

## HONOLULU COOKIE COMPANY - METAL DETECTOR AUDIT AND FOOD SAFETY TRAINING

**ABOUT HONOLULU COOKIE COMPANY.** The Honolulu Cookie Company was founded in 1998 when entrepreneurs Keith and Janet Sung developed a recipe for premium shortbread cookies. As time passed and the company grew, Honolulu Cookie Company opened stores throughout Honolulu and quickly became a staple among locals and tourists alike. Today, Honolulu Cookie Company has twelve store locations throughout Hawaii along with additional locations in Las Vegas and Guam. The company is known for their premium ingredients and focus on island-inspired flavors.

**THE CHALLENGE.** In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic halted tourism in Hawaii and in turn closed the direct-to-consumer retail locations of the Honolulu Cookie Company. With this revenue stream diminished, the company looked for different ways to reach consumers in order to preserve the business and employees' jobs. Previously Costco had shown interest in Honolulu Cookie Company's cookies, so management decided that it was a good time to research Costco's requirements. Management knew that a third-party audit would be necessary to meet the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requirements. However, third-party audits can pose a challenge to businesses and management decided to look for a local resource to help them prepare for the audit.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** In 2020, Honolulu Cookie Company's management reached out to the Innovate Hawaii team, part of the MEP National Network™, seeking assistance for their audit. Innovate Hawaii was able to bring in a highly experienced consultant for a pre-assessment audit to identify any gaps in their current manufacturing process. From this audit, management was able to take the consultant's notes and make the necessary adjustments to their manufacturing methods. After the adjustments had been made, the consultant returned for a post-assessment audit, which is setup to simulate the actual audit. Honolulu Cookie Company passed this simulated audit and felt confident that their business and manufacturing process was ready for the Costco third-party audit. In April 2021, Honolulu Cookie Company successfully completed their audit to meet FDA and Costco requirements. Overall, it took less than a year between Honolulu Cookie Company reaching out to Innovate Hawaii and passing the required third-party audit. The Innovate Hawaii team was also able to setup the necessary food safety education classes to further expand employee knowledge on best-practices and regulations.

"I highly recommend reaching out to the Innovate Hawaii team for business support. Food manufacturing can be challenging in Hawaii, but the Innovate team is able to connect you with the right resources to assist in a myriad of ways. They have opened opportunities for our business and really make it their goal to help their clients succeed. We appreciate their ongoing communication and know that their help is available if we need it."

-Kara Ono, Director of Food Safety & Quality

## RESULTS



250 jobs saved as a result of the new wholesale account with Costco



\$50,000 in cost savings resulting from food safety services



Products can be found in Costco locations nationwide and internationally in Japan and Korea



Passed third-party audit in less than a year with help from Innovate Hawaii

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