MEP National Network™

COLORADO SUCCESS STORY

LOCAL FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS SERVES UP HIGH-QUALITY, WHOLESOME FOOD ACROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION FOR MORE THAN 45 YEARS

ABOUT READY FOODS, INC. Ready Foods is not a household name in Colorado. However, after 47 years of selling soups and sauces into restaurants, supermarkets and other food service outlets, you have probably eaten their food on multiple occasions. Ready Foods was founded in 1972 by Luis Abarca, a Mexican immigrant. Their first kitchen was located in a small meat plant located under the Colfax viaduct. In 1992, the reins of leadership were passed onto his children Marco and Adrianna. They have been able to grow the business from a small facility to four modern food plants with over 200,000 square feet of combined production and storage space. The company now employs over 300 people.

THE CHALLENGE. While over the years company revenues have grown quickly, Ready Foods has worked hard to maintain a solid company culture. Ready Foods has always had a strong commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. From the very beginning, the company's leadership has understood the importance of investing in its own people. They understood that Ready Foods' people were their greatest resource. In turn, they have been fortunate to have many long-term employees and a lower than average industry turnover rate.

After twenty-five years of learning how to make the company grow, Marco understood that most of the low-hanging fruit had already been picked. New sources of ideas were needed to take the company to the next level, but he was reluctant to hire consultants. Marco noted, "I always thought consultants would tell me what I already knew. I had confidence that with enough hard work, we could figure out any problems. But eventually it became clear that we did not have to teach ourselves everything. Why not learn from the hard-won lessons of other people?"

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. After researching the Toyota Production System and lean theories of continuous improvement, Marco turned to Manufacturer's Edge, part of the MEP National Network™. Ready Foods' first step with Manufacturer's Edge was to engage in creating a strategic plan. "There were no sacred cows," Marco observed. "Everything was on the table." While many of the company's practices were already "lean", there was still room for improvement.

Ready Foods was already a successful, medium-sized company when it first started working with Manufacturer's Edge. However, Marco understood that for the company to pass to the next generation of ownership, Ready Foods needed new ideas.

RESULTS

- 35 new or retained jobs
- $1,000,000 in cost savings
- $950,000 in new investment

CONTACT US

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Manufacturer's EDGE
TRANSFORMING COLORADO ONE COMPANY AT A TIME

"We are a mid-sized company that was beginning to plateau. With Manufacturer's Edge's assistance we have been able to get back on a growth trajectory. We have been very happy with their services and we are looking forward to deepening our relationship."

-Marco Antonio Abarca, Owner