NEW YORK MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (NY MEP)

Empire State Development’s Division of Science, Technology and Innovation’s (NYSTAR) mission is to advance technology innovation and commercialization in New York State. Through regional New York MEP centers, NYSTAR works to provide direct technology assistance to small and medium size manufacturers and other businesses. A key strength of New York MEP is its affiliation with the U.S. Department of Commerce’s nationwide MEP network, allowing it to draw upon the expertise within over 400 local outreach centers across the country. As a network of 11 independent, not-for-profit organizations, New York MEP centers cultivate the growth of high-tech industry and help smaller manufacturers modernize. The organizations share a common commitment to providing direct, strategic assistance to companies in the areas of entrepreneurship, technology commercialization, product development, high-tech business incubator management and technology transfer services.

The MEP National Network™ is a unique public-private partnership that delivers comprehensive, proven solutions to U.S. manufacturers, fueling growth and advancing U.S. manufacturing.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

MEP Center impacts are based on clients surveyed in FY2018

- $555.8 Million Total Increased/Retained Sales
- 5,453 Total Increased/Retained Jobs
- $162.6 Million New Client Investments
- $55.3 Million Cost Savings

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NEW YORK
Manufacturing Extension Partnership
DEFINING A PATH FOR GROWTH IN A CHANGING MARKET

ABOUT GROWERS COOP. In 1929 grape growers along the Lake Erie Concord Grape Belt located in Chautauqua County formed a cooperative called Growers’ Co-op, Inc., to crush their crop and sell the juice in order to pay for their growing costs and generate income. Over the years the cooperative expanded in the number of grower-members, and in their operational capacity and capability for pressing grapes, and for pasteurizing, concentrating, storing and selling juice.

THE CHALLENGE. Recent U.S. consumer trends to reduce sugar in diets have slowed demand for grape juice as a flavoring, coloring and sweetener in juices, jams and other foods. This has also created pressure on prices, thereby reducing the return for covering the farmers growing costs. In response, the Growers’ Co-op has pursued new customers and explored new alternatives for generating profits. However, they felt that they had not yet defined a clear path for their long-term future. The Co-op’s Board of Directors and management, therefore, decided that they might benefit from an outsider’s perspective, and they contacted Insyte Consulting.

MEP CENTER’S ROLE. The approach used by the Consultant and Company Team was to divide the customers and potential markets into very granular market categories to examine each category for long-term trends, profitability, competition, and market size, and then to prioritize those market categories for long-term profitable growth. Next, an ideal Future State of product mix was defined for full utilization of the Co-op’s production facility. That production Future State was then overlaid onto the prioritized market opportunities, and used to define an ideal mix of customers and products for long term sustainability of the business, and to deliver greater returns to the grower co-op members. A plan to achieve that ideal mix of customers and products was then devised, and approved by the Board of Directors.

"The project shifted our thinking from being opportunistic to being strategic. The analysis process gave us a framework for making operations and sales decisions with greater confidence in order to sustain our business for another 88 years."

-Steve Cockram, General Manager

RESULTS

- Increased sales by over 5% in targeted markets.
- New website launched reflecting strategy.
- Highly targeted outreach program is showing positive results.