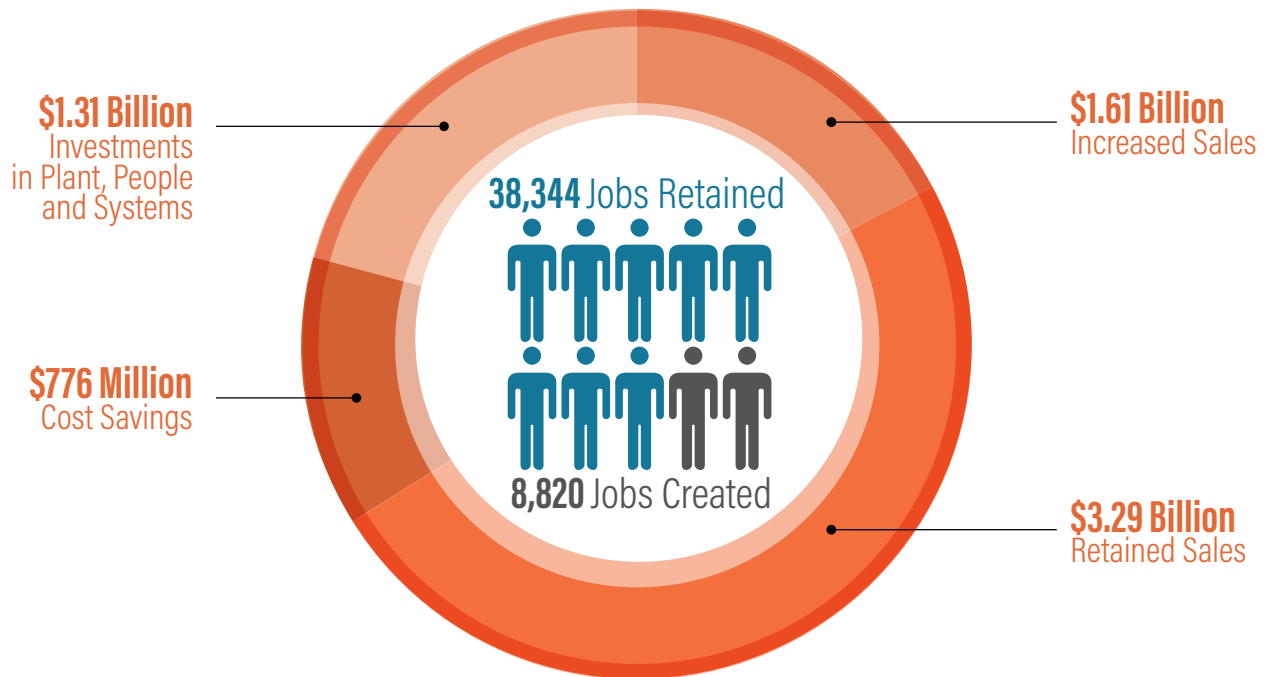
## OUR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON YOURS

After completing a project with NJMEP, our clients are surveyed by an independent third party to gauge the impact of our services on operational performance. Focus is placed on jobs retained or created, investments made, sales generated or retained and the calculation of cost savings.

NJMEP services produce measurable results for manufacturers in New Jersey. Quarterly independent third-party surveys of the clients we serve certify the economic impact.

The impacts shown below are based on clients surveyed since 2000.

Since 2000, NJMEP has helped manufacturers realize more than  
**\$6.53 Billion** Realized Value





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# **INNOVATION & GROWTH**

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# ROSE BRAND WIPERS INC. IS REWARDED FOR INNOVATING – WORKING WITH NJMEP TO SECURE R&D TAX CREDITS

## BACKGROUND:

Rose Brand Wipers is currently located in Secaucus, New Jersey (9th Congressional District; 32nd Legislative District) and is a leader in theatrical draperies and production supplies in the entertainment, educational, and exhibition space. This 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturing businesses fabricates custom stage curtains and assemblies for venues ranging from Broadway productions to school auditoriums and have been doing so since 1921. Rose Brand Wipers turned to NJMEP as a partner to support their growth and competitiveness in New Jersey and abroad.

## CHALLENGE:

Creating and manufacturing custom environments for such an extensive client base requires constant innovation and investment. Rose Brand Wipers is forced to invest their time and money refining their production process, service offerings, and exploring advanced materials to remain a leader in their industry. Without innovating, they would quickly fall behind the competition. The combination between the business expanding and constantly striving to improve tremendously costly.

## SOLUTION:

Rose Brand Wipers heard about another manufacturing business partnering with NJMEP to improve their competitiveness. A complimentary business assessment was conducted to gain an understanding of the company and its manufacturing processes after Rose Brand Wipers reach out to NJMEP. It was discovered the manufacturer would be a great candidate for R&D Tax Credits.

At first, leadership dismissed R&D Tax Credits, stating no R&D was conducted at the facility. NJMEP's Account Manager insisted they meet with the subject matter expert to explore what qualifies as R&D. Many manufacturers immediately envision lab coats and clean rooms when R&D is being discussed. However, nearly every manufacturer requires some form of innovation or has developed or is constantly developing new processes that allow them to perform their job better, safer, or produce their products more efficiently.

NJMEP worked with Rose Brand Wipers to conduct a close-up inspection of their facility and operations. An in-depth study was conducted with NJMEP's subject matter expert to see which of the manufacturer's actions met the following criteria.

After a preliminary review and the eligible R&D costs were reviewed, NJMEP combined this information with additional organizational data to provide Rose Brand Wipers an approximate Federal R&D tax credit.

The R&D Tax Credit Process includes...

- Reviewing the list of development projects and selected eligible R&D projects
- Client preparing a narrative or description of each project for the accounting firm's review.
- The accounting firm reviewed the narrative and made some revisions to eliminate ineligible areas or activities
- The client supplied information enabling the accounting firm to allocate costs to the eligible projects
- NJMEP worked with the client to gather costs related to the R&D projects
- The accounting firm prepared the necessary tax forms and submitted the tax return and R&D tax credit on the client's behalf.

NJMEP supported the manufacturers' needs every step of the way to secure the largest possible R&D Tax Credit. The tax credits they received continue to help the organization expand and grow in New Jersey.

## RESULTS:

Rose Brand Wipers has a long history of pushing the boundaries of its manufacturing process and service offerings. The ability to fully understand what processes qualify as R&D is critical so they can take full advantage of the R&D Tax Credit incentive program. The credit helps offset some of the costs of constantly improving and allows them to continue leading their industry.

"If we didn't have the R&D Tax Credits, I'm not sure we would have had the ability to make some of the acquisitions that help Rose Brand Wipers maintain its standing as an industry leader," said Bob Bertrand, Rose Brand Wipers General Manager.

An independent third-party survey captured the impact of Rose Brand Wipers engaging with NJMEP after 12 months:

- **INCREASE SALES: \$9,000,000**
- **EMPLOYEE CREATION: 27**
- **RETAINED SALES: \$17,000,000**
- **EMPLOYEE RETENTION: 10**
- **COST SAVINGS: \$385,000**

\*2019-2020 Survey Period\*

# CASE MEDICAL, INC. COMPLIES WITH EU'S NEW MDR 2017/745 STANDARDS FASTER, AND MORE EFFICIENTLY BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF NJMEP'S EXPERTISE

## BACKGROUND:

Case Medical, Inc. is a 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturer that produces and offers high-quality, cost-effective instrument processing products and services. They were originally founded in 1992 as a supplier of custom graphics trays to medical device manufacturers. In their 30 years of business, they've become a leader in the medical device space and are best known for the DIN-sized, SteriTite(R) universal sealed container and modular customizable MediTray(R) inserts that are regarded as the gold standard in instrument protection and organization. This local manufacturer prides itself on providing customers with products of the highest level of safety and effectiveness, using a universal design providing long-term cost savings and a high return on investment.

