



MAINE MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (MAINE MEP)

The Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) is able to leverage a vast array of public and private resources and services that are available to every manufacturing enterprise in Maine. The nationwide system of MEP centers is linked through the U.S. Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP), with the common goal to strengthen the global competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers.

The challenge for manufacturers today is satisfying escalating customer expectations in an increasingly volatile and competitive global market while also maintaining satisfactory profit margins. With technological change happening so rapidly many small and medium manufacturing enterprises (SMEs) find it difficult to keep pace with those demands. Maine MEP provides affordable, innovative solutions to these problems. Maine MEP will assist your organization in a transformation from traditional to world-class manufacturer. The MEP Center's experienced project managers will work with companies to identify conditions that may impede a company's ability to become more efficient, competitive and prosperous. Maine MEP can assist in providing the resources to help maximize profit. In working side by side with leadership, the Maine MEP becomes a partner for success.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2024



\$95.6 Million

Total Increased/Retained Sales



1,166

Total Increased/Retained Jobs



\$60.7 Million

New Client Investments



\$14.8 Million

Cost Savings

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FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM SUPPORTS RAPID DOMESTIC MARKET EXPANSION

ABOUT CHOW MAINE. Chow Maine is a food manufacturer in Trenton, Maine, with 15 employees. Founded in 2008, the woman-owned company has grown rapidly. A manufacturer of prepackaged Asian meals including Pad Thai, noodle salads and egg rolls, Chow Maine currently sells in 44 North Atlantic Whole Foods Markets and some independent health food stores. The company also recently expanded into the Big Y Supermarket chain and UNFI/Fresh distribution to the Northeast region.

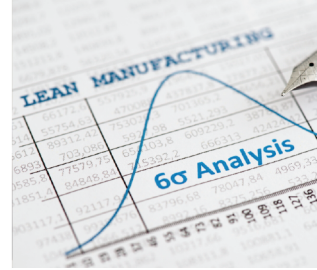
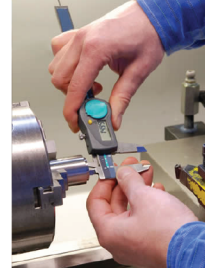
THE CHALLENGE. As Chow Maine grew, it became evident that a food safety system would be necessary to meet the requirements of larger supermarket chains and distributors. Owner Chiaolin Korona reached out to Maine MEP, part of the MEP National Network™, to see if there was any support in developing a food safety system to prepare for a third-party audit.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Maine MEP Project Manager Rob Clement engaged with Chow Maine to develop a food safety plan and help the company prepare for a third-party audit. Over the course of 2022, Rob assisted the company with developing a HARPC plan and SOPs for food safety. He also delivered training in hazard analysis.

With the food safety system in place, Chow Maine was able to secure two major contracts in addition to their existing relationships with Whole Foods. The contracts were with the Big Y supermarket chain in Massachusetts and UNFI, the nation's largest wholesale distributor of health and specialty foods. Chow Maine attributes having the food safety system in place to helping them secure both these contracts.

"With Maine MEP's exemplary guidance, Chow Maine is able to launch new products and expand our business. This special effort directly resulted in a 30% increase in our sales and enabled us to provide additional jobs to the local economy. We truly appreciate Rob Clement's expertise, patience and foresight in the completion of our comprehensive food safety plan. "

-Chiaolin Korona, Owner



RESULTS



\$1,100,000 in retained sales



\$360,000 in new sales



Expansion into new supermarket chain

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