



In the “Spirit” of Improvement, GBMP Lends a Helping Hand at Award Winning Rhode Island Distillery

A GBMP Client Case Study

South Kingstown, Rhode Island craft distillery Sons of Liberty Spirits is a small, privately held manufacturer of award-winning whiskey. Since its inception in 2007, Sons of Liberty has quickly made a name for themselves in whiskey circles. In both 2014 and 2015 Sons of Liberty has taken top honors at the World Whiskey Awards in the category of **Best Flavored Whiskey in North America**.

“It is an honor just to be mentioned in the ranks of some of the most celebrated, longstanding distilleries of North America, let alone to win such a coveted industry award,” said Sons of Liberty Owner, Mike Reppucci. “Winning a World’s Best award last year for our Pumpkin Spice Whiskey was amazing and being recognized again in the Best Flavored Category, for a different whiskey in 2015, gives us even more motivation to push the envelope and continue to innovate American Craft Whiskey.”

In the summer of 2014, based on a referral from a colleague, Mike Reppucci contacted GBMP for help in their packaging area. The issue --- after winning the top honors for their product in 2014, Sons of Liberty anticipated having to package a lot of product in a short period of time in the fall of 2014, and they were worried.

As a New England based not-for-profit organization whose mission is to keep or grow jobs in the region, GBMP was pleased to step in and offer some pro-bono support to Mike Reppucci and his employees. In just a few work sessions spread over a handful of days, Continuous Improvement Manager, Bruce McGill, brought lean thinking to the Sons of Liberty team and coached them on ways to streamline the packaging work area and process. “We talked about the difference between work and waste as it related to their process, and then sketched out and set up a new filling, labeling and boxing work cell,” noted Bruce. The idea was to reduce batching and unnecessary moving, handling and other extraneous activities so workers could focus entirely on filling, labeling and boxing.

With their new, singular focus on uninterrupted product flow, the team worked out the kinks and began testing the new process. The results? **The Sons of Liberty team indicated it used to take 2 people about 4 days to label, fill, and pack 1000 bottles of whiskey. In the new arrangement, two people processed the same 1000 bottles in one 8-hour shift!** After the testing, Bruce made a couple of more visits to assist Sons of Liberty in refining their process before they officially hit their pumpkin spice “season”.

Owner Mike Reppucci was thrilled with the results of the short packaging improvement project with GBMP. He noted, “We founded Sons of Liberty with a spirit for innovation, and we set out to create a line of whiskies the world had never seen. With GBMP’s kind offer of help we learned some new forms of innovation that will help us continue to achieve our goals. It was pretty amazing to see the change in the area and discover what our people could comfortably output! I think at first we were all a little freaked out by how much work 2 people could actually get done in this new arrangement, but it sure did make a huge difference in our ability to handle our busy season demands.”

For more information about Sons of Liberty please visit <http://www.solspirits.com>

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