## CHALLENGE:

In May of 2017, the European Union adopted Medical Device Regulations MDR 2017/745 to replace both Medical Device Directive MDD 93/42/EEC and Active Implantable Medical Device Directive AIMDD 90/385/EEC. Issues with specific medical devices in the European Union forced them to add devices that were not regulated under the original directives. All medical device manufacturers and suppliers had 3 years to implement the changes required under the new regulation. There is no grandfather clause. This is a mandatory regulation for these businesses.

The challenge for manufacturers like Case Medical is when reviewing the language of the regulations, it is not necessarily written for their business. Understanding what exactly a manufacturer must do to comply is a full-time job and requires a working knowledge of exactly what auditors review during the audit process.

Even though Case Medical is compliant with all the FDA regulations, the EU MDR requires manufacturers to have even more documentation in place to meet these standards. It's incredibly time-consuming to document every step of the manufacturing process, especially for a business without experts on staff with a working knowledge of EU MDR.

## SOLUTION:

Case Medical reached out to their NJMEP Account Manager, Peter Russo for assistance in complying with these new regulations. They needed an expert that understands all the nuances that are involved in meeting these high standards and to find out exactly where the gaps were in their current documentation and quality process. Peter Russo was a former auditor and has done extensive research into the new EU regulations to provide manufacturers with a more concise and easier to understand process which helps ensure organizations would become compliant as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The first step to help Case Medical meet these new standards was to review the current QMS system and compare it to MDR 2017/745 compliance and audit current documentation and records. Peter Russo helped assess the MDR 2017/745 technical requirements and current Post Market Surveillance (PMS) vs. MDR CE Mark Classification Review.

Next, Peter Russo provided the results of the Gap Analysis. The NJMEP team outlined all non-conformances to the new MDR and provided options to rectify these issues. Additional training was needed to help Case Medical meet its goals of being MDR 2017/745 compliant. Case Medical then went on to take advantage of the CARES Act funding to help offset that future training.

## RESULTS:

Case Medical was able to successfully meet the new European standards for medical devices. Through their engagement with NJMEP's Subject Matter Expert, they were able to achieve compliance in a much more efficient and effective manner.

Throughout their time working with NJMEP, Case Medical cited the following results during their latest NIST Survey:

- **RETAINED SALES: \$200,000**
- **EMPLOYEE CREATION: 2**
- **COST SAVINGS: \$50,000**
- **NEW PLANT EQUIPMENT INVESTMENTS: \$1,500,000**

"Thanks to Peter Russo we were able to meet these standards in a much more lean fashion without hitting dead ends. When he was helping us, we would navigate the regulatory pathways at a much better pace. We are definitely happy with the service we received."

Michael Polozani, Microbiologist, Case Medical

# KNICKERBOCKER MACHINE SHOP LAUNCHES INTO NEW MARKETS

## BACKGROUND:

Knickerbocker Machine Shop Inc. has been in continuous operation since 1943. Starting as machine designers and welders in a 3-car garage in Paterson, New Jersey, the Company soon focused on producing the ASP Brand of austenitic stainless steel, duplex and high alloy pipe fittings, plugs and unions in 1944. The ASP Brand, marketed by Alloy Stainless Products Company Inc. became well known and internationally sold through PVF distributors for use in the chemical, pharmaceutical, petrochemical, power & energy, shipbuilding, and nuclear power industries.

## CHALLENGE:

Knickerbocker Machine Shop needed to improve its competitiveness and productivity. They had issues being able to expand their business and reach new prospects or new markets, and needed a way to engage with the community and business collaborators. It was imperative that the company develop new, sustainable revenue streams to remain viable.

## SOLUTION:

Knickerbocker Machine Shop reached out to NJMEP for assistance and NJMEP met with Knickerbocker's senior staff to complete an on-site assessment with a plan to identify and clarify the organization's sales and marketing strategies.

The project focused on a needs analysis, and conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. Through a structured process, NJMEP helped Knickerbocker identify and characterize the markets, trends, value chains, and website enhancements.

NJMEP initiated a program that consisted of individual training modules: Destination Innovation, Establishment of Growth Opportunity Criteria & Project Goal Setting, Sales & Marketing Outreach Planning, and Monthly Market Scouting & Business Development Support.

The training produced:

- An expansion of Knickerbocker's ability to reach new prospects and or new markets through a carefully planned and professionally executed growth strategy.
- Distinct criteria that will define, weigh and go on to set a hierarchy of the organization's efforts as related to top line growth.
- Expert facilitation and project support that will instill a: Plan, Do, Check and Act inspired system to drive market diversification efforts.
- A structured process for identifying market needs and opportunities, while building a strategy and tactics to pursue carefully vetted market opportunities.

## RESULTS:

After completing the training, Knickerbocker created new marketing messages and established a marketing strategy. The company is in a more sustainable position now that it has a formalized marketing plan and website in place.

Knickerbocker Machine Shop benefited from NJMEP's help in many ways:

- **RETAINED SALES: \$4,500,000**
- **COST SAVINGS: \$50,000**
- **SAVINGS ON INVESTMENTS: \$50,000**
- **WORKFORCE PRACTICES: \$50,000**
- **NEW SALES: \$150,000**

# PURATOS CORP

## SIX SIGMA GREEN BELT TRAINING

### BACKGROUND:

Puratos is an international group offering a full range of innovative products, raw materials and application expertise to the bakery, patisserie and chocolate sectors. Their headquarters are just outside Brussels (Belgium), where the company was founded in 1919. Almost a century later, their products and services are available in over 100 countries around the world and, in many cases, are produced by their network of local subsidiaries. Above all, they aim to be 'reliable partners in innovation' helping their customers around the world to deliver nutritious and tasty food to their local communities.

### CHALLENGES:

Puratos Corp aims to be a reliable partner in innovation helping customers deliver nutritious and tasty food to their local communities. Customers tend to be artisans, industrial manufacturers, supermarkets, and food service companies. They wanted their employees to have the tools and techniques to improve and evaluate supply chain logistics and distribution processes to improve production in daily operations. With those goals Puratos wanted to go through Six Sigma Greenbelt training.

### SOLUTION:

Puratos worked with NJMEP to work on the Six Sigma Greenbelt Certification. Six Sigma is a universally recognized standard of excellence for continuous process improvement. This course will prepare all participants for Green Belt certification – an accomplishment that will add value to each of their their careers. The participants will have the tools and techniques to improve and evaluate supply chain logistics and distribution processes to improve production in daily operations. The students will understand project opportunities and determine quantifiable savings by participating in Six Sigma training.

In this 5-day course attendees will master the use of the Six Sigma approach to quantify the critical quality issues in the company. The Philosophy of Six Sigma recognizes that there is a direct correlation between the number of product defects, wasted operating costs, and the level of customer satisfaction.

The implementation of Six Sigma is a team process. As a Six Sigma Green Belt, attendees will be equipped to support the Six Sigma implementation in their company.

### RESULTS:

Puratos Corp benefited greatly from NJMEP's help in many ways:

- **NEW SALES: \$100,000**
- **RETAINED SALES: \$100,000**
- **COST SAVINGS: \$200,000**
- **RETAINED EMPLOYEES: 2**

"The training was insightful and taught in a way that it could be tailored to any industry that is looking to become better, cheaper, and faster all while improving quality. The training was data driven and gave us tools to create metrics to assist us with tightening our spec."

Jaimian Davis, Warehouse Manager of Puratos Corp.



# C.B. KAUPP & SONS UPGRADES TO MEET DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CYBERSECURITY STANDARDS

## BACKGROUND:

C.B. Kaupp & Sons is an ISO 9001:2008 + AS9100:2009 Rev C certified manufacturer and leader in the Hydro Forming, and Precision CNC Machining space. They are experts in sheet metal hydro forming. Hydro forming allows C.B. Kaupp & Sons to provide both prototype and production quantities. The DoD often turns to this New Jersey manufacturer because of its reputation for producing high-quality products and prototypes.

