

TACTICAL ACTIONS DURING PANDEMIC PAVES THE WAY TO  
GROWTH

**ABOUT ELK COUNTY POWDERED METAL INC.** Elk County Powdered Metal (ECPM) has over 30 years' experience in low and high-volume production runs of powdered metal components. They specialize in structural components up to 18 square inches in surface area working with all iron-based materials, stainless steel, bronze, and brass. The company was founded to help satisfy a niche in the industry serving the small volume, small and large-part market and over the years has expanded to run large volumes as well. The company is located in Ridgway, PA and currently has 12 employees.

**THE CHALLENGE.** As the pandemic started impacting businesses nationwide in early 2020, ECPM saw orders drop drastically to near nothing and there were no orders or forecasts from their automotive clients. Their cash flow was stressed, even though they tapped into pandemic resources of the Small Business Administration (SBA).

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** NWIRC, part of the Pennsylvania MEP and the MEP National Network™, conducted a business assessment as part of the organization's COVID Recovery Program (CRP). The assessment indicated that the ECPM was negatively impacted and actions were needed for the company to start a recovery. A tactical action plan (TAP) was developed with their management team that included a SWOT Analysis, an ideal customer profile, evaluation of the company's competitors and market, and recommendations of immediate steps. ECPM implemented several of the recommendations outlined in their TAP, along with the help of NWIRC navigating the various resources and expert service providers to address the most pressing concerns and have the greatest impact. The company completed a sales and marketing initiative with support of Steel Valley Authority that included market research and sales action plan provided by Deane Patterson. Vision Creative Solutions was contracted to rebuild the company website, including content writing, photos, video, and search engine optimization (SEO). ECPM also looked to internationalize their website by starting with a website translation to Portuguese. This would allow better communications in Brazil where ECPM has an outside representative working. ECPM regularly ships to Brazil that accounts for approximately 5-10% of annual sales and they hoped to increase Request for Quotes (RFQs) coming from that area. Vision Creative Solutions facilitated the set-up, installation, configuration, and testing of a translation module in Joomla software to include translation in six languages.

"The SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) was particularly helpful because a SWOT is part of our ISO 9001 certification and it was great to have this updated for the end of the year. Others aren't aware or don't understand the value of working with organizations such as NWIRC, Steel Valley Authority, and PennTAP. If another manufacturer asks me about CRP, I will tell them to pay attention, there's a lot of help out there and a lot going on. The program was a godsend for ECPM."

-Paul Stilwell, President

## RESULTS



**\$640,000** in new or retained sales



access to funding available via the CARES Act to offset the cost of their various projects

## CONTACT US



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