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Manufacturers Share Machines, Expertise With Outside Entrepreneurs

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Any entrepreneur with a product idea or prototype can find someone to build it in New Mexico.

Two companies that do just that for a variety of clients are Marpac, a maker of devices that secure medical tubes and collars, and TEAM Technologies Inc., which designs and fabricates products that require advanced engineering and electronics.

Both Albuquerque companies opened their doors for New Mexico Manufacturing Day activities last fall and plan to participate again this year.



From Full Service to a Single Stitch

Marpac manufactures medical devices that can stabilize and secure breathing and feeding tubes, but its machines also sew other products for external clients. Marpac, for instance, has sewn costumes, clothing and pet bedding for clients in the film, fashion and animal-care industries.

About half of its “soft goods” clients come from out of state, attracted by the company’s willingness to accept small-scale projects and the skill set of its workforce, according to general manager Jeff Alcalde.

Coordinating Marpac’s house brands with outside projects is the job of a single employee who meets with potential clients to discuss their projects and the range of desired services, Alcalde said. Some come with their own materials and designs; others provide an unfinished concept of what they’d like to manufacture. Some clients need Marpac’s machines only for a single stitch.

Production employees work four 10-hour days. On Friday, machines are set up to execute the following week’s production plan. This capacity for diversification has broadened Marpac’s manufacturing base well beyond its original product line, and it’s allowed the company’s workforce to swell from three to 50 in 19 years.

Launching Rockets and Businesses

TEAM Tech does large-scale engineering and mechanical manufacturing for government clients,

including Sandia National Laboratories and NASA, for which the company designed and built a real-time propulsion control system. It serves the commercial needs of private-sector companies like Mega and Johnson & Johnson and acts as an accelerator for 15 companies and 20 separate innovative technologies.

“The broad range of work that we do does create a bit of a management challenge,” said Bob Sachs, CEO and president of TEAM, which began as a merger of Team Specialty Products and MC Manufacturing. “It’s like running several small businesses under one roof.”

Even though it doesn’t build a brand-name product under the TEAM name, the company designs, develops, engineers and manufactures products under contract to other entities, and it spins off companies — essentially selling a service. It employs 14 Ph.D. experts in photonics, chemistry, material science, physics, lasers and electrical and mechanical engineering.

“We now have clients from all over the world,” Sachs said. “We are formalizing our technology acceleration process with what we are calling TEAM Accelerator. Here we hope to not only accelerate technology but help young entrepreneurs to understand the difficulties of product development.”

Manufacturing Day events are sponsored by New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which provides training and expertise in efficient production and works individually with clients to identify their long-term goals. This year’s events take place Sept. 28 through Oct. 2. For information about Manufacturing Day, contact mfgday@newmexicomep.org. To learn about New Mexico MEP, visit www.newmexicomep.org.

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