## CHALLENGES:

New cybersecurity rules and regulations are requiring manufacturers to implement DoD Cybersecurity Standards. Manufacturers will lose out on DoD contracts if they aren't actively working to become compliant with these new standards. The DoD made it mandatory that all contractors and subcontractors begin taking cybersecurity training and implementing cybersecurity safeguards throughout their facility and manufacturing operations.

C.B. Kaupp & Sons wanted to be proactive. They began training key members of the organization before DoD Cybersecurity Standard requirements began to speed up.

## SOLUTION:

As with any new regulations, the rollout is complex, taking place in sections, and is often unclear. C.B. Kaupp & Sons wanted to remain proactive. Once they received word that the new rules would begin rolling out and that DoD contracts started to mention the new requirements, they began looking for support.

NJMEP is in the unique position of having access to the details and intricacies behind the new DoD cybersecurity regulations. NJMEP works directly with the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) which released the NIST Special Publication 800-171. This document governs Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) in Non-Federal Information Systems and Organizations. It is the set of standards that define how to safeguard and distribute material deemed sensitive but not classified.

C.B. Kaupp & Sons saw the value of participating in a training workshop with NJMEP because of its unmatched insight into NIST 800-171 and the latest regulatory changes for DoD contractors and subcontractors.

## RESULTS:

C.B. Kaupp & Sons work with NJMEP to prepare for new DoD cybersecurity regulations and requirements have kept their business in compliance. They can continue to bid on DoD contracts while effectively protecting their business from cyber threats.

This New Jersey manufacturer benefited in the following ways from engaging with NJMEP in 2019:

- **INCREASE SALES AMOUNT: \$10,000**
- **RETAINED SALE: \$10,000**
- **EMPLOYEE CREATION: 4**
- **EMPLOYEES RETAINED: 4**

"It's very important for the whole supply chain to stay on top of cyber threats. We definitely recommend this cybersecurity workshop to other manufacturers. It was very helpful. If you did a rework of this course, I'd certainly comeback."

James Kimball, Compliance & Customer  
Service Manager for C.B. Kaupp & Sons Inc.

# WORD CENTER PRINTING REGAINS LOST GROUND WITH DIGITAL MARKETING TRAINING

## BACKGROUND

Word Center Printing, established in 1983, began as a copy shop and quickly grew into a full-service commercial printing company located in Hamilton Township, New Jersey. Company leadership is dedicated to continuous improvement and innovation. Investing in the future has been fundamental in Word Center Printing's continued success and is a cornerstone of its business strategy. Word Center Printing provides full printing, graphic design, and copying services. The Word Center Printing team is committed to providing the highest quality product and the most value possible to all its customers.

"In printing, you have to adapt and pivot constantly" explained Marilyn Silverman, Owner, Word Center Printing.

## CHALLENGE

COVID-19 had an impact on nearly every person and business around the world. Word Center Printing was not immune to the disruptions brought on by the pandemic. Even though NJMEP helped ensure all manufacturing would be considered essential and remain open, without a steady stream of business manufacturers couldn't maintain cash flow. Word Center Printing's largest customer closed once stay-at-home orders were enacted. This had a monumental impact on the manufacturer's bottom line.

"I thought to myself, we're going to have to get more business doing other things or we're going to die here. So, I looked at Social Media marketing, but it was a mystery," said Marilyn Silverman, Owner, Word Center Printing.

Through close collaboration with Word Center Printing's NJMEP Account Manager, the need for marketing upskilling was identified soon after the first engagement with the manufacturer. To help offset the impact of losing their biggest customer for over 2 months due to the pandemic, a solution was identified by exploring service options with NJMEP.

## SOLUTION

The CARES ACT included funds that would be provided to MEP centers like NJMEP to create opportunities that will help manufacturers weather this uncertain business landscape. One of the programs that were developed is 'Digital Marketing for Manufacturers in 2020'. This program is comprised of five, 4-hour training sessions on a variety of marketing topics. A live instructor guides the manufacturer through five sessions that include 'Your Website and Search Engine Optimization, Content Management Systems,' 'Automated Marketing (Hubspot, Salesforce, Act-On),' 'Brand Strategy,' 'Social Media,' 'Other Media - Podcasts, Blogging, Apps and Video.'

'Digital Marketing for Manufacturer in 2020' was the ideal solution to address the needs of Word Center Printing. It would provide the upskilling opportunity to Marilyn so she can implement her new skills to drive more business.

Marilyn worked with NJMEP and its marketing resource for a total of 20 hours. Every module in the 'Digital Marketing for Manufacturers in 2020' curriculum is specifically designed to be easily absorbed and implemented by the manufacturer. Marilyn had direct access to a digital marketing expert so she can ask questions and use real-world examples to ensure the training would be utilized and drive results.

## RESULTS

NJMEP was able to provide the following value to Word Center Printing throughout 2020:

- **INCREASED SALES: COVID-19 CAUSED SALES TO DROP 30% YEAR OVER YEAR, BUT A REINVIGORATED MARKETING EFFORT IS HELPING DRIVE NEW BUSINESS.**
- **RETAINED SALES: \$45,000**
- **EMPLOYEES RETAINED: 4**

"Once COVID-19 hit, I immediately heard from NJMEP that we were allowed to remain open. That was a lifesaver for us. We did an extensive upgrade of our website and NJMEP's resource taught me and the staff how to boost posts on Facebook. He also taught me the value of having relevant Google Reviews and how to put more emphasis on the services that we wanted to sell."

Marilyn Silverman, Owner, Word Center Printing.

# ZERO SURGE DOUBLES DOWN ON DIGITAL MARKETING TO EXPAND BUSINESS

## BACKGROUND

Zero Surge, located in Frenchtown, New Jersey began in 1989 when J. Rudy Harford was presented with the challenge of reinventing the surge suppressor. By closely examining failed surge suppressors Harford was inspired to improve the classic design. He developed and patented a series-mode surge suppression circuit that protects against the worst surges and he only continued to improve his design. Harford never stopped improving and Zero Surge's entire product line incorporates his revolutionary surge suppression technologies that are more reliable and more durable than other technologies on the market today.

## CHALLENGE

Surge suppressors are used in a plethora of industries spanning from restaurants and IT support to military and manufacturing and are critical in large-scale infrastructure projects as well. Zero Surge has a massive client pool but cutting through the noise is always difficult. All the time and effort spent upgrading their infrastructure while continuing to service key accounts and new business meant there was little time to spend on their digital presence. Their website was aging, and they weren't taking advantage of social media to strengthen their brand recognition and generate leads.

Since there are so many kinds of customers it creates a challenge when it comes to creating a focused marketing message. Zero Surge is a business made up of electronic and engineering experts. The individual responsible for marketing wears multiple hats and strictly focusing on digital and traditional corporate communications is not an option.

The combination of a large customer base and a product-focused business meant that Zero Surge was having trouble leveraging marketing to generate sales and growth opportunities.

## SOLUTION

Zero Surge has engaged heavily with NJMEP events, open enrollment courses, and is active in the manufacturing community. Their product is unique and their needs are specialized. This history of engagement and trust made it easy for Zero Surge to reach out to NJMEP and talk through some of their pain points.

An initial consultation was conducted between Zero Surge leadership and their NJMEP Account Manager. NJMEP has visited the facility a few times over the course of 6 years, but it is critical the complimentary business assessment is as up-to-date as possible before exploring possible solutions to any business challenge. The Account Manager was introduced to the manufacturing process, toured the facility, and sat down for a lengthy discussion to ensure they understood all of Zero Surge's

challenges. It was confirmed that exploring digital marketing could be an ideal way to offset COVID-19 disruptions in the short term while also helping their business grow and expand in the long term.

The next step was to bring in the Digital Marketing resource alongside the NJMEP Account Manager to meet with leadership. The Digital Marketing resource was introduced to Zero Surge and a thorough examination of Zero Surge's current marketing materials and digital presence was conducted. Once all the current materials were reviewed, an extensive digital plan was presented to Zero Surge.

NJMEP and Zero Surge is collaborating in the following areas:  
Social Media activity and engagement – NJMEP is training Zero Surge on social media best practices. Social Media posts are developed weekly and the Digital Marketing resource works with the Zero Surge team to refine the message.

