ABOUT FIZZ DISPENSE OPTIMIZATION GROUP. After working in the industrial gas distribution business for a number of years, Derrick Gordy saw an opportunity to provide customers with a product that they didn’t know they needed. In the past, tanks of nitrogen were produced in one location and then delivered to customers on trucks. This process could cause issues when the old supply ran out before the new tank was delivered.

In 2004, Gordy started Fizz Dispense Optimization Group, to manufacture Nitrogen Generators, a machine that could be installed at a company and used to pull the naturally occurring nitrogen out of the air. This solved the problem of running out and also provided the environmental incentive of a reduced carbon footprint by eliminating the need for delivery.

THE CHALLENGE. Over the years, Gordy and other Fizz Dispense Optimization Group team members had participated in a number of trainings and events hosted by the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP) at Georgia Tech including the Northwest Georgia CEO Roundtable and the Manufacturing Growth Meeting Series in Acworth.

In 2015, Knowing that the company was preparing for a period of intense growth, Gordy reached out to Andy Helm, GaMEP project manager, for advice on how to grow in a healthy and sustainable way.

MEP CENTER’S ROLE. Helm recommended a Value Stream Map to help the company better understand their processes, material flow, and internal communication. Damon Nix, project manager, worked with the company over two days, to map out every step of their process from start to finish, noting and brainstorming solutions for bottlenecks or gaps in the flow of materials or information. This project helped the company redesign their operations to increase capacity and productivity.

The next step was to work with Helm to analyze the company’s management structure. After first reviewing the team’s goals and metrics, they helped the company redefine their team’s roles, shift team members into new roles when needed, and create a strategic plan to guide them over the next few years.

As production numbers increased, the company noted difficulties related to one particular sub-component of the Nitrogen Generator, issues which included a long lead time for the part in question (the only supplier was in Europe) and difficulty in installation once it arrived.

Bob Wray, project manager, was able to work with Gordy to redesign the part and found multiple machine shops in Georgia that could produce it, cutting the lead time and cost significantly. Through several rounds of prototypes, the team was also able to improve the installation method, making it much faster to complete assembly.

"Working with GaMEP has helped us create innovative solutions over the years, no matter the issue. From the ideas and support I get from the CEO Roundtable events to process improvement and strategic planning to design assistance. GaMEP is a true partner and resource for our company."

-Derrick Gordy, President