



Success Story: Crider Foods

Canning Manufacturer Makes Improvements to Facilitate Business Growth

Crider Foods, a canning and frozen/fully cooked poultry manufacturer in the small town of Stillmore, Ga., is a 60-year-old family business that values quality, customer service, and commitment to the customer's brand.

Crider Foods operates two production plants for cooked and canned products in more than 450,000 square feet of space. As part of Crider's growth strategy, it continuously investigates new ways to help customers be in the forefront of new and emerging markets.

»» Situation

In anticipation of the company's aggressive business growth plan, Billy Crider Jr. knew he had to make a few key changes in warehouse space and in the packaging and canning lines to ensure the ability to meet new and current customer demands for added products and innovative products.

Crider was operating three warehouses, one attached to the plant, one that was on the grounds of the plant but disconnected from the facility, and one warehouse 25 miles away in Vidalia, Ga. The Vidalia warehouse required transportation of product several times a day, and the employment of a person to load and unload trucks.

In addition, Crider was operating two packaging lines, utilizing older equipment that was operating seven days a week and 22 hours each day, four more hours a day than the canning line, creating a bottleneck in the process.

Crider had seen opportunities within new markets, but could not reach them because of capacity issues. He asked his team to call on Alan Barfoot, the Central Georgia region manager for the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GaMEP) at Georgia Tech, to review the warehouse space and provide insight into capacity improvement.



By making these improvements, Crider Foods has:

- *Saved time, resources, and money by eliminating traveling 50 miles roundtrip multiple times a day to the off-site warehouse.*
- *Combined three separate warehouses into one efficient warehouse space.*
- *Doubled throughput from 260 cans a minute to 520 cans a minute.*
- *Increased plant capacity to allow for expansion into new markets and new opportunities for existing customers.*

»» Solution

Barfoot and Crider decided to start with the warehouse issues and then move on to capacity challenges. Barfoot determined that having three warehouses, including two off-site, was inefficient and costing the company time, resources, and money for space rental and travel costs. Knowing that the company needed to build a single warehouse that could house everything, Barfoot began determining how much space Crider would need. He met with the company's sales and marketing team to review and log every SKU and forecast the amount of inventory needed to be stored. By working through these numbers, Barfoot was able to help determine the need for warehouse capacity, utilization of racks in the new warehouse space, types of storage methods, and the forklift truck and picking equipment that would be needed.

Crider built its new warehouse and was not only able to save time and money, but was also able to reassign the one Vidalia employee to the Stillmore plant.

Next Barfoot and Steve Jarrard, one of Crider's operations managers, led a team to conduct a value stream map of the packaging process to determine the current state and the opportunities for improvement to get to the desired future state – which was the ability to double capacity. They determined that the bottleneck was machine capacity. Machines on the two packaging lines were older, often broke down and operated four hours longer per day than the canning line.

Crider decided to not only replace the machines on the two lines, but also to add a third line to allow for business growth. The company used some of the existing equipment and purchased new equipment that was faster and more reliable. By doing so, they were able to double throughput on their new lines – from 260 cans a minute to 520 cans a minute per line, allowing not only for an increase in throughput but also revenue. Crider is now able to run three types of products versus two, eliminating previous bottlenecks and capitalizing on the ability to produce more. In addition, they are able to better serve their existing customers, multiply the types of products they sell to those customers, produce their products at less cost, and expand into new markets.

Crider has also completed improvements in the canning process, including new, state of the art retorts, an industrial, high capacity pressure cooking system.



"Georgia Tech provided opportunities for improvement within our facility that allowed Crider to grow its business."

- Steve Jarrard, Operations Manager

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