Original content development in the form of blog posts – Blog Posts and original web content is being produced to enhance the manufacturer's digital presence. The client is being educated on best posting practices and the value of original content to their digital marketing efforts.

Website Design – A new home page is being developed to increase lead capture. An updated theme is being used to make the site more functional and appealing. New photos and graphics are being added to clarify the applications and audience reach.

Promotional Video Development – 6 promotional videos are being produced to serve as content for social media and featured website content.

Amazon Content Updates – NJMEP is assisting Zero Surge in updating and improving its brand content for Amazon while educating Zero Surge on the best eCommerce product description practices.

## RESULTS

Manufacturers that can effectively deliver their message in the digital space can increase their brand presence and bottom line. Zero Surge took the initiative to partner with NJMEP and improve its digital marketing efforts through a combination of training and consultative programs.

Zero Surge cited the following impacts from working with NJMEP over the past 12 months...

- **INCREASED SALES: \$90,000**
- **COST SAVINGS: \$10,000**
- **EMPLOYEES RETAINED: 7**

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# **OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

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# CALANDRA'S ITALIAN & FRENCH BAKERY

## SQF COMPLIANCE

### BACKGROUND:

Calandra's story begins in 1962 with the opening of Calandra's Bakery in Newark, New Jersey.

Luciano Calandra, an Italian immigrant, had been in America for just five years when he went into business for himself and opened a small Italian and French bakery. Mr. Calandra and his wife Ortenza worked hard day and night, and their bakery quickly developed a reputation for producing delicious bread.

Over the next 20 years the business took off as Mr. and Mrs. Calandra's two sons, Anthony and Luciano Jr., began working in the family business. Not only did Mr. Calandra teach his sons the inner workings of the bakery, but he also instilled in them his business principles of a strong work ethic, an emphasis on family, and a belief that the customer is always right. Now, over 50 years later, Mr. Calandra's philosophy remains the guiding light for the family business.

Today, Calandra's Bakery in Newark is a 50,000 square foot operation and the family now has two additional bakeries, one in Fairfield and one in Caldwell. The three bakeries deliver their products to more than 500 supermarkets, delis, restaurants, catering halls and sporting arenas in the tri-state area.

In addition to their bakeries, the Calandra family now owns and operates several hotels, restaurants, and apartment buildings in northern New Jersey. The family also produces and sells their own line of olive oil, coffee, fresh pasta, homemade sauces, and wines from their vineyard in Italy.

Although the family's business has grown substantially since 1962 and employees over 700 employees, two things remain unchanged: Calandra's Bakery is still synonymous with delicious bread, and the family remains driven by hard work, traditional family values, and a focus on customer service.

### CHALLENGE:

With a company with as much growth as Calandra's has, keeping up with date production records, training records, recipe books etc, was a great problem for Calandra's. Also they had no SQF Certification to go after accounts like Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. This was a big challenge for their business.

### SOLUTION:

Calandra's worked with NJMEP and hired a consultant to get them to get them an SQF certification. NJMEP supported Calandra's with trading, paper work, finding the right consultant for the SQF training, and was instrumental in them navigating a grant for government reimbursement for most of the SQF certification costs.

Calandra's can now supply large companies such as Whole Foods and their line level managers have learned many new organizational skills. Their paper trails are up to date and their managers went from a "how are we ever going to get this done" to a very positive "yes we can" attitude. They have a much more cohesive team.

The consulting took up to 8 hours to support preparation for the SQF audit.

### RESULTS:

Calandra's Italian & French Bakery benefited greatly from NJMEP's help in many ways:

- **NEW SALES: \$100,000**
- **NEW INVESTMENT IN WORKFORCE SKILLS OR PRACTICES: \$3,000**

"NJMEP should be supported because they truly take care of the manufacturers. They look out for them and find ways for them to succeed."

Kristin Calandra, Vice President of Calandra's Bakery

# PRECISION CUSTOM COATINGS GOES THROUGH A LEAN TRANSFORMATION

## BACKGROUND:

Precision Custom Coatings LLC manufactures and distributes interlining products. The company offers woven, nonwoven, and knitted fusible; needle punch and fiberfill; top fuse and sew-ins interlinings. Additionally, it provides adhesives, taping solutions, stretch linings, mattress and pillow encasing allergen-proof fabrics, and mattress protectors. The company caters to Filtration, bedding, automotive, and apparel markets. Precision Custom Coatings LLC was founded in 1987 and is headquartered in Totowa, New Jersey.

## CHALLENGE:

The cluttered environment of the factory floor and machine shop mitigated their process flows and could negatively impact production and the quality of work.

## SOLUTION:

Precision Custom Coatings recognized the need for Lean training in order to avoid hurting their overseas and domestic position with major customers. Precision Custom Coatings embarked on their Lean journey with the help of NJMEP. The first step in the journey consisted of an on-site assessment and a recommendation on how 5S System techniques followed by introduction of Lean concepts can help all production workers.

The 5S system is a Lean process that is organized around the following ideas: Sorting, Setting in Order, Shining, Standardizing and Sustain. The goal is to create specific places for paperwork, tools and equipment so that they can be located within 30 seconds. The 5S process relies on employees taking control of their work areas and suggesting and implementing improvements.

The Training Allowed Participants to:

- Describe the difference in workplace appearance and functionality before and after 5S process has been applied
- Perform an in-depth audit of workplace organization and standardization
- Organize the workplace by applying the concepts of sort, set-in order and shine
- Standardize procedures to maintain and control an organized workplace using visual controls
- Describe how 5S can help to improve workplace environmental health and safety
- Experience firsthand how 5S system reduces waste and improves productivity and quality

## RESULTS:

Satisfied with the training, Precision Custom Coatings began applying lean processes to the manufacturing floor. Floor level training and improvements have helped minimize the time spent travelling between different work stations and around misplaced equipment, resulting in increased work efficiency. They've worked at sustaining the changes they've made and to continually find new ways to make the process better, cleaner, and faster.

Over the past year, the company has increased significant growth gains, including:

- **INCREASED SALES: \$1,300,000**
- **COST SAVINGS: \$150,000**
- **SAVINGS ON INVESTMENTS: \$50,000**
- **WORKFORCE PRACTICES: \$99,000**
- **EMPLOYEES RETAINED: 5**

# ZAGO MANUFACTURING COMPANY REDUCES INVENTORY TO BOOST THE BOTTOM LINE

## BACKGROUND:

ZAGO Manufacturing Company is an award-winning family-owned business manufacturing high-tech sealing fasteners and switch boots. Their story began over 27 years ago at the New Jersey Institute of Technology Enterprise Development Center Small Business Incubator. From there, ZAGO Manufacturing grew into a full-fledged global manufacturing company operating from a 100-year old refurbished factory located in Newark, New Jersey.

## CHALLENGE:

Inventory is difficult to manage. Having too much is a costly burden. Too much product sitting on shelves is wasted money. ZAGO Manufacturing was working with a tremendous amount of inventory generated from over-production of custom-manufactured parts. This inventory was taking up space, time, and putting stress on employees. Much of it became almost impossible to find and it was clogging up their system.

To first identify the challenge, ZAGO Manufacturing worked closely with their NJMEP Account Manager. Together they found that the company wanted to address their packed warehouse and uncover where else they could add value to their business.

## SOLUTION:

NJMEP and ZAGO agreed that an Inventory Management and Value Stream Mapping project would provide the highest possible return on their investment.

To address the inventory challenge, the first step was to implement a new inventory management system. The Value Stream Mapping project helped identify non-value-added waste in the entire workflow. Jackie Luciano, Vice President, and Gail Friedberg, CEO of ZAGO worked together with NJMEP's consultant to identify the system that would make the most sense for their operation. Leadership guided the implementation of an inventory management system by following the guidance of NJMEP's resource. The next step was to determine what to keep, what inventory to dispose of and how to keep better track of it all. ZAGO Manufacturing now has a more efficient and effective way to process and manage inventory moving forward.

