MEP National Network™

IDAHO SUCCESS STORY

VALIDATING NEW PRODUCTION WITH OBJECTIVE SENSORY MEASURES

ABOUT B AND D FOODS (AKA LJD HOLDINGS, INC.). B and D Foods was founded in 1972 in Boise, Idaho, to supply their signature "Finger Steaks" to a regional chain of fast-food restaurants. Finger Steaks remain an Idaho staple that they produce and sell through foodservice distributors throughout the Northwest and Midwest. Over the years, they have grown their product line to include a variety of other fully cooked battered whole-muscle meats, including their best-selling tempura chicken.
Today, in addition to their foodservice division, they expanded their products throughout private label and industrial markets. Currently, the B and D Foods product line consists of beef, chicken, and pork. Their first and foremost commitment is supplying quality food products to the industry and helping customers find innovative solutions to their everyday needs and tomorrow's challenges.

THE CHALLENGE. Many of B and D Food's clients were asking for shelf life data that could either substantiate a new product's useful life or offer evidence for the frequently encountered request to extend shelf life for existing inventory. In addition to providing their customers with objective quality assessments over the shelf life of their product, this client also wanted to expand distribution. TechHelp specialists, part of the MEP National Network™, worked with B and D Foods to develop a methodology that would solve both problems simultaneously.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Depending on the product category, shelf life for food products is based on three primary factors: (a) analytical measurement of nutritional value, (b) microbiological confirmation of food safety, and (c) sensory data that ensure customer and consumer satisfaction with the product at end of life. TechHelp engaged with the R&D group at B and D Foods to help them develop an internal shelf life program, including longitudinal sensory measurements of finished product.
This included working with their scientists and technicians to develop the tools to gather data on the variability of the existing product, and analyze trends statistically. Quantitative shelf life data was developed for their Idaho location, right as a new manufacturing plant was constructed in Georgia. Using the methodologies developed in Idaho, the team was then able to train the staff in the new location, and qualify all new production as "saleable" using objective standards. This made it possible to quickly provide uniform product quality across their entire supply chain, ensure existing customer satisfaction, and qualify new production for new customer accounts.

RESULTS

- **85** created or retained jobs
- **$16,700,000** in new investment
- **$6,400,000** in new or retained sales
- **$6,900,000** in cost savings

CONTACT US

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TECHHELP
Idaho Manufacturing Specialists

"We really got a lot out of our work with Catherine at TechHelp. She explained statistics so well and we have a better educated Research and Development group. With the complications of commissioning a new production line in another state we were grateful that the sensory tools we had were reliable and objective. It really helped us communicate in high stakes situations and align on best practices."

-Sarah Fisher, Director of R&D