MMEC was instrumental in leading us through an organic growth process that resulted in significant cost savings along the way.” Tim Iudicello, Founder/Owner

THE SWEET SMELL OF (ORGANIC) SOAPY SUCCESS

ABOUT. Botanie has 18 employees and produces soap in their Missoula, MT facility using the same recipes and specialty-crafted methods developed in the owner’s kitchen years ago. As a private label wholesale soap manufacturer, they produce organic soap for customers to sell under their own brands. Over the years, they have developed fulfillment methods that allow them to meet customers’ needs ranging from the minimum online purchase size of 48 bars to purchase orders of 70,000 customized bars. They recently expanded their systems to include organic liquid soap.

THE CHALLENGE. Botanie was growing rapidly and were at a point where “chaos was capable of happening very quickly,” according to their owner. They needed help with strategic action planning, inventory tracking, standardization of processes, and employee training. Producing both stock and custom products, they had a large number of SKUs as well as raw materials. All of their processes were done by hand and needed to be scaled to meet growing demand. As a manufacturer pursuing “organic growth,” they were also innovating as they grew.

MEP’S ROLE. The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC), a NIST MEP affiliate, has worked closely with the Botanie Soap team over the past several years as the company has grown. MMEC Business Advisors have assisted with production layout, equipment purchases, and implementation of a Kanban system. In addition, MMEC trained Botanie employees on Lean and 5S principles and implementation, and brought in a partner to assist with strategic planning. Of particular benefit to the owners has been the Kanban system, as it moved the company to a new level of sophistication in inventory tracking. In the owner’s words, “employees could finally just take care of it without me having to keep everything in my head.” He credits MMEC with enabling the company to continue its growth trajectory and success in innovation by providing the tools needed for an efficient operational foundation.

RESULTS

- Retained 6 jobs
- $280,000 in cost savings
- $250,000 in new investments

NEXT STEPS

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