

## Next Generation Manufacturing Launched in Maryland

*Congressman John Sarbanes engages manufacturing leaders on new movement to advance Maryland manufacturers*

On June 24, 2010 over 175 manufacturers and public-private solutions providers came together to hear about *Next Generation Manufacturing* and how it has transformed two of Maryland's leading small manufacturing companies.

"Manufacturing will be the engine that leads America out of the recovery," said U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes, an ardent manufacturing supporter. The forum was organized by the Maryland Manufacturing Partnership (MMP), a new public-private partnership initiative led by the Regional Manufacturing Institute (RMI) and the University of Maryland's Maryland Technology Enterprise Institute (Mtech) and funded by the National Institute of Standards & Technology's (NIST) Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP). MMP is pulling together a network of resources from around the state, including third-party experts, University System of Maryland faculty, the NIST MEP network, and expert, in-house consultants to strengthen the competitiveness of Maryland manufacturing companies.

"Our goal was two-fold: to provide the case studies on how *Next Generation Manufacturing* has positioned two of Maryland's stellar manufacturers for future profitability and growth in; and to provide *Next Generation Manufacturing* solutions to manufacturers in Maryland so that they can better compete in a rapidly changing global environment," said Dr. Michael Galiazzo, President of RMI.

The forum featured two case studies of forward thinking manufacturers. The first was presented by Susan Ganz, President and CEO of Lion Brothers (<http://www.lionbrothers.com/>), a 111 year old designer and manufacturer of apparel brand identification products., headquartered in Reisterstown; and the second by Drew Greenblatt, President of Baltimore City's Marlin Steel Wire Products (<http://www.marlinwire.com/>) whose origins came from a bagel basket manufacturing plant in Manhattan, which is now transformed and based in Baltimore.

"By all rights, our company should be dead like most of the American textile industry," said Susan Ganz. "We took a last generation company and transitioned into a *Next Gen* company by tapping outside resources like those offered through MMP," she said. Ganz has transformed Lion's business model so that they are no longer providing a commodity which can be manufactured by cheaper labor forces overseas. Today, by embracing the principles of *Next Generation Manufacturing*, the firm has transformed its service offerings to provide customized solutions for a diverse client base ranging from Under Armour and PUMA to Harley Davidson and the Girls Scouts of America. "Manufacturing is now a very important element to social networks," said Ganz. "As crowd-sourcing becomes a new way of articulating and understanding product demand, manufacturers like Lion can now satisfy this demand in a very efficient and effective manner," she said. Bottom line: Lion Brothers has not only survived, but is now succeeding as a global company in a depressed economy and even "in-shoring" some of its outsourced China business.

Marlin Steel Wire Products' President Drew Greenblatt relayed his experience in transforming his bagel basket manufacturing business, which was servicing clients like Einstein Bagels, into a sophisticated steel wire basket design business for companies like Siemens, Toyota and Novartis. "When China could design finished baskets and have them arrive in Manhattan at a cheaper price than I could purchase the material itself, I knew the game was over for my bagel basket business," he said. Greenblatt told the mesmerized audience that just at the moment he was ready to fold, he got a call from Boeing who asked if he could design precision baskets for their factory throughput. "Price was not the issue; it was all about speed-to-market." That order transformed Greenblatt's bagel operation into the precision steel basket business which now serves multinational clients.

Greenblatt also adopted the *Next Generation Manufacturing* approach. He invested in top quality people, top robotic equipment and instituted a company ethos that was totally customer driven. "As a result of our embracing of *Next Generation Manufacturing* principles, we've increased profits each year since our rebirth five years ago," he said. He confided that the secret sauce to his success is to emphasize profit over revenue and he said that he's "not afraid to fire a client."

"What we are witnessing here in Maryland is the kind of private sector leadership that provides a great model for the nation," said Congressman Sarbanes. "I believe U.S. manufacturing is the best in the world and we need to get behind it and support it," he said. Congressman Sarbanes stayed after his remarks and engaged the audience in Q&A. The Congressman is helping MMP get connected with other legislators and endorsed the idea of a congressional outreach effort to help members of Congress understand the importance of manufacturing to the future of the country.

What's Next? The MMP solutions website, [www.mmpsx](http://www.mmpsx) was unveiled at the event and will be populated with Maryland manufacturers and resource vendors to provide a *solutions exchange*. "We created a simple, easy to use website that allows users to get answers to questions. Essentially, it is a social media website for manufacturers," said Dr. Galiazzo. "This revolutionary medium for the manufacturing industry will be one more tool in our MMP toolkit for making Maryland manufacturing more competitive," he said. As MMP plans its next legislative outreach event, RMI is also taking time to recognize Maryland's *Constellation of Stars* with a star-studded event on October 28 at Martin's West to recognize the many manufacturing stakeholders that contribute to the success of Maryland Manufacturing.

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