

## AMERICAN PAPER BAG SACKS OUTDATED PROCESSES IN FAVOR OF INNOVATION

**ABOUT AMERICAN PAPER BAG.** Located in Sugar Notch, Pennsylvania, American Paper Bag (APB) is proud to offer what no other U.S. manufacturer can - revolutionary paper shopping bags and mailers with unmatched customization options. APB is changing the thought process from "coloring within the lines" to "rethinking the canvas completely" and is helping clients compete in today's retail industry by creating a one-of-a-kind customer experience that is better for the environment, operationally efficient and custom built.

APB continues to bring innovation into paper bag manufacturing by using state-of-the-art production lines and printers, which make it possible to create a more purposeful design for a client's packaging needs. Additionally, the company possesses ISO 9001, ISO 14001, FSC and BRC certifications.

**THE CHALLENGE.** APB sought to increase its capacity over the next five years, including the addition of five conversion machines and a printing press. The company wanted to ensure that its growth in capacity was planned appropriately with a support structure in place to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. For help APB turned to NEPIRC, part of the Pennsylvania MEP and the MEP National Network™.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** After meeting with NEPIRC to learn more about its options the company asked NEPIRC to provide a value stream map (VSM). NEPIRC met with the company's management team to create the VSM charter, which detailed the event's scope, mission, goals, logistics, metrics and team members. After the charter was created, NEPIRC provided classroom VSM training to APB. APB management then guided the project team through the process so that the team could record all pertinent data, which was used in the creation of the current state map.

Once the current state map was created NEPIRC and APB held an ideation session on how to identify and reduce nonvalue added activities, improve efficiencies and identify areas of improvement. The outcomes were then used to create the future state map and a detailed improvement plan. An electronic version of the future state map was also created as a method for calculating "What If" style experiments. This plan became the new current state map for ongoing improvements.

In addition to the VSM, a baseline ERP system study was performed. This included a discovery meeting to define areas of focus and create a "wish list", onsite process observations, offsite data analysis, summary report recommendations and a presentation to show conclusions. As a result of this assistance, APB has an evaluation to determine which type of ERP system would benefit it most based on the current and future needs - creating process efficiencies to manage resources, exceed client expectations and grow the business.

**"NEPIRC is a great group! They provided fantastic assistance, and we plan to work closely with NEPIRC going forward as we continue to expand American Paper Bag."**

-Ian Robson, VP Manufacturing, American Paper Bag

## RESULTS



15 new or retained jobs



\$1,000,000 in new or retained sales



\$1,000,000 in new investment



\$150,000 in cost savings



\$50,000 in improved productivity

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