

CURATION FOODS

Unlocking Bowling Green Plant Untapped Capacity

Student Team:

Joe Bertha – Master of Science in Engineering in Industrial and Operations Engineering
 Pablo Martinez – Master of Business Administration
 Deb Xavier – Master of Business Administration

Project Sponsors:

Jim Buatte – Sr. Director of Continuous Improvement
 Jeff Korengel – Vice President Project Management– New Product Commercialization

Faculty Advisors:

Debra Levantrosser - College of Engineering
 Lisa Pawlik - Ross School of Business

A division of Landec Corporation, **Curation Foods** is a natural foods company producing plant-based fresh food, stocked in many national grocery chains. Curation's leadership identified the strategic need to close the underutilized manufacturing plant in Hanover, PA, and consolidate its operations into its manufacturing facilities in Guadalupe, CA and Bowling Green, OH by September 2020. In addition, Curation Foods is seeking to foster a culture of continuous improvement and operational excellence across its plants by rolling out its ZEST (Zero Mindset, Empowerment, Standardization, and Training) philosophy.

Curation Foods invited the Tauber team to its Bowling Green facility to identify and evaluate opportunities for increased production capacity through operational efficiency improvements, with minimal capital expenditure. The Tauber team took a systematic, data-driven approach for evaluating the facility, identifying analysis focal points, prioritizing potential solutions, piloting them and measuring projected impact.

In the first phase, the team focused on the analysis of the current state of the facility by creating current state maps for its salad and green beans production and identified the process' bottlenecks. After this, the team established a baseline for the bottleneck's overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) and calculated a target OEE necessary to absorb the Hanover, PA plant's production.

In the second phase, the team identified potential operational improvements through the ZEST framework, focused primarily on the standardization of processes, enabling continuous improvement, reducing waste, and improving overall safety at the plant. The team's primary proposals focused on improving the onboarding process to increase employee retention, implementing a daily OEE tracking and reporting method, streamlining changeovers, using a daily production scheduling tool to maximize machine availability, and improving safety through the installation of pedestrian and forklift pathways.

In the third phase, the team piloted some of the solutions to evaluate their viability and determine the next steps necessary for their implementation. With information gathered from these pilots and projections from previously gathered data, the team determined that these recommendations would yield sufficient OEE increase to allow for the absorption of the Hanover plant's production.

By freeing up the untapped capacity in the Bowling Green plant, this project has paved the way for smooth consolidation of production into one location. This results in an annualized expected savings for Curation Foods of approximately \$4.4M per year.