

RPB SAFETY: SUPPORTING HEALTHCARE HEROES WITH HELP FROM THE CENTER

ABOUT RPB SAFETY LLC. RPB Safety, the respiratory protection brand, was founded in the 1970s with the mission of creating the world's best respiratory equipment. Over their 40+ year journey of continuously developing new and better respiratory equipment for clients - from industrial soldiers to healthcare heroes - RPB has been committed to protecting customers for life's best moments. Family-owned and operated, RPB employs 40 at their Royal Oak, Michigan, facility.

THE CHALLENGE. RPB was preparing for a modest but solid year of growth in 2020 with plans to enter the health field in 2021. However, when COVID-19 began to spread rapidly throughout the nation, RPB's focus shifted to supporting healthcare workers on the pandemic's frontlines. As RPB began developing and producing new respiratory equipment for the health field, they noticed several areas in operations were not as scalable as anticipated - including receiving, inventory control and finished goods inventory. For assistance RPB turned to the experts at the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (The Center), part of the MEP National Network™.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. After analyzing RPB's systems and structure, The Center made practical recommendations for improvements, including implementing automation into processes to increase efficiency while maintaining quality. The Center's support was crucial during this time of rapid change at RPB, enabling them to reach new levels of sales and bring new products to market quickly while continuing to serve their traditional industrial customers.

With The Center's guidance, RPB was able to complete a major shift in their supply chain strategy and inventory requirements to support a new line of healthcare-focused products in a compressed timeframe. One such product, the portable Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR) PX5, received certification from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in record time with RPB using a combination of human labor and automated systems to meet the high demand for the product. Both this and the healthcare-focused T200 headtop, combined with the appropriate hood, have been received well among healthcare workers due to the quality, flexibility and safety provided. The T200 earned the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) highest Assigned Protection Factor (APF) score of 1,000.

As explained by Garth Ivory, RPB CEO, "The Center helps us fulfill our vision of 'protecting you for life's best moments.' The more streamlined our processes are, the more product we are able to get out the door and the more industrial soldiers and healthcare heroes we can protect. The Center helps us make that happen."

"What I like about The Center is that their recommendations are practical, but it doesn't stop there. They follow up, meet with staff at the grassroots level, and use pictures and other communication techniques that are practical and drive real change"

-Randy Friesen, COO

RESULTS



\$1,000,000 in new sales



\$700,000 in cost savings



3 new jobs

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