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**HOW SWEET IT IS: MAINE MEP SIMPLIFIES LIFE  
AT SIMPLY DIVINE BROWNIES**

*Confectioner Leans Production Process, Saves Money,  
and Emerges as the Cream of the Crop of Brownie Bakers*

**FREEPORT, MAINE** – Baking brownies seems like a simple endeavor. But baking Simply Divine Brownies is another story entirely.

Trina Beaulier, CEO of Simply Divine Brownies founded the company in November 2004, after spending a summer on Echo Lake, frustrated with the lack of availability of thick, fudgy gourmet brownies. The demand was so great for her sweet treats that Trina had to relocate to a larger space in Brunswick, Maine after two years of production. And in 2006, Trina's daughter Meggen joined the family business as COO.

“I think what sets us apart from other brownie bakers is the wide variety of toppings and frostings we offer, such as butter brickle or Maine blueberries or chocolate-covered raisins. We've achieved national attention, being featured on Rachel Ray and also on the Food Network,” said Beaulier. “But our start up brownie and confections company wouldn't be nearly at the spot we are today without the help and consultation of the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP) right from the beginning.”

Rosemary Presnar from Maine MEP had heard about Simply Divine Brownies from a fellow plane passenger and decided to contact them about their new business. Soon after, Rosemary invited Meggen and Trina to a Time Wise® Lean Workshop.

“We wanted to introduce them to the Lean process and show how Lean could benefit their company,” said Presnar. “Wayne Messer, Maine MEP Project Manager, was then able to dive right in, training everyone at Simply Divine Brownies on the principles of Lean. He was able to demonstrate ways to make their production process much easier by changing the workflow of the facility.”

“We had originally set up our baking facility without thinking about what would make sense in saving time and energy. However, Wayne and Rosemary showed us that we were wasting so many steps; that there were ways to make things easier and more efficient,” added Beaulier. “Soon after we streamlined that process, Wayne helped us with the whole cost analysis side of things. He set up a spreadsheet with the 60 different types of brownies we make, and showed us how to plug in the variables. This showed us how to adjust prices accordingly when needed.”

Simply Divine Brownies was missing a very important element in their shop: standard operating procedures (SOP) for baking and shipping. Messer knew it was imperative to teach them how to draw these up.

“Trina was doing all the baking when I first arrived at their shop. And when she wasn’t baking, she was telling everyone else how to bake, how much of one ingredient to add over another. It just wasn’t practical,” said Messer. “So we decided Trina should write down every recipe, right down to the specifics. Then we created SOPs for shipping as well, how to package one half-dozen brownies to send to a warm climate, for example. In all, they have about 100 standard operating procedures. This way, the customer gets the same thing every time they order. And it saves the company money and reduces the production time by adhering everything to the same consistent standard.”

Maine MEP’s involvement with the company continued for months to come. In 2007, Simply Divine Brownies entered the Forbes.com “Boost Your Business” contest, a competition where nearly 1,000 contestants submitted detailed plans for how they would use \$100,000 to grow their business. Maine MEP helped the company with its presentation and helped them figure out their business plan to launch a frozen brownie batter line.

“We didn’t win, but came in as first runner up, which we were excited about just the same,” said Beaulier. “Using the business plan the folks at Maine MEP helped us devise, we will still move forward with that frozen brownie batter line in the near future, we hope.”

Presnar and Messer also put Beaulier in touch with the Maine Technology Institute (MTI) to help them obtain two MTI seed grants, for commercialization of the frozen batter and to develop a Mach controlled CNC machine to cut their brownies. The machine is the first of its kind, and cuts four trays of brownies in the same shape, all at once. “It is exciting to see a young manufacturing company that is as innovative as they are,” noted Elizabeth Crabtree, the MTI manager who assisted them with their projects. “They reached out to a number of state resources and that has also helped fuel their growth.”

In late March, Simply Divine Brownies moved to their new facility in Freeport. They needed a larger baking facility, as they were growing immensely. Messer helped set up the flow of their new space.

“We applied everything we had learned about Lean previously and now our facility is just perfect for us. We even had big pieces of paper taped to the wall, showing where the mixer goes, the refrigerator – everything we would need. The whole set up worked like clockwork. Wayne helped us with every single step from baking to shipping,” added Beaulier. “We wouldn’t be where we are today without the Maine MEP. It’s amazing; just because Rosemary talked to that person on a plane, it’s serendipity. They are our guardian angels.”

## **About Maine MEP**

Maine MEP is an affiliate of the NIST under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP is a network of manufacturing extension centers that provide business and technical assistance to smaller manufacturers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Through MEP, manufacturers have access to more than 2000 manufacturing and business “coaches” whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits, and enhanced global competitiveness. For more information on the Maine MEP program call 1-800-637-4634 or visit [www.mainemep.org](http://www.mainemep.org).

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