

REACHING NEW MARKETS

ABOUT INDIE-PEASANT ENTERPRISES, LTD. Shagbark Seed & Mill is an organic mill located in Athens, Ohio, within SE Ohio's Appalachian region, that works with Ohio farmers who grow specialty grains and beans to bring local staple food products to the region's home kitchens, grocers and food service customers through direct sales and sales to distributors around the state. They employ two full time staff and four part time staff. The owners also work in the day to day operations of the business focusing on sales, financials, marketing and farm contracts.

THE CHALLENGE. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indie-Peasant Enterprises, Ltd, DBA Shagbark Seed & Mill, saw the bottom drop out of food service accounts that represented 62% of sales. They also had to end the in-store demos they used to market their chips and crackers in grocery stores around the region, which meant losing 10 contract workers. At the same time, a local company announced they would no longer carry food based products on their shop page. In order to pivot for the growing interest in retail products brought about by the pandemic, they saw an opportunity to reach those customers through on line sales on their website.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. The OSU South Centers, part of the Ohio MEP and the MEP National Network™, was able to provide a web design company, at a low cost, that addressed the issue and added the ability to conduct e-commerce through the website, which launched on July 1, 2020. As a result, Indie-Peasant Enterprises, Ltd (DBA Shagbark Seed & Mill) was able to actually increase sales and reach retail customers they had not before been able to secure. All staff, office, production, and farmers market staff, continued to work at their pre-COVID hours throughout the pandemic.

"The OSU South Centers MEP staff were great partners on this project. Every step of the way, we felt their commitment and support for our success. Our sales presence on our website has clearly made the difference we needed that will benefit us for years to come. Not only did our e-commerce page increase our retail sales, it also brought customers to our mill for pick ups, and larger account inquiries. We look forward to working with the MEP team on new projects that will help us increase sales and hiring at our mill."

-Michelle Ajamian, Principal

RESULTS



\$28,210 in increased or retained sales



\$1,000 in cost savings

CONTACT US



77 South High St., 28th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215



(614)752-2587



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