

ULU MANA - MANA UP PROGRAM AND EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE

ABOUT ULU MANA INC. Ulu Mana was found in 2017 by Loren Shoop after he saw the potential between the Hawaiian Ulu tree and the fruit it produces, called breadfruit, and a gap in the local marketplace. Breadfruit is rich in potassium and provides a number of health-boosting vitamins and minerals. Loren understood the opportunity in the health benefits of breadfruit and knew that he could offer it in new, innovative and delicious ways. He also had experience with farmer's markets in Hawaii, and selling products in the value-added space gave him the idea to package breadfruit for consumers in two different ways, as a chip and as hummus.

THE CHALLENGE. As a new business owner Shoop was searching for a small business community that could provide introductions, insight and experience for him to learn, which would help him grow and expand Ulu Mana.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. In 2019, Ulu Mana was accepted into the fourth Mana Up co-hort. The vision for Mana Up is to fuel economic growth in Hawaii that can generate success for the local economy, support the high cost of living in Hawaii, and create well-paying, interesting jobs for locals. The overarching goal is to create Hawaii's next 100 product companies based in Hawaii and earning over \$10 million in annual revenue. Innovate Hawaii, part of the MEP National Network™, has been a partner of Mana Up since its inception.

Participating in Mana Up gave Loren the chance to collaborate with other businesses and network with a diverse group of business owners. The professional business insight he gained allowed him to connect with valuable resources in Hawaii, such as the Innovate Hawaii team, that eventually would allow him to pivot Ulu Mana and expand online when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020.

In 2019, the Innovate Hawaii team was also able to help Loren's packaging efforts through PACK EXPO in Las Vegas, Nevada. This event connected Shoop with Bill Scott of RLS Consulting, who specializes in offering guidance about different consumer and manufacturing packaging equipment that could help streamline his business and save his company money.

"The Innovate Hawaii team has provided my business with invaluable insight and guidance. It is a great place to turn to if you have a variety of business questions. It is evident that the team wants to help the local small business community succeed."

-Loren Shoop, Owner

RESULTS



Purchased a new packaging and filler machine to help package products more accurately.



30% time savings with new machine



\$8,000 in cost savings in labor costs per year



Able to collaborate, network, and gain valuable resources helped them expand online in the pandemic.

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