

POP DADDY: STRONGER & MORE RESILIENT POST-COVID WITH COMPANY-WIDE TRAINING

ABOUT POP DADDY POPCORN LLC. In 2013, Mark Sarafa founded Pop Daddy Popcorn with the goal of improving his family's favorite snack. After experimenting with different kernels and flavors out of his garage, Mark perfected his recipe using Ruby Red Kernels sourced from family-owned farms in Michigan and Indiana. Now based in Whitmore Lake, Michigan, with 38 employees, Pop Daddy has grown to supply their popcorn and pretzel snacks online and in stores across the Midwest. All snacks are produced in small batches to ensure their unique flavors - including white cheddar, hot sauce, garlic and yellow mustard - and they never disappoint.

THE CHALLENGE. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, several employees had to leave Pop Daddy due to childcare issues. Business also was lost from major customers, including all bar and restaurant accounts. As Pop Daddy's full staff returned to work, with new hires joining the team, proper training was necessary to equip workers to manage their recovery and continued growth.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. For expert training in the areas of food safety, efficiency and leadership, Pop Daddy turned to the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (The Center), part of the MEP National Network™. Members of the Pop Daddy team participated in several types of training with The Center.

More than a dozen Pop Daddy employees engaged in food processing skills development training, each coming in with varying levels of experience in the food industry. Through group exercises and discussions, the team gained the basic skills and knowledge needed to better understand the specific needs of the food industry, covering topics such as problem solving, organization and efficiency, and food safety.

Pop Daddy recognized that, as the company grows, they need to maintain an organized workplace to be as efficient as possible. Through hands-on training in 5S implementation the Pop Daddy team evaluated their current facility to find areas that could benefit from 5S organizational tools. Saving just five minutes a day by becoming more organized and efficient could save the company \$5,000 a year in costs.

Five Pop Daddy team members participated in The Center's interactive supervisor skills training, where they learned how to be more supportive and effective leaders. Participants left the training excited to implement the enhanced managerial skills they learned in order to further support and drive business growth.

"The Center has provided invaluable resources for our team members and our company. They've always been our go-to resource for all of our manufacturing and food safety training. The Center staff is knowledgeable and engaging and our employees always look forward to the training opportunities offered by The Center."

-Mark Sarafa, Owner

RESULTS



90% of sales retained



18% increase in sales



8 jobs created



15 jobs retained

CONTACT US



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