## RESULTS:

ZAGO Manufacturing has experienced the following benefits from their work with NJMEP in 2019:

- **RETAINED SALES: \$200,000**
- **EMPLOYEE RETENTION: 2**
- **EMPLOYEE CREATION: 1**
- **COST SAVINGS: \$150,000**
- **SAVING INVESTMENTS: \$50,000**

"Sometimes you need someone from the outside to point out [an inefficiency] to make a major change in the way you operate.

I would recommend NJMEP to any manufacturer. Some of the best companies I know have worked with NJMEP and have become even better."

Gail Friedberg, CEO, ZAGO Manufacturing

# CUTTING EDGE INDUSTRIES SCORES BIG WITH R&D TAX CREDITS

## BACKGROUND:

Cutting Edge Industries is a diverse American manufacturing firm that specializes in Lighting, Furniture, Funeral & Cremation, Awards & Promotional Products, Souvenirs and Giftware, and more. Their staff designs, manufactures, assembles, and finishes all their products from the highest quality materials right here in the USA. With such a wide range of manufacturing capabilities and services, from metal casting to computer drafting and design, Cutting Edge Industries works to continuously improve and innovate the business to develop the best possible processes to ensure customers remain satisfied.

A testament to Cutting Edge Industries drive to offer their clients high quality products and services is the recent expansion of their product line in response to COVID-19. The company developed and is now manufacturing Plexiglass floor and countertop partitions.

## CHALLENGE:

New Jersey is an expensive state to conduct business. Cutting Edge Industries is always working to improve, and that requires investments in equipment and technology. Securing additional funds that can be invested back into the company is challenging, especially with the high cost of doing business in New Jersey. Cutting Edge Industries and their NJMEP Account Manager connected to brainstorm solutions for securing additional capital.

## SOLUTION:

To secure additional capital, quickly, and for a low up-front investment, Cutting Edge Industries and NJMEP landed on securing R&D Tax Credits. Many businesses don't think they would qualify for a research and development-based tax credit. However, as Cutting Edge Industries discovered, many manufacturers' day-to-day processes or unique job roles can qualify a manufacturer for R&D Tax Credits. Cutting Edge Industries was able to qualify for Federal tax credits at the end of the easy R&D Tax Credit process.

The R&D Tax Credit Process Includes:

- Reviewing the list of development projects and selected eligible R&D projects
- Client preparing a narrative or description of each project for the accounting firm's review.
- The accounting firm reviewed the narrative and made some revisions to eliminate ineligible areas or activities
- The client supplied information enabling the accounting firm to allocate costs to the eligible projects
- NJMEP worked with the client to gather costs that related to the R&D projects
- The accounting firm prepared the necessary tax forms and submitted the tax return and R&D tax credit on the client's behalf

"Anytime [Our Account Manager] has something to say, we always listen. Most of the stuff NJMEP comes up with is very helpful to manufacturers. It's good to have them as a resource." Steven Filler, President, Cutting Edge Casting Inc.

NJMEP and Cutting Edge Industries has a strong working relationship. Their Account Manager works closely with the company to ensure they're aware of all the unique opportunities NJMEP has to offer. Together they work to uncover pain points and identify ways for their business to become more profitable and competitive. This close working relationship ensures that Cutting Edge Industries takes advantage of all the programs that can improve their business.

## RESULTS:

Cutting Edge Industries successfully secured their federal R&D Tax Credits and reinvested these funds back into their business. This allowed them to offset the cost of new high-tech equipment allowing them to expand their manufacturing capabilities.

Cutting Edge Industries engagement with NJMEP in this endeavor and other 2019 projects benefited the company in the following ways:

- **INCREASE SALES: \$25,000**
- **RETAINED SALES: \$25,000**
- **RETAINED EMPLOYEES: 2**
- **COST SAVINGS: \$15,000**



# LOCAL NEW JERSEY MANUFACTURER WORKS WITH NJMEP TO UTILIZE STATE INCENTIVE THAT REWARDS R&D

## SUPERIOR GLASS & METAL, LLC REALIZES THE SCALE AND SCOPE OF THEIR R&D PRACTICES

### BACKGROUND

Founded by Emil Saporito, Joseph Zisa, and Kenneth Warnet, Superior Glass & Metal, LLC has been directly involved in the fabrication and construction of commercial building aluminum windows and doors since 2005. Together they bring over 30 years of experience in the installation of Storefront, Curtainwall Framing, Glass and Glazing. This 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturing business is known for its quality, attention to detail, and ability to complete projects on time. Their experience allows the organization to take on complex projects and provide solutions to any of the challenges that are common when architectural projects begin to take shape. Based in Wyckoff, New Jersey, they can custom fabricate window jambs and sills in a variety of metals depending on the architectural drawings.

Superior Glass & Metal, LLC and its leadership's experience allow the 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturer to continuously improve and innovate their processes to remain ahead of the competition.

### CHALLENGE

New Jersey is an expensive state to conduct business. Taxes always weigh heavily on any operation, but this is especially true when it comes to a small manufacturing shop in northern New Jersey. While moving past the COVID-19 pandemic, Superior Glass & Metal, LLC was looking for any relief after nearly 2 years of disruptions. An influx of capital would allow this 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturing shop to move forward without any additional pressure from an uncertain year as demand for commercial properties and construction began to speed up.

Many manufacturers often overlook certain programs and incentives because they underestimate their work. New Jersey gives manufacturing businesses access to unique ways to offset costs and provides ways to create a more manageable business environment.

### SOLUTION

Superior Glass & Metal, LLC was searching for ways to improve their business.

They were open to learning about new options that may have not been previously explored. After the Controller participated in NJMEP's annual State-of-the-State of Manufacturing event they were connected with their local Account Manager. Ryan Sheehy, their local Account Manager conducted a General Business survey to learn more about their manufacturing operation and see where NJMEP could add value.

After developing an understanding of their needs, current operation, and workforce, it was clear a long-term relationship and growth plan were required but immediate support could be provided. This manufacturing operation was in the ideal position to benefit from R&D Tax Credits. They didn't notice the amount of R&D they were practicing daily. Many businesses imagine R&D only takes place when scientists in cleanrooms are involved. However, manufacturers of all kinds are constantly improving their specific processes in their respective industries. This 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturing business has decades of experience in the Glass and Glazing industry. All this experience, years of trial and error, and their diverse backgrounds culminated into an incredibly efficient and effective business thanks to the R&D that was taking place.

NJMEP and its resource provided support and assistance every step of the way to ensure compliance while also capturing all qualified R&D activities

### RESULTS

Superior Glass & Metal, LLC was successfully able to secure an impactful R&D Tax Credit. These funds were able to be reinvested into their business, and its people. The following results were provided by the 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturer through an independent third-party survey from the company's engagement with NJMEP over a 12-month period.

- **INCREASED SALES: \$1,500,000**
- **RETAINED SALES: \$3,000,000**
- **EMPLOYEE RETENTION: 15**
- **COST SAVINGS AMOUNT: \$550,000**

"We started out by getting involved through their State-of-the-State event which caught my interest because it gave me the chance to voice my concerns with local legislators, but then I had a chance to learn how they could help my business. Working with NJMEP and their experts was necessary for our local manufacturing business."

# FOOD SAFETY TRAINING HELPS ENSURE SEA BREEZE REMAINS COMPLIANT AND MAINTAINS HIGH-QUALITY STANDARDS

## BACKGROUND

New Jersey is known as the Garden State, but farming is only part of the state's impressive food industry. 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturer, Sea Breeze is a fourth-generation, family-owned manufacturer and distributor of Premium Beverages On Tap in the Metro New York-New Jersey area since 1925. They manufacture beverage concentrates, milkshake bases, and syrups, including their famous Bosco Chocolate Syrup at their 40,000 square foot facility in Towaco, New Jersey. Sea Breeze has over 75 employees and offers a variety of services in addition to their manufactured products.

