

EQUIPMENT UPGRADE FOR FAST-GROWING SMALL BUSINESS

ABOUT SALTY WAHINE GOURMET HAWAIIAN SEA SALTS, LLC.

Salty Wahine Gourmet Hawaiian Sea Salts is an award-winning business that specializes in tropically infused seasonings and Hawaii-grown cane sugar. Based in Hanapepe, in Kauai County, Hawaii, the family-owned company began as a sole proprietorship in 2008 and since grown to seven full-time employees and one-part time employee. Salty Wahine produces healthy premixed gourmet seasonings designed to enhance the dining experience of customers through the local flavors of herbs, spices, and tropical fruits. The company takes pride in the fact that 84 percent of the end-product originates in Hawaii.

THE CHALLENGE. Salty Wahine needed to updated its production processes to keep up with customer demand, so company management started researching options for equipment upgrades that could improve efficiency. They found three pieces in particular that would have a major impact on production speed: a mixer, a filler and a sealer. However, investing capital in production equipment is always daunting for a small business, and management was wary of taking on this upfront debt.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Salty Wahine is a member of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii and found out about INNOVATE Hawaii, part of the MEP National Network™, through this organization. While speaking with INNOVATE Hawaii, management learned about the Hawaii Manufacturing Assistance Program (MAP). This program works with Hawaii-based manufacturers on facility expansion, equipment, training, and energy efficiency. Salty Wahine's equipment upgrade plans were eligible for MAP, and the company received funding assistance and one-on-one consulting from INNOVATE Hawaii through the program. The company successfully incorporated the three new pieces of equipment into its manufacturing process, and experienced rapid production and sales growth. The increase in capacity helped Salty Wahine to both keep pace with growing demand and expand into international markets.

"INNOVATE Hawaii has been beneficial in helping us advance our business to the next level. The MAP allowed us to invest in equipment and streamline our production line. Having INNOVATE Hawaii as a resource, along with opportunities such as this one, made it possible for us to meet production demands."

-Laura Andersland, Owner

RESULTS



Achieved **20%** year-over-year growth with forecasted continued growth



Invested in **3** new pieces of equipment to increase efficiency



Expanded into international markets

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