



THE UNITED STATES' EXPERIENCE

TITLE:

TECHHELP – PROGRAM TO DEVELOP AND GROW IDAHO MANUFACTURERS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Country: United States of America

Coordinating Institution: TechHelp, Boise State University

Other institutions involved: Economic Development Administration (EDA), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), University of Idaho, Idaho State University, SGW DesignWorks

Duration of the experience: July 2012 - present

Webpage: <http://www.techhelp.org>



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

1) Objectives

TechHelp is Idaho's EDA University Center and MEP center. Working in partnership with the state universities, we provide technical assistance and training to manufacturers, food and dairy processors, service industry and inventors to grow revenues, to increase productivity and performance, and to strengthen global competitiveness. TechHelp is a respected, customer-focused, industry recognized organization with strong employee loyalty, confidence of its business partners and with the resources and systems in place to achieve the following annual results:

- 80 manufacturers reporting \$100,000,000 economic impact
- 500 jobs created and retained

TechHelp uses a team-based network of experienced staff and proven partners from private industry, Idaho's Universities and the National MEP network to develop trusted and lasting relationships with Idaho companies and communities. TechHelp has a reputation for developing, teaching and delivering innovative processes, products and services that enable Idaho's medium, small and rural companies to drive profitable growth through innovation best practices and self-sustaining continuous improvement strategies.

2) Relevance

The program provides regional manufacturers with best practice training, methods and consulting in three main service areas: Growth & Innovation, Operational Excellence, and Food & Dairy Processing. It offers a wide range of advanced manufacturing best practices using both TechHelp manufacturing specialists and expert consultants from around the U.S. and the world. A network of partners helps participating companies make their product ideas real by assisting with design and prototyping; helps companies make products better, faster, and more efficient with innovation methodologies and lean enterprise manufacturing; helps food and dairy processors make their products safer for consumers with food safety programs; and helps companies become more sustainable with best practices in E3, Economy-Energy-Environment.

As a result of participating in the program's community events, one-on-one consulting and projects with groups of companies, Idaho manufacturers have reported over \$1 Billion (U.S.) of sales, savings, and investment over the past two years. This program is proven to successfully cultivate product and process innovation and business expansion in the region's manufacturing clusters.

3) Concrete activities and actions

Economy, Energy, Environment Program – Manufacturing Specialists facilitate company leadership and teams to develop process innovations to increase productivity, sustainability and competitiveness.

Innovation (Design Thinking, Innovation Engineering) and New Product Development Prototyping Programs – Innovation Specialists coach and train on innovation process and structure; Product Development Specialists provide engineering and prototyping services to drive product innovations.

Export Excellence Program – Export Specialists facilitate development of plans to enter new global markets to drive increases in export sales.

Food & Dairy Processing, Food Safety Programs – Food and Dairy Specialists conduct public training, implement food safety programs in companies, and train and coach teams to create and implement advanced manufacturing processes in food and dairy processing companies.

4) Achievements and results

Program achievements and results are measured by the sum total of its impact on the region for product sales, company savings, investment and new and retained jobs. Each quarter an independent survey of participating of the program companies captures quantitative and qualitative impact of the program. Over the past two years target and actual performance for the program in each evaluation category are:

Category	Target	Results
Sales	\$170 Million U.S.	\$1,123 Million U.S.
Savings	\$10 Million U.S.	\$10.9 Million U.S.
Investment	\$20 Million U.S.	\$31.2 Million U.S.
Jobs	500 new and retained	455

In the past two years approximately 200 projects were completed with over 100 companies. 16 undergraduate and graduate students participated in value added roles. Over 90 percent of these companies reported a very high level of satisfaction with training and project assistance.

5) Sustainability

Financial viability is key the program's sustainability. Initiated over 15 years ago, program annual results have grown steadily over the years to achieve current performance levels. Today, the program is funded 50% by federal and state funds, and 50 percent by private funds in the form of fees charged to participating companies. Each year the private sector investment in the TechHelp program grows, which allows for investment in new and innovative services offered to help grow the region's manufacturers. Federal and State commitment to a strong manufacturing base in the United States has never been higher; we anticipate continued investment at the same or greater levels than in the past. We also anticipate increasing involvement by private sector companies each year, with a corresponding growth in program investment.

Future sustainability of the program, as it exists today, relies on on-going Federal and State investment, especially if the program is going to continue to serve regional manufacturers in both rural and urban communities.

6) Lessons learned

Process Innovation - Rising labor, energy, environmental costs necessitate broader and more strategic approach to company engagement. Manufacturers need a more comprehensive strategy that simultaneously contemplates all resources including people, equipment, processes, energy and material inputs and outputs.

Product and Market Growth and Innovation - Strategic leadership is critical to success. Customer/Supplier clusters that support mutually beneficial innovation strategies are crucial to become more competitive regionally, nationally and globally. Few companies and even fewer support resources, including consultants, have a systems, structured approach to innovation.

Food & Dairy Safety and Processing - New U.S. federal regulation has small food and dairy processors panicked because of perceived complexity. A broad range of expert resources are needed to meet the skills development and process improvement needs of U.S. food and dairy processors.

Business Model – As a public-private partnership the TechHelp program has many stakeholders. An alternative organizational model like a 501-3C or a single university system could be more efficient and easier to manage. All partners and stakeholders need to be on a single communication and business management database system.

7) Capacity for the exchange of this experience

Cooperation modality	Cooperation modalities the institution can provide to others	The institution may be able to provide this cooperation to others by
Information Sharing	x	July 2014 – on going
Conference Calls	x	July 2014 – on going
Videoconferences	x	July 2014 – on going
Workshops	x	July 2014 – on going
Technical and Experts Visits	x	July 2014 – on going
Other(s) – please describe Network building and facilitation	Webinars, remote technical assistance	January 2015 – on going

8) Author of this story

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