The company serves national and regional customers through the installation of custom dispensing equipment and provides emergency repair services 365 days a year. This 'MADE in New Jersey' manufacturing business is a staple of New Jersey, and their products can be found in so many households across the United States. Bars, restaurants, healthcare facilities, schools, catering halls, and establishments of all kinds turn to Sea Breeze as well for their ability to custom install dispensing equipment designed to meet their needs and can rely on this local business to provide support nearly around the clock, all year long. Sea Breeze is a well-established food manufacturer that built a trusted brand right here in New Jersey.

## CHALLENGE

Food manufacturers are held to high standards. Any product meant for human consumption must be produced in a facility that meets strict requirements and by a workforce that has the right training and certifications. This high standard is especially true for a company like Sea Breeze which hosts an impressive roster of in-house talent. Professional Sales Consultants, Production, quality assurance, their own food science laboratory, warehousing and logistics, office staff, and administration make up the entire Sea Breeze team. This presents a massive competitive advantage but also a tremendous challenge. Maintaining customer trust, a high level of service, and the ability to produce a high-quality product requires a well-trained workforce that follows all food-safety best practices.

Food regulatory bodies require businesses to participate in annual training for specialized employees and any time Sea Breeze brings on new members of the team, those individuals must be brought up to speed. Additionally, when staff are promoted to a new role, they must be trained to ensure a smooth transition, and production is not hindered in any way.

## SOLUTION

Sea Breeze has a long history with NJMEP. When new customized training opportunities are available and the company brings on new people, they turn to their local MEP center to upskill their staff. They recently hired new regulatory employees and brought on new people to work in the food science laboratory.

NJMEP has the capabilities and expertise to provide training in nearly any area within a food manufacturing operation through its highly regarded food manufacturing training suite of services. In-depth courses are led by some of the nations' most highly regarded food regulatory experts in a customizable, engaging, and efficient manner.

A total of 17 courses were identified to meet the regulatory, compliance, and upskilling needs of the client. 30 training days were provided to 10 employees over a 12-month period.

The following Quality Control – Food Safety courses and training were facilitated by NJMEP:

- Food Allergens
- Foreign Supplier Verification Program (FSVP)
- Food Defense
- FDA Food Labeling Nutritional Facts Updates
- HACCP
- SQF Practitioner
- Preventative Controls for Human Food PCQI
- Internal Auditing for Food Safety Management
- CGMP Requirement & Readiness
- Cleaning & Sanitation
- Food Recalls and Withdrawal
- Corrective Action and Root Cause Analysis

## RESULTS

All clients that work with their local MEP are surveyed by an independent third party to record the impact the projects conducted had on that business. Sea Breeze participated in their client survey after NJMEP's training concluded.

NJMEP was cited with the following impact by Sea Breeze:

- **RETAINED SALES: \$50,000**
- **COST SAVINGS, \$15,000**
- **INVESTMENT IN WORKFORCE PRACTICES: \$15,000**
- **NEW EMPLOYEES: 1**
- **EMPLOYEES RETAINED: 4**

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

## 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.

## 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**

# MIRA PLASTICS SOURCES PPE AND REMAINS OPEN THANKS TO NJMEP COLLABORATION

## BACKGROUND

Mira Plastics Co., Inc. is a full-service plastic injection molding manufacturer located in a 62,000 square foot modern facility in Newton, New Jersey. This manufacturer has been committed to producing custom plastic parts with the highest quality and care since they were established in 1955. The state-of-the-art plant utilizes the latest technologies and green manufacturing practices to provide their customers with the high-quality products while making the smallest possible environmental impact. Mira Plastics is a leader in the plastic injection molding space, supplying life science, food manufacturing, and a plethora of other sectors throughout the tri-state and the nation.

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 Mira Plastics. They were fearful that their business would close and couldn't find the information on the executive orders that were being released each day.

Securing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was a serious challenge for this manufacturer. Without having the proper PPE, Mira Plastics would not be able to help ensure the safety of its employees. Employers needed to provide their workforce with PPE to keep their facility open. Masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, cleaning products, etc. were nearly impossible to source at the start of the pandemic. If businesses like Mira Plastics could not acquire adequate PPE, they would have to close their doors even if the state deemed them essential.

## 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.

NJMEP was able to help Mira Plastics secure the critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for their employees. Mira Plastics filled out the COVID-19 Supply Chain Support form and NJMEP connected the company to manufacturers and suppliers that had PPE available. This collaboration allowed the manufacturer to keep their business open and provide their employees with essential PPE.

## RESULTS

Keeping manufacturing progressing and competitive in New Jersey is the goal of NJMEP. COVID-19 presented a whole new set of challenges for local manufacturers. NJMEP remained agile and continued supporting businesses through this difficult time.

Mira Plastics was able to benefit in the following ways through their collaboration and work with NJMEP:

- **EMPLOYEES RETAINED: 20**
- **ABLE TO SOURCE PPE AND REMAIN OPEN**
- **RECEIVED UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON STATE AND FEDERAL GUIDANCE**

# NJMEP AND FACE SHIELDS HELP PUT HATTERAS PRESS BACK ON TRACK

## BACKGROUND

Hatteras Press has been manufacturing in New Jersey for over 30 years. Located in Tinton Falls, this full-service print shop is committed to providing clients with the highest quality print solutions which are produced 95% in-house. Hatteras Press is a strong believer in establishing true relationships with their customers and community.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced local governments all over the United States to begin mandating the shutdown of businesses deemed 'non-essential'. 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 Hatteras Press. 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.

Sales began to dip and uncertainty on which businesses would be deemed essential continued to put even more pressure on Hatteras Press.

## 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 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.

Hatteras Press began manufacturing face shields and temporary bedframes out of materials that they would normally print on.

Participating in the NJMEP COVID-19 supply chain database allowed Hatteras Press to get their newly manufactured face shields in front of state officials. This connection between the state and Hatteras Press was facilitated through the NJMEP COVID-19 supply chain database. New Jersey's state police needed face shields and Hatteras Press was able to connect with them through the NJMEP COVID-19 supply chain database. This resulted in the state of New Jersey placing an order with Hatteras Press for 100,000 face shields.

## RESULTS

Collaborating with NJMEP benefited Hatteras Press in the following ways:

- **NEW SALES: \$1,500,000**
- **NEW EMPLOYEES: 50**

“There are a lot of manufacturers in the same boat as us, starting out small and doing the same thing for the last 20 years. We didn't know where to start. We knew we had to make a change to stay ahead of our competitors and we benefitted from the services NJMEP provides. I love dealing with all NJMEP resources. It's been a great time.”

Matt Snyder, VP of Operations, SPEX CertiPrep

# 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.

## 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**

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# **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

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# SUPERVISORY AND FSMA TRAINING KEEPS FOOD MANUFACTURER A LEADER IN THE INDUSTRY

## BACKGROUND:

Tropical Cheese began as the dream of Rafael Mendez. Born in Las Villas, Cuba, Mr. Mendez came to the US at seventeen with \$50 and a dream. Armed with experience from working in his father's cafeteria he gravitated to the food industry, first making deliveries, then establishing a small milk route and finally starting Tropical Cheese in Perth Amboy, NJ. Thirty plus years later this family owned business remains the favorite cheese of many Hispanic households because of the company's attention to detail and authenticity. Tropical Cheese, which operates a state of the art manufacturing facility with 300+ employees, is ISO, HACCP and SQF certified, uses the finest natural ingredients and employs award-winning cheese makers from around the world in its 125,303 sq ft facility.

## CHALLENGE:

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is the most sweeping reform of the food safety laws in more than 70 years. It was signed into law on January 4, 2011 with its objective being to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it. Food manufacturers have been working diligently to implement the law's requirement to ensure they are in compliance with the new regulations.

As part of Tropical Cheese's continuous improvement plan the company brought in its trusted process improvement partner New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, Inc. (NJMEP) to assist them in putting in place the new requirements.

