

BREATHE HEALTHY TRANSFORMS TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

ABOUT MICHAEL VAHEY LLC. Michael Vahey LLC, which also operates under the name Breathe Healthy, is a service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSB) in Williamsburg, Virginia. Their Breathe Healthy® Masks are a registered trademark of Breathe Healthy. These featured masks are a unique line of antimicrobial breathing masks for general respiratory protection from germs, dust, allergens, and more. The masks may be washed, making them a more sustainable option, and are assembled in America.

THE CHALLENGE. As the pandemic raged on, and as business for their Breathe Healthy® Masks eroded due to competition, owner Michael Vahey began looking for outside support. He registered his company as a PPE resource through the newly created Virginia Supply Chain Connector. This online portal is hosted and maintained by GENEDGE Alliance, part of the MEP National Network™, as part of their effort to build a Virginia-based supply chain for PPE. Through this portal he learned of the GO Virginia Program for Re-tooling Virginia Manufacturers for Strategic Industries, a new program managed by GENEDGE focusing statewide on helping participating manufacturers to shift their operations to emphasize PPE production.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Participation in the Re-tooling Virginia Manufacturers for Strategic Industries Program involved two phases: phase 1, focused focus entirely on PPE, and phase 2, engaging with other emergent critical industry supply chain retooling and continuing PPE capacity additions. This multi-pronged approach drew on the expertise of more than a dozen Virginia agencies and organizations involved in manufacturing, economic development, technology, and health care. Phase 1, accelerated market planning (AMP), delivered a B2C technical and digital marketing channel campaign infrastructure. Phase 1's 4-6 week project developed an actionable plan for PPE commercialization and include a project management platform for execution. By gaining a deeper understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to commercialization and sustainment over the next several years, the commercialization planning tools provided a level of clarity otherwise difficult to achieve when immersed in day-to-day operations. The business plan contained a listing of proposed phase 2 services provided by GENEDGE as well as desired outcomes relative to the Re-tooling Virginia Manufacturers for Strategic Industries Program proposed outcomes. Phase 2, promotional marketing management, lasted 8 weeks, building on phase 1's AMP to slow and reverse the downward spiral in sales, producing an actual increase in sales in the first month and activity across channels continued to increase in second month.

"Participation in this GO Virginia Retooling program has been a welcome and necessary transitional step for Breathe Healthy. It is helping to form a sustainable foundation to ensure continuity and control in our marketing process should a future crisis occur."

-Michael Vahey, Owner

RESULTS



\$350,000 in anticipated created or retained sales



\$100,000 in anticipated cost savings



\$26,300 in anticipated new investment



1 created or retained job

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