

UNITED PREMIUM FOODS EXPANDS PRODUCTS AND INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY AMID LABOR CRUNCH

ABOUT UNITED PREMIUM FOODS LLC. United Premium Foods (UPF) provides quality food products and temperature-controlled warehouses. As a USDA and FDA certified food processing, storage, and distribution manufacturer, UPF serves as the leading manufacturer and distributor of authentic Irish and Italian meat products in the US. They operate out of a state-of-the-art, 110,000-sq.-ft. food processing and cold storage facility in central New Jersey.

THE CHALLENGE. UPF's CFO has worked with the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program (NJMEP), part of the MEP National Network™, in the past on R&D tax credits and thanks to those successful efforts, UPF approached NJMEP again in 2021 with hopes of further optimizing their production process and addressing certain challenges that they faced in terms of food safety - particularly with their expansion of pet food products. UPF was also facing certain manufacturing challenges. The more efficient a manufacturing processes can be made, the higher the potential yield.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. The solution to UPF's challenges was to first map out the current processes for their food manufacturing production facility and then create a baseline for process improvements while further identifying areas of opportunity. The solution was centered around creating a current state process map followed by an improvement opportunity list. A value stream map (VSM) would then be drafted where an evaluation of every step from beginning to end, from order receipt through shipment of the finished product, and this would provide a baseline for generating a future state map with necessary optimizations generated through UPF's work with NJMEP. The second aspect of enhancing and optimizing productivity was creating quick changeover opportunities on the production line to increase the amount of product that each production line can generate per shift. After meeting with CEO Ken Mayer and taking a detailed plant walk through focusing on food safety practices, NJMEP's resources determined there was a need to adjust the food safety culture of UPF's employees. This adjustment would require enrolling qualified employees in training courses facilitated by expert resources that focus on environmental monitoring programs, cleaning and sanitation programs, including SSOPs, pre-op inspections and machine manuals. There was also a need to mentor UPF's quality control team and educate them on problem solving to better meet their client's quality needs. It was also necessary to implement monthly training sessions to effect long-term changes are continued.

"The biggest success story here are the people. We have a great group of people and that's our biggest asset within the building. Equipment is equipment, we can replace that, but you can't replace good people easily."

-Ken Mayer, CEO

RESULTS



2 created or retained jobs



\$50,000 in new or retained sales



\$18,000 in cost savings

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