## SOLUTION:

NJMEP began the process by conducting an assessment of Tropical Cheese. The assessment identified the lack of communication between departments. This resulted in each department not being aware of the other's tasks creating inefficiencies because each team's role directly impacted the efficiency of another department. With these findings NJMEP recommended that Tropical Cheese implement Supervisory Skills training that would work in conjunction with the FSMA related training that Tropical Cheese was planning.

Tropical Cheese and NJMEP worked closely to create a training plan that would not interfere with the demanding production requirements and be cost effective for the company.

NJMEP and its resource, Juan Ortiz, built and conducted a Supervisory Skills training program that covered Basics of Management, Leadership Skills and Managing Change & Performance.

Knowing the FSMA would be impacting many food manufacturers such as Tropical Cheese, NJMEP brought together companies for an Industry Specific Consortium Grant. Tropical Cheese and eighteen other NJ Food Manufacturers were trained in critical FSMA requirements. Consortium grants make it possible for companies who would not be able to meet direct grant requirements, line 10 participants in a class, to benefit from the DOL programs.

Four Tropical Cheese employees attended classes in Food Allergens, Internal Auditing and Corrective Action and Root Cause Analysis and SQF Practitioner training.

- Food Safety Training - Food Allergens addressed the major allergens and how to set up an effective allergen program to avoid cross contact and ensure food safety. Participants created a framework of the allergen program to be customized to their business.
- Food Safety Training - Internal Auditing enabled personnel to become qualified and confident to conduct internal audits as required by international quality management and food safety management systems. The fundamentals and phases of the audit process and including a number of practical exercises and case studies were used to facilitate the learning process. Further, the participants had the opportunity to create their individual internal audit plan during the training class.
- Food Safety Training - Internal Auditing for Food Safety Management Systems. Besides the fundamentals and phases of the audit process this class focuses on the particular requirements of food safety management systems and how to evaluate effectiveness. Practical exercises and case studies will facilitate the learning process.
- Food Safety Training - Corrective Action and Root Cause analysis. Common methodologies of root cause analysis and how to apply them during case studies and practical exercises as well as the implementation of an effective corrective action process including methodologies and evaluation of effectiveness are addressed in this class.
- SQF Practitioner covered about the role and responsibilities of the SQF practitioner, the structure of the SQF code, SQF certification audits and scoring system, the "SQF system elements" and "Food Safety Fundamentals for food manufacturing."

## RESULTS:

As a result of the Supervisory training the divide between departments and unwillingness to cooperate with one another improved. Employees became aware of how one person's tasks directly impacts the outcome of another individual's tasks. These changes greatly improved the work environment.

Required certifications were a result of the training provided by the FSMA Consortium Grant.

Joseph Vicini, VP Manufacturing for Tropical Cheese talked about his work with NJMEP. "We have been working with NJMEP for many years now. They are well known in the manufacturing industry and possess the experience and outside perspective to assist with any business needs we might have. For example, what the assessment uncovered helped us identify our specific personnel training needs. Also they look out for us in ways that helps us contain costs, such as the grant, and achieve certifications that keep us FSMA compliant."

When responding to the NIST Survey Mr. Vincini reported that the training in addition to the operational impact financially impacted Tropical Cheese positively in a number of areas:

- **A \$24,000.00 COST SAVINGS**
- **SALES INCREASE OF \$258,000**
- **RETAINED \$19,000,000 IN SALES THAT COULD HAVE BEEN LOST WITHOUT THE CERTIFICATIONS THAT RESULTED FROM THE FSMA TRAINING.**



# SAINT-GOBAIN - PRO-ACTION EDUCATION NETWORK APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

## BACKGROUND

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics is a world leader in producing engineered, high-performance polymer plastics and serves a variety of major industries around the globe.

To further Saint-Gobain's employee professional development initiatives, Sean Devlin took on the responsibility of becoming a mentor. The company has three apprentices currently enrolled in NJMEP's US DOL Registered Apprenticeship program, which is made possible through the Pro-Action Education Network™

## CHALLENGE

Saint-Gobain is facing a challenge that's become common among manufacturing businesses in today's current business landscape, recruiting and retaining workers. With manufacturing skills becoming harder to find, the company is forced to think outside the box when it comes to building their workforce.

"In 2018, we had 5 or 6 retire and 5 or 6 people leave for other opportunities. Our retention was extremely low. At one point we were at 60% staffing levels for our production floor, and we were a ton of overtime. We were having a hard time finding the people we need," Sean stated when discussing why Saint-Gobain was looking for new ways to attract and retain workers.

Luckily there is a partner that could provide the ideal workforce solution to meet their needs.

"We reached out to NJMEP because we've worked with them before for recruiting and it went well. That's when Torsten Schimanski [Pro-Action Education Network™ Program Manager] told us about the apprenticeship program."

## SOLUTION

"We started looking at people who had a wider variety of previous experiences. We started focusing more on people's personality in an interview setting. Some, of course, didn't work out but we found some really great employees that we can train so they have the skills they need."

NJMEP's US DOL Registered Apprenticeship program is an ideal solution for manufacturers that want to cultivate a talent pipeline. Saint-Gobain can hire from a wider group of people and train those individuals through

the Registered Apprenticeship to provide the education and experience they need to contribute to and be successful within the organization.

"From a flexibility standpoint, it works out well. The in-class instruction is one day per week which is perfect because it doesn't really affect our production. And, they're still getting their full hours in, pay-wise."

## RESULTS

By providing employees with in-depth professional development opportunities, Saint-Gobain is rewarded with effort and loyalty from their employees. Employee retention and loyalty skyrocket and Saint-Gobain walks away from the apprenticeship program with qualified and highly-motivated employees.

Sean, Production Manager, and mentor for Saint-Gobain apprentices can see the impact of the Registered Apprenticeship program on the apprentices.

"Bryan came with a great work ethic from his time in the military. He has shown growth in both his leadership skills and business knowledge over the last few months. It is a common sight to see him helping out another operator who is struggling. And, he understands the direct impact quality and scrap have to the bottom line."

"Luis sees that we're investing in him by giving him this chance to gain some knowledge. He's applying for tuition reimbursement, and he's excited to use the credits he gets from the Bridge to College Credits program. He will be working toward his mechanical engineering degree."

"Nick has a lot of really good experience from working with Toyota and BMW, and they have good training programs. For him, it was getting experience with more of the manufacturing side of things. He has a better handle on part drawings, using micrometers, calipers and more."

Apprenticeship programs like NJMEP's which have a curriculum that is registered and approved by the USDOL can have a massive impact on any manufacturing workforce. The skills acquired, the knowledge shared, and on-the-job/hands-on learning is proven to both increase competency and the capabilities of employees and at the same time improve employee loyalty and retention.

Saint-Gobain currently has three employees enrolled in the Industrial Manufacturing Production Technician (IMPT) Registered Apprenticeship. It is a one and a half year-long program that includes 2,736 hours of on-

# UNIVERSAL TOOL AND MANUFACTURING CO. (UTM)

## BACKGROUND:

Universal Tool and Manufacturing Co. (UTM) was founded in 1945 by two German immigrants. Over the years Emil Augenstein became the sole owner and remained the sole owner until his death in 1982 at which time his daughter, Dorothy, took over the position as president. UTM remains in the family and is a women-owned, ISO 9001: 2015 certified manufacturing business. Now, Dorothy and her daughter Robin continue to look toward the future while carrying on a proud history of exemplary service to world-class customers. UTM continues to meet the challenge of custom metal stamping and tool and die making and decorative hardware.

## CHALLENGE:

UTM was facing a common challenge that most in the manufacturing industry are struggling with today, finding workers with the right skills. The company also wanted to develop a safety committee, but they didn't have enough people with the right certifications and knowledge to help ensure this program would continue forward as needed. As high schools and parents continue to steer students away from the manufacturing industry, recruiting employees with the necessary skills and certifications to positively contribute to a manufacturing operation from day one has become increasingly difficult. The challenge is continuing to bring back manufacturing to America. Making America strong again.

