

RESULTS: LEAN MANUFACTURING

VALUE STREAM MAPPING HELPS LOST ART CULTURED FOODS “FIND” TIME AND INCREASE PRODUCT QUALITY

COMPANY PROFILE

Lost Art Cultured Foods in Cranston, Rhode Island batch-produces fermented vegetable products by hand, using only organic produce, sea salt and spices.

Owner Kaylyn Keane and co-owner/husband Padraic first conceived of the company when Kaylyn was working in Australia with a non-profit that encouraged reduction of food waste. Sauerkraut was one method of preserving vegetables. After returning to Rhode Island, the entrepreneurs began experimenting and founded the company in 2015.



SITUATION

By 2017, the food manufacturer was selling via both wholesale and retail. Owner Kaylyn Keane said that the team anticipated increases in demand but was challenged by the lack of a production plan. Hand-mixing each batch of sauerkraut since 2015, “there was a lot of wasting time, waiting for information, and training people took a long time.”

Lost Art needed to determine a new operating pattern for increased production without adding workers or increasing labor costs. A second goal was to increase food quality control while remaining vigilant about food safety. Mistakes were reducing morale and costing valuable time.

After seeing a short Polaris MEP “Lean Tip” video, Keane reached out to Polaris MEP.

SOLUTION

- First, Polaris MEP conducted a sauerkraut production VSM (Value Stream Mapping) to define the Current State and generate the desired Future State of production.
- After identifying gaps in the Future State, the team created a detailed plan.
- Then, Project Manager Nathan Bonds led a Kaizen event which guided the team in addressing some of the gaps.

“When we started the Value Stream Mapping, that was really the first time that myself, my husband, or any of our production team had actually thought through the process, about why we were doing each step,” said Keane. “Our experience with Polaris MEP allowed us time to think it through, introduce things slowly, to work through the process. Then, when we did the Kaizen at the end, and everybody contributed to the changes — I was impressed by the buy in from the staff.”

Small changes — Keane said many cost nothing — led to big results. For example, a whiteboard shows the production plan for the entire week, including what needs to be ordered ahead of time.

IMPACTS



Reduced sauerkraut packing time by **10%-20%**



\$1,560 in annual labor savings



87.5% reduction in rate of defects rate – annual rate dropped from .4% to fewer than .1% of production



Increased profit margin per jar through reduction of labor costs and defects for the same output

Read the full Success Story at

<https://bit.ly/3dKFMHe>



“

Polaris MEP made it easy for me to pick my own ending and what was going to be most useful for Lost Art Cultured Foods ... With Polaris MEP's help, we reduced the time it takes to put the product in the jar by at least 10%, if not 20%.

”

Kaylyn Keane

Owner



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