## SOLUTION:

To overcome their challenge, UTM began looking within their own organization. The goal was to find stand-out employees that showed exceptional promise and potential and give them the opportunity to hone their skills through an apprenticeship program. UTM turned to NJMEP and its Pro-Action Education Network™ which just received a Certificate of Registered Apprenticeship from the US Department of Labor. They identified two exemplary employees that showed incredible initiative and drive. UTM asked if they wanted to be enrolled in the NJMEP's first Industrial Manufacturing Production Technician (IMPT) apprenticeship

program. Both immediately jumped at the opportunity and would begin their apprenticeship in April of 2019.

Course material consists of safety training, part of the MSSC certification, as well as manufacturing and production on the job learning and in-class related technical instruction (RTI). On the job learning consists of 2,736 hours that supports the in-class portion of the program. Some of the on the job learning includes the ability to demonstrate good safety practices, read and interpret MSDS sheets, operate production equipment, producing quality products, interpret technical information, use mechanical tools and testing equipment, and perform mechanical set-up according to the employer's standard operating procedure manual and equipment manufacturer's specifications. Likewise, RTI supports the on the job learning. RTI consists of safety awareness training, production and process as well as product design lessons, maintenance and awareness training, technical drawing, quality assurance as well as Tech & Numbers course material.

Jessica was one of the employees chosen to take part in the apprenticeship program. She has been working in manufacturing for nearly eight years and just last year she was promoted within UTM to work on the Quality Control team.

## RESULTS:

UTM didn't have to wait the entire year and a half to begin benefiting from the NJMEP Pro-Action Education Network™ IMPT Apprenticeship Program. After passing the MSSC Safety Module, Jessica was able to immediately apply the skills she acquired. The company can rely on her as a key member on their Safety Committee. She is even able to train employees and up-skill additional members of the UTM team. It only took a month before the skills she is working to develop, began to pay off for the company that invested in her future.

When asked what else Jessica would like to gain from the Program she stated, "I would like to learn the ins and outs of a warehouse and how

# C.B. KAUPP & SONS APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESS

## BACKGROUND

C.B. Kaupp & Sons is an ISO 9001:2008 + AS9100:2009 Rev C certified manufacturer and leader in the Hydro Forming, and Precision CNC Machining space. They are experts in sheet metal hydro forming. Hydro forming allows C.B. Kaupp & Sons to provide both prototype and production quantities. To maintain their impressive reputation and to continue servicing clients, they need employees with an extremely specific skill set.

## CHALLENGE

"Our biggest challenge is getting people but we can train new people and train them," John Buchanan an Engineer for C.B. Kaupp & Sons stated.

This New Jersey manufacturer is not alone. Manufacturers all over the country are facing the same workforce pressures as C.B. Kaupp & Sons. Finding new workers with the right skills to contribute to a manufacturing operation is proving to be extraordinarily challenging. Manufacturers are posting wanted advertisements but there are so few individuals with the qualifications that these ads continue to go unanswered.

## SOLUTION

John Buchanan is now a mentor for the company's apprentices. He stated, "It's hard to find people these days, so this training is valuable."

C.B. Kaupp & Sons recognized that there's a talent shortage and that there were too few people with the skills they need. To continue moving their business forward and bolster their workforce, they turned to the NJMEP Pro-Action Education Network™.

The Pro-Action Education Network™ is a state-wide workforce development program spearheaded by NJMEP. This program provides New Jersey manufacturers with a variety of solutions to bridge the skills gap.

Five United States Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship programs are part of the Pro-Action Education Network™. C.B. Kaupp & Sons enrolled two employees in the Industrial Manufacturing Production Technician (IMPT) Registered Apprenticeship program. Through this program, these apprentices are being upskilled so they can contribute more to their organizations and take on more responsibilities.

## RESULTS

"[The NJMEP Apprenticeship Program] worked out well. I think they learned a lot. It's certainly going to help us. The only way we're going to grow is if our people grow. [The apprentices] are getting more confident and willing to take on more responsibility," Buchanan explained.

Kalvin is one of C.B. Kaupp & Sons apprentices. When asked about his time in the Registered Apprenticeship, he said, "My overall impression is that the program is very helpful with a reminder of certain information to help reinforce it, and learning new things and especially learning things that would help toward supervising or managing. The communication portions are my favorite part."

David, another C.B. Kaupp & Sons apprentice agrees that the communication section of the apprenticeship program is essential. He mentioned that the safety curriculum is valuable for both seasoned manufacturers as a refresher and those new to the industry as well.

C.B. Kaupp & Sons are cultivating their talent pipeline through the use of NJMEP's IMPT Registered Apprenticeship program. C.B. Kaupp & Sons can rely on the two apprentices enrolled in the program to take on more responsibilities. They are contributing more to the organization as a whole. This fact allows C.B. Kaupp & Sons to look for more entry-level individuals that can then be trained, as the two current apprentices move up within the company.

# POWERTECH UPSKILLS THEIR WORKFORCE TO CLOSE THE SKILLS GAP

## BACKGROUND

PowerTech is an industry leader in the energy conversion space. The company specializes in electrical power supply systems for rail and industrial applications. Their mission is to “ensure energy availability and to use it as effectively as possible. Whether in rail vehicles, in industry or in research and development, our power supply systems operate efficiently and reliably and ensure that optimum use is made of energy.” PowerTech complies with the standards of ISO 9001 quality management systems and the International Railway Industry Standard (IRIS).

## CHALLENGE

Manufacturers all over the country are facing a severe skills gap. PowerTech was in search of new production workers with all the skills to help drive their company forward. Unfortunately, that perfect hire with all the right experience just didn't exist. Finding employees that will remain loyal to an organization is another massive challenge. Workers find it much easier to walk away from an organization that doesn't invest in their professional development.

PowerTech is not alone. Nearly every manufacturer across the nation is facing similar challenges. What makes PowerTech stand out is how they took action to move forward and overcome.

“We wanted to push some of our guys from the shop floor to the next level. With the support of NJMEP, we could offer to develop our workforce.”

Andreas Beilharz, Director of Operations

## SOLUTION

“It comes down to motivating people and increasing company loyalty. The original discussion with PowerTech leadership was centered around how we can develop everyone at our organization. The NJMEP program was simply a good solution.” Andreas Beilharz, Director of Operations and PowerTech's mentor stated.

PowerTech hired Jaime S., a former truck driver, to help with work in the OEM side of the business. Jamie proved himself as a valuable member of the team. To provide Jamie with the skill that will allow him to contribute even more to the organization, PowerTech leadership signed him up to take part in the NJMEP Industrial Manufacturing Production Technician (IMPT) Apprenticeship Program.

The IMPT Apprenticeship Program is part of NJMEP's Pro-Action Education Network™. The Pro-Action Education Network™ is a state-wide workforce development program spearheaded by NJMEP. This program provides New Jersey manufacturers with a variety of solutions to bridge the skills gap. The IMPT Apprenticeship Program is a year and a half long program that mixes on-the-job (OJT) training with in-class related technical instruction (RTI). The curriculum focuses on providing education to develop well-rounded manufacturing professionals.

## RESULTS

“We saw that the NJMEP program gives apprentices a bigger picture about the product they're working with, a perspective on safety, and a production point of view.” Beilharz explained.

Jamie, PowerTech's apprentice stated, “It gave me some newer information. I did welding in high school but I learned a lot more of the technical details. I've learned more about blueprint reading and drawing and pneumatic systems, and hydraulic systems. Of course, the safety review was great.”

Jamie has been promoted to servicing PowerTech's older materials. PowerTech can now utilize his new skillset and place him in more critical roles. He is now able to contribute even more to PowerTech.

This apprenticeship is split up into two parts; related technical in-class instruction and on on-the-job learning. As of March of 2020, Jamie completed the in-class related technical instruction portion of the apprenticeship. Now he will continue forward with additional on-the-job training. PowerTech is already realizing the benefits and there is still another entire section of the program centered around on-the-job training.